

The First Layman Missionary (Acts 11:19-30)

Through suffering, we could know God's plan and be closer to God in His grace. We could not get what we deserve without suffering. **"It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees (Psalms 119:71)** Faith will be verified through suffering. In the bible, When God compliments Job's faith, Satan replied with a surprising definition of faith. **"Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land (Job 1:9-10)** It is not real faith if we love God because He loves us and blessed us. We should be blameless and upright - fear God even in suffering and to prove our true faith through passing it. In the history of Christianity, so is the Gospel too. It was not spread out in plain surroundings and without oppression but rather with suffering and affliction.

Mission in God's hands. **"Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. (Acts 11:19-21)** Bible shows that when in Jerusalem, God made them scatter with persecution but God's hands were with them when they started to evangelize to gentiles. God's hands, in other words, power of Gospel, made them to testify resulting in several changes in history.

What is Gospel? It is the Good News: Jesus Christ. **"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)** **"regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.(Romans 1:3-4)** Why only Jesus? Because He opens the way of life, who solves our sins, gives us new life to live with/in true values and guides us to eternal life. **"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)** **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here (2 Corinthians 5:17)** There is always surprising change followed by where Gospel came in: It is the power of God. There would be change in our life, family when accept Jesus as our Lord. God is pleased most with it. God's hands will be with us when we do what He is pleased - it is most blessing in our life.

Sending a layman missionary **"News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, great number of people were brought to the Lord. (Acts 11:22-24)**

- 1. A good man with leadership in the church** **Spiritual leadership-** Not qualified without leadership in faith **Personal leadership-**Not only full knowledge of the bible but also with a good personality. **Functional leadership-** Capability to do assigned work(task) Barnabas was the person of outstanding personality; concerned the poor and weak people. Meaning of Barnabas' name is comforter. **Spiritual leadership** brings in Jesus Christ but to follow life of Jesus is on own personality. **"Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:36-37)**
- 2. A man with full of Holy Spirit and faith.** Barnabas was rational, emotional person but also full of Holy Spirit.
- 3. A man who raise others.** **"Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. (Acts 11:25-26)** He accompanied Apostle Paul when sent to Antioch.

Relief of the first church **"The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. (Act 11:29-30)** The first ministry of Antioch was the relief, helping people in need before evangelizing with devotional offering. In the book of Acts, the first things done by people in Holy Spirit is helping others in needs. **Evangelize, relief and mission work are the distinction of the one who is fulfilled with Holy Spirit** How they did when offering? **"as each one was able (Acts 11:29)** We should do as we are able, never be on test of it. **But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh (Galatians 5:13)** We should offer as much as we could. It does not matter either much or less. We just do as our faith.

We should check(inspect) our own faith if we encounter suffering even though we are in faith. Focus on Worship, Words and Prayer more to solve those problems. God's hands will be with us when we testify Jesus. God lives our life instead of us. Being with Jesus is the most blessed life. The used one by God is a good man, fulfilled by Holy Spirit to raise others. Evangelize, relief and mission work are the distinction of the one who is fulfilled with Holy Spirit.