

November 22nd & 23rd, 2025

From Scorn to Celebration

Responding to God's Kingdom with Thanksgiving

Acts 11:1-24

The progress of God's kingdom exposes the true condition of our hearts; we will either resist it with criticism, analyze it from a distance, or join it with obedient and joyful participation.

Acts 11:1-3 "Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³'You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.'"

A Critical Response

❖ The circumcision party criticized Peter's ministry to the Gentiles.

- ◆ The kingdom of God was advancing, but it was in unconventional ways.

Acts 11:2b-3 "...The circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³'You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.'"

- ↳ By criticizing Peter, they overlooked the evidence of God's work in the Gentiles.
- ↳ They were not only questioning Peter but also revealing their disregard for the Gentiles.
- ↳ Their traditions blinded them to God's unfolding plan of salvation for the Gentiles.

Acts 11:4 "But Peter began and explained it to them in order."

An Obedient Response

❖ Peter's obedience was rooted in the revelation of God, not in his own innovation.

- ◆ Peter was careful to explain the revelation of God in his life for this ministry.

Acts 11:4-10 "But Peter began and explained it to them in order: ⁵'I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. ⁶Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. ⁷And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' ⁸But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' ¹⁰This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven."

- ↳ Peter reacted with humility to the questioning because God had confronted his own prejudice against the Gentiles.
- ↳ Peter revealed the condition of his own heart before he went to the Gentiles.

- ◆ Peter did not invent a new ministry; he responded to God's clear direction.

Acts 11:11-12 “And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house.”

↳ The Spirit of the Lord spoke directly to Peter, confirming God’s call and vision.

Acts 11:13-17 “And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷If then God gave the same gift to them as He gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”

↳ Peter recounts how he realized that God called him to preach the Gospel.

↳ Peter recognized the work of God in the Gentiles through the Holy Spirit, confirming their salvation.

Acts 11:18 “When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.’”

A Worshipful Response

- ❖ The evidence of God’s work and the expansion of His kingdom silenced their objections and caused rejoicing over the transformation of the Gentiles, so they glorified the Lord.
 - ◆ God’s clear work silenced their criticism.
 - ◆ The evidence of salvation is the result of God's supernatural work.
 - ◆ Our goal as believers is to see evidence of spiritual transformation and eternal life in others.

Acts 11:19-21 “Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.”

A Missional Response

- ❖ The desire to advance God’s kingdom calls us to active participation in His mission.
 - ◆ Mission flows from obedience, not from convenience.
 - ↳ Persecuted believers understood the importance of proclaiming the Gospel.
 - ↳ God uses ordinary believers to accomplish His work.
 - ↳ The hand of the Lord was with them, and many turned to the Lord.

Acts 11:22-24 “The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, ²⁴for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

↳ The Church in Jerusalem responded with partnership, not with control, towards the kingdom of God.

How do you respond to the progress of God’s kingdom today?

- ❖ Are you excited or apathetic towards God extending His kingdom to others?

- ❖ Are you aware of God's call for your life?
- ❖ Are you passionate and eager to extend the kingdom of God?
- ❖ Are you implementing the Kingdom of God through your difficulties?
- ❖ Are you willing to give your life for God's purpose?

Endnotes:

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