

# Uprising

Week of May 15

It's easy to stand up for Jesus when everyone else is standing. But it becomes very difficult to take a stand for Christ when people around you are hostile toward the things of God, especially the name of Jesus. The Lord Jesus never said following Him would be easy. He said: "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34). What causes a person to take up a cross and tread behind nail-pierced feet?

Because the Lord Jesus "got in the game" for us He expects nothing less of the men, women, boys, and girls who choose to follow Him. New converts in the first century knew what it meant to "take up a cross" and they understood that taking up a cross was associated with pain, suffering, and even death. So why did so many early followers enthusiastically move from the sidelines and risk their lives to be "in the game"? Is the Holy Spirit still in the business of moving us beyond ourselves today?

## Read Acts 11:19-26, Acts 13:2-4

As believers in the early church began to scatter due to persecution, the Gospel message also began to spread. Fully devoted followers of Christ – the ones who are in the game and not merely spectating – carry the Good News of Christ with them. Disciples make disciples. And like early believers, we too are commissioned and equipped through God's indwelling Holy Spirit to proclaim the message of salvation!

1. Notice in v20 of Acts, chapter 11 that "some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus." Think for a moment how these believers were "in the game" as opposed to merely spectating. How are they living out the words of Jesus in **Matthew 28:18-19, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46-49, and Acts 1:8**?

What was the result of their obedience according to Acts 11:21?

Why does it take "the power of the Lord" being present (and tapped into) in order for large numbers to turn from sin and turn to Christ?

The more certain we are about Christ – who He is, what He has done for us, and what He has called us to do – the more we will be compelled to *live* our faith and not sit idly by and watch from the sidelines. If Christ is our focal point, then our attitude and actions will emulate that of Christ: "For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will" (John 6:38). Loving Christ means loving others, and truly loving others means loving them enough to tell them about the life-changing message of salvation in Jesus. Think about the early believ-

ers. Although they faced diverse setbacks, their certainty about Christ and their love for the lost gave them a certain God-confidence that propelled them forward to spread the Gospel, even in the face of persecution.

2. Obviously, we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but what would it take for you to live out your faith more like a first-century follower of Christ—one who is all-in, confident in Christ and His mission *for you* in the world around you?

The Holy Spirit may be working on you now, moving you from a spectator's seat. What is keeping you from being all-in for Christ, keeping you from abundant life and distracting you from sharing the message of life with others who may have a Christ-less eternity? In the space below (or on a separate sheet of paper) write down these distractions and ask the Lord what His will is for you. Tell the Lord why you're having a difficult time surrendering to the Holy Spirit. What fears arise in you as you think about giving over control to the Spirit? Share the longings of your heart. If you need to re-prioritize areas of your life, ask the Lord to help you now.

3. Lord, I am having a difficult time surrendering to the Holy Spirit. Here's why:

I want to fully follow in your footsteps. Here are the longings of my heart:

Lord, would you help me re-prioritize the following areas of my life, so that I may be all-in for you?

There is coming a time we will no longer be "in the game" but will have completed the race, our time on earth the Lord is giving us. What we decide to do now really does matter. One day we will be cheering on future generations: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now He is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

4. Close by asking the Lord to stir within us a passion for people to know Christ. Pray for Christ Church – for our pastors, staff, leaders, worshipers – to truly love others, to be faithful and fully devoted to Christ. Ask the Lord to give us a certain God-confidence and remind us we are on the winning team.

# UPRISING

Text: Acts 11:19-26

The people yielded to the following four fundamentals:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

## The Plain Truth:

Spectators \_\_\_\_\_ while Followers  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### One Year Bible Reading

May 15: 1 Samuel 17:1-18:4, John 8:21-30, Psalm 111:1-10, Proverbs 15:11  
May 16: 1 Samuel 18:5-19:24, John 8:31-59, Psalm 112:1-10, Proverbs 15:12-14  
May 17: 1 Samuel 20:1-21:15, John 9:1-41, Psalm 113:1-114:8, Proverbs 15:15-17  
May 18: 1 Samuel 22:1-23:29, John 10:1-21, Psalm 115:1-18, Proverbs 15:18-19  
May 19: 1 Samuel 24:1-25:44, John 10:22-42, Psalm 116:1-19, Proverbs 15:20-21  
May 20: 1 Samuel 26:1-28:25, John 11:1-54, Psalm 117:1-2, Proverbs 15:22-23  
May 21: 1 Samuel 29:1-31:13, John 11:55-12:19, Psalm 118:1-18, Proverbs 15:24-26