



## Sermon Notes

**Term** – Autumn 2020

**Series** – Acts: manual for a scattered church

**Gathering & Date** – 8.30, 11.00 & 6.00, 11 October

**Title** – Rear view mirror or windscreen?

**Preacher** – Paul Langham

**Reading** – Acts 11:19-26 (But please read Acts 9 – 11)

A manual is practical: it answers 'Who?' questions. In acts 9-11, we see that, when we ask the question 'How can we be effective and fruitful followers of Jesus?' we find a number of answers.

1. Our primary need is for the Holy Spirit to fill and guide us: notice how many times in these 3 chapters, the Holy Spirit gives such specific directions to his followers, e.g.

9:10,11 ... Ananias is told where precisely to find Saul

10:5,6 ... Cornelius is told to send for Peter, giving his precise location

10:19 ... Peter is told the number of men who've come to find him before he sees them

Spend time this week asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you with this sort of precision.

2. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to replace the 'rear view mirror' of our restricted thinking with the 'windscreen' of God's big possible future

In particular, the early church had to learn that all prejudice (especially that of racial inequality) was not of God's heart. Fighting prejudice – and particularly in today's world racial injustice – is a gospel imperative and must be part of every believer's discipleship

3. Followers of Jesus were first called Christians in Antioch: Christian literally means 'little Christ'. This is our calling wherever we spend our lives.

4. Where are you scattered? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the eyes of Jesus to see your workplace, school, community, family, leisure group in a new light. You may well be the only Christian there. God has placed you there for a reason. Tell him you're willing to be his 'little Christ' there and ask the Holy Spirit to enable, empower and equip you.

5. Discerning what the Lord is already doing and joining in: ask the Holy Spirit to show you where he is taking the initiative. Ask for eyes like Barnabas, who 'saw what the grace of God had done' in Antioch (11:23). Then ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to join what he is already doing.

6. Intentional development of leaders. Note how Barnabas travels all the way to Tarsus, because he's seen Saul's potential. He brings him to Antioch and mentors / partners him for a year (11:25, 26). Who are you investing in? Who is investing in you? With whom can you partner, someone who has more experience in, e.g. evangelism, healing, culture transformation?