

Series: Becoming a Contagious Congregation

## God's Favorite Church

Acts 11:19-30

Focal verse: v. 23 *"When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts."*

### 1. GOD FAVORS A CHURCH THAT IS COMMITTED TO EVANGELISM.

v. 19 *"...telling the message only to Jews."*

v. 20 *"...and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus."*

v. 21 *"...and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord."*

v. 24 *"...and a great number of people were brought to the Lord."*

- Salvation cannot come apart from the grace of God.

Acts 15:11 (NIV)

*"No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."*

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast.*

- God sends a harvest when the target is understood.
- God sends a harvest when the job is shared.
- God sends a harvest when He trusts us with the results.

### 2. GOD FAVORS A CHURCH THAT PERSEVERES THROUGH PERSECUTION.

v. 19 *"Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch..."*

- God's grace takes care of us when we are doing what God asks.

Revelation 1:9 (NIV)

*I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

- God's grace sustains us when we face opposition.

Matthew 10:17-18 (NIV)

*"Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. <sup>18</sup>On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.*

- God's grace is sufficient in the midst of persecution.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

### 3. GOD FAVORS A CHURCH THAT REMAINS TRUE TO HIM.

v. 23b *"...he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts."*

- Remaining true to the Lord involves a commitment to His Word.
- Remaining true to the Lord involves a commitment to His Kingdom.
- Remaining true to the Lord involves a commitment to His Purposes.