

Series: *Becoming a Contagious Congregation*

Why Did They Call Them Christians?

Acts 11:19-30

Focal verse: v. 26c “...The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME.

- The believers arrived at Antioch as a place of refuge.
- The metropolitan flavor of the city gave them freedom.
- The new church there created a new identity for the movement.

2. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NAME.

- To know Christ.

Philippians 3:10 (NIV)

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

- To imitate Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (TEV)

Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.

- To share Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 (TEV)

For we brought the Good News to you, not with words only, but also with power and the Holy Spirit, and with complete conviction of its truth. You know how we lived when we were with you; it was for your own good.

3. THE HERITAGE OF THE NAME.

- It was born out of persecution.

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

- It sets us apart from the world.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- It gives us the privilege to share in God's mission.

Matthew 28:19-20 (MsgB)

Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.²⁰ Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."