6 PM FBC BIBLE STUDY
WEEK 5 | BEYOND THE DIVIDE
A CHURCH THAT LOOKS LIKE THE KINGDOM

Primary Scripture: Acts 11:19-26; Acts 13:1-3
Key Verse: Acts 11:26 (KJV) - "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

OPENING TABLE ASSIGNMENT - WHO'S AT THE TABLE?

Imagine the church's surrounding neighborhood has changed significantly. Discuss together:

1. Who lives in the community now? (Ethnicity, Employment, Family composition, income, etc.)

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2. Does the church understand their needs? How can we?

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3. What methods might need to change without changing the gospel?

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

Churches serve neighborhoods where cultures, generations, and communication change. The gospel never changes, but how we listen, welcome, teach, and serve may need to change. Antioch shows us a congregation that made disciples, equipped leaders, and followed the Holy Spirit into mission. This lesson challenges churches to uphold Scripture while adapting ministry methods to reach the people who live around them today.

LESSON CONTEXT

Persecution scattered believers from Jerusalem, and the gospel reached Antioch, a city shaped by people from many places. Barnabas recognized God's grace, encouraged the church, and brought Saul to teach the growing congregation. The disciples became known as Christians, publicly identified with Jesus. Later, leaders at Antioch worshiped and fasted together as the Holy Spirit called them to send Barnabas and Saul on mission. Their story reveals a church united in Christ and committed to serving beyond familiar boundaries.

KEY WORDS

Christian - Greek: Χριστιανός (Christianos); **Acts 11:26**. A person identified as a follower of Jesus Christ. This name describes allegiance to Christ, not simply church attendance, or a cultural label; Acts says the disciples first received it in Antioch.

Prophet - Greek: προφήτης (prophētēs); **Acts 13:1**. One who speaks forth a message from God by the Spirit. Prophets served the early church by proclaiming God's truth; their ministry was more than giving personal opinions or predictions.

Teacher - Greek: διδάσκαλος (didaskalos); **Acts 13:1.** An instructor who explains God's Word and forms disciples in sound teaching. Antioch's teachers strengthened believers, so their unity rested on shared faith rather than mere agreement about customs.

Separate - Greek: ἀφορίζω (aphorizō); **Acts 13:2.** To set apart or designate for a particular work. The Holy Spirit directed the church to set apart Barnabas and Saul for mission; worship, fasting, prayer, and sending followed.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. THE GOSPEL CROSSES CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

Acts 11:19-21 (KJV)

Persecution scattered the believers, but it also carried the good news into new places. Gospel ministry calls us to reach beyond familiar circles without confusing our cultural habits with biblical truth. We can celebrate our heritage while welcoming neighbors whose backgrounds and experiences differ from ours.

2. OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST MUST BE GREATER THAN OUR DIFFERENCES

Acts 11:22-26 (KJV)

Barnabas rejoiced in the grace of God and enlisted Saul to help teach the growing church. The believers came to be called Christians, a name that identified them with Jesus above every other allegiance. Our racial, cultural, generational, and social identities matter, but none should become a reason to deny our unity in Christ.

3. DIVERSE LEADERSHIP CAN STRENGTHEN MISSION

Acts 13:1-3 (KJV)

Acts names prophets and teachers connected to varied places and life experiences, serving together in one church. While they worshiped and fasted, the Holy Spirit directed them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for missionary work. Representation becomes meaningful when people are prepared and trusted to teach, discern, lead, and serve together.

HOW TO APPLY THIS TO LIFE

Learn who lives around your congregation and listen across generations. Give younger adults meaningful responsibility while honoring the wisdom of older believers. Keep biblical truth and the gospel central, but reconsider customs or methods that unnecessarily hinder participation. This week, name one neighbor to know better, one emerging leader to encourage, and one practical way to serve today's community.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for making us one body. Keep us faithful to Your Word, willing to listen across generations, and obedient to the Holy Spirit. Help us honor each person's gifts and serve our community together for Your glory. Amen.