

Contending for the Faith
Text: Acts 11:1-18
February 3, 2024

Big Idea: To be a faithful witness, you must contend for the faith.

Context is key!

Question #1 (Context)

Ask Yourself: What is going on in the text?

- a) What is the setting and what is happening?
- b) Who are the main characters?
- c) Are there any words/phrases that are repeated?

Question #2 (Context)

Ask Yourself: What does the text say about God and about me?

- a) Is God saying or showing something about Himself? If so, what?
- b) Do the words in the text predict, prophesy or picture something about Jesus? If so, what?
- c) Is God saying or showing something about us? If so, what?
- d) How does the text point to my need for Jesus? How?

Question #3 (Context)

Ask Yourself: What are the principles, commands or promises given?

- a) What is the overall theme of the text?
- b) Does the passage include any promise from God? If so, what?

Question #4

- a) What does it mean to contend for the faith?
- b) Why is this an essential part of being a faithful witness for Christ?

A faithful witness contends for the faith...

Point 1: KNOWING: Criticism will Come (vv. 1-4)

Question: When you follow Jesus, critics will arise. Will you stand firm in faith?

Question #5

- a) **Rd vv. 1-4:** Why does the Jerusalem church criticize Peter about his ministry to the Gentiles?
- b) Why was Peter not backing down in fear crucial to the future spread of the gospel?
- c) Have you ever received criticism/opposition for declaring the gospel? When and with who?
- d) When you are tempted to back down from sharing the gospel, what are you thinking in those times?
- e) What is it that you actually want in those times that you think you'll get back backing down?
- f) Share some gospel promises from God's Word that you can stand on in moments when you are tempted to back down from gospel opportunities.

Point 2: DECLARING: God's Truth(vv. 4-17)

Question: The faithful witness sticks to God's truth. Will you?

Question #6

- a) **Rd vv. 4-17:** How does Peter respond to the opposition from the church in Jerusalem?
- b) Why was it essential that he stuck to God's truth instead of resorting to using his own ideas and arguments? Would getting defensive have helped convince his opponents?
- c) How did the Holy Spirit help Peter in this moment?
- d) **Rd John 14:26:** What does this verse assume the believer is consistently doing as a discipline?
- e) Why is having daily, consistent time in God's Word an act of contending for the faith?
- f) How is your time of abiding in God's Word? What way(s) do you want to grow in it this year?

Point 3: BELIEVING: God will be Glorified (v. 18)

Question: As the gospel goes forth, God will bear fruit. Will you trust Him?

Question #7

- a) **Rd v. 18:** How did the Jewish church respond after hearing Peter's testimony?
- b) Why was this such a massive moment in church history?
- c) Who has God put around you to witness to? Ask for faith to believe He will use your witness for His glory.

Question #8

- a) **Rd. Heb. 12:1-2:** Who contended for the faith perfectly in His witness?
- b) Discuss how point 1-3 of this outline are fulfilled perfectly in Jesus.
- c) How should knowing what Jesus has done, give us confidence as we face opposition in our witness?

Prayer Application

Spend time as a group/in accountability in prayer...

- a) REVERENCE before God: Jesus, You are the faithful witness who_____.
- b) HUMILITY before God: Jesus, I confess i) Backing down in fear in my witness when____. ii) Not sticking to your truth when____ iii) My unbelief in your power when_____.
- c) THANKSGIVING: Jesus, thank You for empowering me to witness by_____.
- d) SUPPLICATION to God: Jesus, I ask for i) Faith to contend for the faith in my witness to_____.

Memory Verse:

"Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."-1 Timothy 6:12

