



The Giving Starts with God!

May 2nd, 2010

Acts 11

Acts 11 describes how the church in Jerusalem related to “those below,” the Gentiles in Caesarea and Antioch who had trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Having fellowship with the Gentiles was a new experience for these Jewish Christians, who all their lives had looked on the Gentiles as pagans and outsiders. Tradition said, and still does, that a Gentile had to become a Jew in order to be accepted; but now in the church (past/present) both Jews and Gentiles were united through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26-28).

Acts 11 describes three responses of the Jewish believers to the Gentile Christians: acceptance, encouragement and assistance. Of course, don't lose sight of God and his activity among his people. Because it is with God that this acceptance, encouragement and assistance comes from first. As Peter so boldly states, “¹⁷So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?”

Begin with God as the “first of givers” and answer the following questions:

- What does that say to you about the character of God?
- Describe where and how God has given you acceptance in your life.
- Describe where and how God has given you encouragement in your life.
- Describe where and how God has given you assistance in your life.

Now, answer the following:

- To whom can you bring acceptance or encouragement or assistance to in their life this week?