



Purpose of Heart

“Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord” (Acts 11:23).

Bulletin VCAT36

14 February 2024

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. 23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord..” (Acts 11:19-24).

Life attains a different level of dimension when lived with purpose of heart. Actions reach a different level of meaning when carried out with purpose of heart.

A decision emanating from purpose of heart transformed Daniel (a captive in a foreign land) into a giant in accomplishments and excellence. Philip Paul Bliss (1838-1876) captured this poignantly in a song:

1 Standing by a purpose true,
Heeding God's command,
Honour them, the faithful few;
All hail to Daniel's band!

Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known.

2 Many mighty men are lost,
Daring not to stand,
Who for God had been a host
By joining Daniel's band.

3 Many giants, great and tall,
Stalking through the land,
Headlong to the earth would fall
If met by Daniel's band.

4 Hold the gospel banner high;
On to victory grand;
Satan and his host defy
And shout for Daniel's band.

“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord” (Acts 11:21).

A life of purpose is a meaningful life. The scattering of the church in Jerusalem did not destroy the purpose in life of believers who fled to Phenice, Cyprus, Antioch and continued preaching the word - the very thing that caused the persecution. Note the following:

- 1) Their preaching were to the Jews only (vs 19), revealing their lack of understanding of Christ's great commission, due to the impact of long held traditions, that had just been broken through the ministry of Peter to Cornelius in Acts 10, which they probably had not heard of, due to the scattering from Jerusalem.
- 2) The persecution, instead of stopping, actually inspired the spread of the Gospel beyond their local areas. Men of Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch and preached the Lord Jesus to the Grecians (20).
- 3) What really made the difference was the hand of God being with them (vs 21). Wherever the presence of God is, success is bound to be experience, despite adverse circumstances.
- 4) News got to the apostles at Jerusalem of these developments and they sent Barnabas to go “as far as Antioch” to see things for himself (vs 22).
- 5) On arrival and seeing the grace of God upon the believers, he “exhorted them all, that **with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord**” (vs 24).

What a wise admonition! He did not want the revival to be driven by excitement of the moment, exuberance of the believers nor zeal without knowledge, as such could fizzle out quite readily, with adversity. Purpose of heart is what would bring stability and sustainability. Purpose truly makes a difference. Determine to be a man or woman of purpose.