

11:26  
Acts 11:26 - the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. Now this was - we know that nations, political parties, and religious denominations often call themselves by one name and they call their opponents by another name. And sometimes this may describe them - so the name Christian comes into play.

You know, this name is mentioned three times in the Bible. First, a hearty king that Paul with a little persuasion would make him a Christian. Acts 26:28.

Peter admonishes that if anyone suffers as a Christian and if it becomes an offense - let him not be ashamed but glorify God in his name. That was the second time it was used.

Third, the heathen people in Antioch had put the Christians, the followers of Christ in this new society. Now the Jews did not designate them this - nor did the Gentiles call him this. The heathen invented this name Christian. Pleasure loving people of Antioch were compelled to notice this religion. That church attracts the attention of the world by it's deeds - not by it's sensational advertisement. Jesus could not be hide. Paul became known everywhere.

Now this new name did not stand for a new school of philosophers. But it stood for the followers of Christ. The people of Antioch had no idea that Christ is not a proper name but the designation of an office. God over-ruled their mistake for Christ's Glory. Now had the Disciples been called Jesuits - that would have signified followers of a mere man. If they had been called Galileans - that would have been to localize the group. But these people who were ignorant of the bond that united them called them after the anointed son

of God.

It is a strange fact that they were commonly designated by the world and by themselves. They called themselves disciples, believers, saints.

But it shows that the church at Antioch was recognized not as a sect or a part of the Hebrews - but it was a new society. They were known by the name - a new name. They were the people of Christ. However it might have been - it was the Christ they spoke of saying - the Christ like life that they lived. And so to call them Christian meant a man of the Messiah. A man of the Messonic.

Why did their enemies call them Christians? It was because these believers reminded them of Christ.

Did anybody ever think of Jesus by looking at your life? Does anybody ever say, if you are a Christian, I would like to be one. I would like to be like you. Are you reminding others of Jesus in your home life. In your church life? Do you really deserve the title of Christian - of bearing the name.

There was a great harvest and this was one of the things. They got a new name, here in Antioch.

When Henry Morehouse was a young preacher holding a meeting in England, a rough man by the name of Ike Miller, a terrible drunkard said that he was going to break up the meeting. That evening when the preacher came to the pulpit - there was one seat empty in the front row. He waited for the time to preach and Ike Miller came in and took the vacant seat. Mr. Morehouse

changed his text. He preached on the love of God. When he gave the invitation - after one stanza, Ike Miller walked out of the building. Later a Deacon said, you made a mistake on preaching on the love of God. You should have scolded Ike Miller for his sins. The preacher said, I did the best I could, I believe God led me. What happened that night was - Ike Miller went home. His two little girls heard him coming and crawled under the bed. They remembered that he had come home drunk and had beaten them. That night he came home and put his arms around his wife, and said I am sorry for the way I have treated you. From now on, I'll be a different husband. He asked for the little girls and the Mother called them out from under the bed. He put his arms around them - don't be afraid anymore. And I will always love you and be good to you. He poured out his heart and he thanked God for saving him - and asked him to save his family. Now the next night all of them were at the church - and they made their profession and joined the church. Ike Miller became an evangelist.

The love of God that reached down and saved that man is still available. And this is the same thing that was preached by the church at Antioch. As it was planted in persecution, fertilized in evangelism, cultivated by missions, and by the spirit produced a great harvest.