

5-16-21 Called to Work

Acts 13:1-12.

In **Acts 13** God's Word shifts from the church in Jerusalem and Peter. God's Word moves forward onto Antioch in Syria and new followers of Jesus, Barnabas, and Paul. God is always on the move, Jerusalem to Antioch, later onto Ephesus. The church in Antioch Syria was Paul's "home" church. Unlike the church in Jerusalem, the church in Antioch Syria was a missionary sending church. We read about this in the first three verses of **Acts 13**.

Fun Facts regarding Paul:

- He was to be an instrument to carry the name of Jesus.
- He would carry the gospel message before Gentiles, Jews, and Kings.
- He would be shown how much he must suffer for Christ.

Acts 9:15-16, But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children[c] of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

1. Lots of work to get done. (verses 1-3)

- **Read verses 1-3.**
- **"Prophets" (v. 1)** means NT prophets (**Eph. 4:11**). These men spoke for God and were led directly by the Spirit. Now that we have the written Word of God, we do not have prophets in the church.

Ephesians 4:11, And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the [e]difying of the body of Christ,

- Barnabas, (Joseph) names means encouragement, son of encouragement, a Levite (**4:36**). According to the scriptures, he was a good man, full of faith and lead by the Holy Spirit (**11:24**). He is also John Mark's uncle.
- Simeon Niger, some commentators believe he is the Simeon who carried Jesus' cross.
- Lucius of Cyrene in North Africa.
- Manaen, brought up, childhood friends with Herod (Antipas) the tetrarch, the Herod who treated Jesus poorly and killed John the Baptist.
- Saul, who we know as Paul (**v.9**)
- **Verse 2** tells us that these were faithful men that were working hard. In **verse 25** of the previous chapter, they had just travelled 600-800 miles to drop off an offering to the church in Jerusalem.
- God calls, chooses, the church fasts, prays, lays hands on them and sends them out.
- From **Acts 13-28** there will be lots of miles, city upon city where the gospel is proclaimed. There was a lot of work to get done, and Barnabas and Paul were the tip of the spear. There was a great harvest about to happen!

- In America there is a real crisis, workers needed, lots of work to get done. This has led to many businesses shutting down, mandatory 50-70 hours of work for those employed, poor customer service.
- Of course, in The Divided States of America there is plenty of jokes, sarcasm, anger, and hatred being thrown around. [Lots of memes, \(click through some\)](#) just more areas for Satan to separate us more. (Living wage verses multiple jobs discussion set aside)
- Brothers and sisters in Christ beware, if we are not careful, we can chase off the people the Holy Spirit has sent us to minister to.
- Only God can change the heart of the king, amen? The gospel is still the answer!
- What if I posted memes about all the work that God has for us? Or if I started posting memes airing out all our dirty laundry? How many wants to see that? Our personal knuckle headedness.

John Phillips commentary of the book of Acts, *"The church is weak because of its desire to compromise rather than confront."*

- We seem to more than ready to tell call out everyone on their "bad behavior" while many times we are full of "bad behavior" At any given moment in the church of God, in the lives of everyday believers, we are dealing with sins of anger, hatred, gossip, slander, abuse, physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional. We struggle with love of money, material things, content in our complacency, insubordinate, striving to fulfill our fleshly desires through gluttonous consumption of everything.
- We are quick to point out everything everyone is doing wrong and not reflecting in at ourselves in the light of our walk with Jesus.
- Can I say again, there is a lot of work to get done...in our own back yard. Are we ministering @ Bethel, to the people of Bethel? That is where the Holy Spirit found Barnabas and Paul. They were faithfully working, **"As they ministered to the Lord and fasted."**
- God hit me over the head with **Hebrews 5:12-14. (Slide for it)**
- There is a lot of work to get done, who will join me in putting the bottle of milk down. If you are in sin, will you repent of it, with me? Pray and ask God to convict and show you.
- We either evangelize or fossilize. God will move on.

2. There will be rubbernecks. (verses 4-5)

- **Read verses 4-5.**
- When I read these verses, it serves as a reminder that not everyone will immediately respond to the good news of the gospel. God's Word doesn't say there was or wasn't any salvations at the stops Barnabas and Paul made.
- All God' Word lets us know is, **"they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant."**

- This made me think about rubberneckerers, if we were honest most of us have been a rubbernecker a time or two.
- Something happens and people slow down, stand around, watch, but don't stop or get involved. They make the decision to move on, but they do take notice. As you live for God, you will have rubberneckerers, lookie lou's. You might even get the privilege of encountering hecklers.
- Do as Barnabas and Paul did, keep moving forward, more determined than ever to keep living (holy) for God, and take inventory of the John Mark's God has in your life.
- They didn't allow the lack of results to determine their passion for the mission.

3. Watch for fakes, knock offs. (verses 6-11)

- **Read verses 6-11.**
- God moves Barnabas, Paul, and John Mark to Paphos, 100 miles southwest of Salamis.
- At Paphos, Barnabas and Saul met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus (son of Jesus/Joshua). The word "**sorcerer**" (magos) could describe a counselor or honorable gentleman (the "Magi" in **Matt. 2:1, 7, 16**) or it could refer to a fraudulent wizard, as here.
- **(Verse 7)** It so happened that Bar-Jesus was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus (cool name!). This sorcerer was greatly threatened by the intelligent proconsul's interest in the gospel.
- Proconsuls were governors appointed by the Roman senate; procurators, on the other hand, were appointed by the emperor. Three Judea procurators are mentioned in the New Testament: Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26–36), Antonius Felix (A.D. 52–59?), and Porcius Festus (A.D. 59–62). (Bible Knowledge Commentary)
- What word do we see in **verse 8**? "**But**" meaning a contrast. Proconsul Sergius Paulus "**sought to hear the word of God. "But" Elymas withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.**"
- Jesus spoke about the wheat and the tares in **Matthew 13:24-30**. The wheat and the weeds will grow together until the harvest. **John 12:24** says that when the wheat dies it produces many seeds, fruit. An unbeliever can look a lot like a true believer until the harvest. When the wheat dies, this should be done daily, it produces fruit, of God. Are you producing fruit for God?
- **Acts 13:9-11** are legit, in today's vernacular, Paul is Savage! Read!
- Man, if we handled problems in the church like Paul did.... wow!
- Notice **verse 9** says, "**filled with the Holy Spirit,**" before we can clean up others, we better be sure our lives our surrendered to the Holy Spirit.
- Too many times I have been caught up ready to rebuke someone and get an itch in my eye. The Holy Spirit reminding me about the beam in my own. That doesn't mean we don't judge or attempt to correct a family member; we must be humble and surrender to God as he cleans us up first.

- Paul wasn't afraid to stand up! Can you imagine Paul's intent look? Anyone in your life that has a look that says something without saying a word? (Remember Paul has a murderous past...haha)
- Paul says to Bar-Jesus, in Aramaic, "son of Jesus, Joshua, you are a liar, a fraud, son of the devil, an enemy of Jesus." Then Paul inflicts him with temporary blindness. God knows I would be so irresponsible with that power.
- There is and will be fakes/knock offs in the church and our lives. God has not enabled us to inflict them with blindness. But we can mark them, make note, pray for them, challenge them in a proper way, and if it becomes crystal clear they are a weed, we cast them out. But again, this isn't the first option or taken lightly.
- Our main concern should be that our (individual) actions don't cast a shadow of doubt on our authentic ness.
- But remember that Satan will send problems, fakes, knock offs to area's that are seeking to do the work of God. When we act like knuckle heads we make his job easy. He can focus elsewhere.

4. Be ready to be astonished. (verse 12)

- **Read verse 12.**
- What was it that ultimately led to the conversion of the Sergius Paulus? It wasn't just the supernatural display of power when Paul rebuked Bar-Jesus and he was blinded. What led to the conversion of Sergius Paulus was that he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. What was the teaching of the Lord? It was the GOSPEL of Jesus Christ.
- There will be difficulties and roadblocks and hardships that we encounter as we seek to fulfill the missions mandate that has been laid before us. (sharing, living the gospel)
- Opposition to the gospel must be expected. If we are faithful to be THE church, if we faithfully proclaim the gospel, opposition is a given. That's true on a church level – and that's true on an individual level.
- Do you want me to tell you how to not be considered a fool by someone else? Never share your faith.
- Do you want me to tell you how to not be rejected in the culture? Never stand for righteousness on a social issue.
- Do you want me to tell you how to not be taken advantage of? Never reach out to extend help to the needy.
- Do you want me to tell you how to never fail in Christian ministry? Never step out in faith to attempt something that only God can do.
- Do you want me to tell you how to not have your heart broken? Never give it away in real relationships of encouragement and love.

- Difficulties, hardships, failures, oppositions – they are a given in Christian ministry. If you seriously follow Christ and seriously desire to serve him, you will be open to an array of sorrows that is unknown to the average Christian in this life.
- But you will also open yourself up to a vast array of joys and triumphs and treasures that are also unknown to the average Christian in this life.

Conclusion:

There is a lot of work to get done. The gospel needs to be shared, through our words and more importantly through our conduct.

Yes, there will be rubberneckers, fakes, hardships, and difficulties.

But the CRITICAL nature of the mission DEMANDS that we give our best to see it accomplished.

The choice is ours, serve oneself and our desires, make a mockery of God's Word.

Or surrender to HIS desires and Will and watch as God's Word astonishes us.