

Being Sent by the Holy Spirit | Acts 13 | 3/6/2016

- Paul is called into the mission field. | Acts 13:1-4
 - **Read Acts 13:1-4**
 - Turing point for the focus of the Gospel
 - Up until this point in the book of Acts the focus has been on Peter and the Church in Jerusalem.
 - Now we have a major shift where the focus turns to Paul and his missionary work to take the Gospel out into the world and to the Gentiles.
 - The church at Antioch became the starting point for Paul's missions.
 - The prophets and teachers at Antioch
 - As we had previously seen the church at Antioch was an obedient church where one could witness the grace of God.
 - Acts 11:23
 - "When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged all of them to remain true to the Lord with a firm resolve of the heart,"
 - In this church were prophets and teachers.
 - Prophets
 - Prophets in the New Testament church was not exactly the same as in the Old Testament.
 - The prophets in the Old Testament were the ones chosen by God to receive His divine Word that was then given to everyone else.
 - Now that the Holy Spirit had come all would have the Spirit of God living within them and could converse with God.
 - These prophets were more like preachers.
 - Although there are a few cases where they early New Testament prophets did receive a message from God that was not given to others the instances of this ceased at the same time as the other external "signs".
 - The role of the prophet was that of a pastor, to bring the Gospel message.
 - When we talk about spiritual gifts of being a prophet from Scripture we look at this as the role of a pastor.
 - They served a critical role in building the foundation of the Christian Church.
 - Ephesians 2:20
 - "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone."
 - God called many people in various roles to grow the church and to spread the Gospel message.
 - Teachers
 - The role of the teacher within the church was used by God from the very beginning.
 - It was important for the early church as it is today that there are also teachers of the Gospel in addition to the prophets or pastors.
 - 2 Timothy 2:2

- “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
 - Teachers were and are used to help others understand the Scriptures and its teachings.
 - Ezra 8:8
 - “They read out of the book of the law of God, translating and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was read.
 - All Christians should be teachers.
 - While we might think of a teacher in the biblical since is a Sunday school teacher, bible scholar or someone who teaches the Scriptures in a public setting.
 - But in reality all Christians should grow in their faith and knowledge, so that they can do as Ezra and the other teachers had done. To give guidance to others as to the meaning and interpretation of the Scriptures.
 - Christians should be able to share what the Scripture means to them to someone else even on a very basic level.
 - **This is achieved with Spiritual growth.**
 - God does not call just one person to proclaim the Gospel, but He calls many in various roles.
 - We see that even some 2000 years later the modern day Christian church still follows these same basic principles to spread the Gospel.
- The Holy Spirit made it known that it was time for Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to be sent out.
 - It was now part of God’s plan and timing for Paul and Barnabas to set out upon a great missionary journey to spread the Gospel message.
 - Paul proved to listen and obey the Holy Spirit the rest of his entire life as is evident by the Scripture we read today.
 - Paul obeyed the calling of God and He used him to be a blessing to millions of others by telling them about Christ.
 - Paul’s previous life events are now coming together
 - While Paul’s previous life events might not have been understandable at the time, it was now becoming very clear.
 - Paul who was Saul the great persecutor of the church had an encounter with Jesus Christ and he humbly obeyed.
 - God then built him up for a period of time until He was ready to send Paul out.
 - Paul was being prepared for the ministry and now was time for it to all come together.
 - The church acknowledged God’s calling and prayed upon these missionaries for Christ.
 - Just as we continue to do today in our modern church, when one of its members acts to obey the calling of the Holy Spirit the church acknowledging it will fully support that Christian.
- God sets aside Christians today to do His good works. We are also sent out by the Holy Spirit.
 - Just as God had set aside Paul, God also sets aside Christians today for a Holy calling.
 - What He calls us to differs as we are not all preachers or teachers in the formal since, **but we all are called by God for some for of ministry.**
 - To fulfill the great commission is ministry.

- It may be ministry in our profession as God calls people to be doctors, teachers and lawyers.
 - These are all necessary (most) skills that God has given people to be a benefit to others.
 - **Jesus was a carpenter!**
 - Regardless of the profession or skills, if God given they can be used to glorify Him.
- **God has set us all apart and He has a purpose for us to serve the people in our own generation that is according to His plan.**
 - **Acts 13:36a**
 - **“For David, after serving his own generation in God’s plan...”**
- And whatever it is we must do it for the glory of God.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God’s glory.”
 - Colossians 3:23-24
 - “Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ.”
 - **God rewards those who obey Him.**
- **Have you been able to recognize God’s calling, or the Holy Spirit’s sending in your own life?**
- **Can God use the various puzzle pieces of our life (even our bad choices) to build a perfect picture that will glorify Him if we are obedient to His calling?**
- The difficulties we will face, even when being sent by the Holy Spirit.
 - Just because God has called us to something this does not mean that it will be easy.
 - Sometimes we think oh if I’m to do God’s will then it will be a piece of cake, there will not be any opposition and I will just glide on through.
 - This of course is a false perception.
 - In fact, Scripture tells us that everyone who seeks to obey God will have trouble.
 - 2 Timothy 3:12
 - “In fact, all those who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
 - Paul had great difficulties even though He was doing exactly as God had called him to do.
 - Paul would be one of the best examples for us in this matter.
 - One would think that surely after Paul was obedient and was obviously departing on a holy calling of God that his way would be easy and he would have no difficulties.
 - He was sent out by the Holy Spirit after all!
 - “Acts 13:4a
 - “Being sent out by the Holy Spirit..”
 - Surely he wondered around in a priestly robe and had no struggles.
 - However, Paul ran into several difficulties along his missionary journeys.
 - Paul ran into difficulty from the very beginning.
 - Acts 13:7-8
 - He was stoned in Lystra
 - Acts 14:19
 - **At this early on he might be thinking...was this really God’s plan for me?**
 - Paul ran into opposition at every turn it seemed.
 - 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

- **On the surface this does not sound like a “Holy calling”, but these things were necessary for Paul to endure.**
- Paul understood that that the road would be difficult.
 - Acts 14:21-22
 - “After they had evangelized that town and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, **“it is necessary to pass through many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God.”**
 - Paul didn’t say you “might” need to, he said it was NECESSARY!
 - Paul saw the grace of God even in his times of great trial and learned that power is perfected in weakness.
 - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10
 - “But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, catastrophes, persecutions, and in pressures, because of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
 - **Most importantly Paul recognized that regardless of the difficult path that an obedient Christian may find themselves on, that good will come to those called according to His purpose.**
 - Romans 8:28
 - “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.
 - Christians must expect that even when we answer God’s calling and are sent by the Holy Spirit, that we too will face difficulties along the way.
 - **Can you personally relate to Paul’s difficulties while fulfilling a holy calling of God?**
 - **How does Paul’s example encourage you to continue on in whatever it is God has called you to?**
- What are the results of enduring the hardships we encounter while obeying God?
 - When we endure our hardships and obey God, great things happen for the Kingdom of God.
 - Acts 13:9-12
 - Acts 13:46-49
 - Acts 14:1
- There are times where we will have to shake the dust off of our sandals.
 - There are times when even when we are obedient and we are doing everything as God has desired for us, that the result is not what we would expect.
 - There are times where we have fought the good fight and we feel beaten and bruised even after we did exactly as God desired.
 - Paul on many occasions was not able to persuade people to open their hearts to the truth because the people would not listen to the truth.
 - Acts 14:1-4
 - Acts 28:23-27
 - In these times it may be a time where we shake the dust off of our feet.
 - Acts 13:51
 - “But they shook the dust off their feet against them and went to Iconium.”
 - Matthew 10:14

- “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that house or town.
- Paul did all that was possible and in the end he and the other disciples shook the dust off their feet against them.
 - It was now in God’s hands and they needed to move on.
- This does not mean that at the first sign of opposition that we give up, but there are times when we can do no more and it is God’s desire for us to move on.
- There may be times that we get discouraged in our ministry and we must not give up even though it may be difficult.