

(Acts) Sent Out by the Spirit

by Brian Brodersen

Acts 13 highlights the beginning of intentional missionary efforts by the church, emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and sending leaders like Barnabas and Saul.

Duration: 1:03:03

Scripture: Psalm 103:2, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:8, Acts 13:1-5, Acts 13:14-15, Acts 13:38-39

Topics: "Missions Work", "Church Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a vision to spread the gospel. He highlights how churches often become self-focused and fail to recognize the missionary opportunities around them. However, he acknowledges that God raises up individuals with a passion for missions even when the church is uninterested. The speaker then shares his personal experience of how his movement, Calvary Chapel, has been stirred with a missionary vision and has started sending people to new places to plant churches.

Transcript

Acts 13. That's where we are this evening. The Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 13, as we continue to make our way through this account of the first few years of the Church.

Father, we pray that, Lord, you would teach us tonight as we follow this history. Lord, we want you to instruct us from it for our lives today. And we thank you, Lord, that what was true then is true now.

And what you did then, you are doing now. And so, Lord, help us just to lay hold tonight of the things you have for us here in your word. We pray this in the name of Jesus.

Amen. This 13th chapter really does begin, in a sense, a new phase of this historical account. You remember, Jesus had declared to them that when the spirit came upon them, they would be witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and then finally, ultimately out into the uttermost parts of the earth.

And the first 12 chapters pretty much cover, in that order, Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. And then, of course, there's little, you know, indicators that the gospel was now beginning to go beyond those boundaries, going into Gentile territory. But now, as we come to chapter 13, this is where the great missionary endeavor of the church begins.

This is where there is an intentional mission effort that is put forth. Up until this point, the mission effort has been sort of incidental. The persecution that came caused the people to be scattered, and wherever they went, they preached the gospel.

And there were a few people here and there that had a vision, and they were going out and they were spreading the gospel as they went. They were speaking predominantly to Jews or exclusively to Jews, really, for quite some time. And then they started venturing out and speaking to the Gentiles that had had some contact with Judaism.

And then some even went a bit further and began to speak to Gentiles that had not become proselytes to Judaism. But there wasn't a concerted effort on the part of any church at this point to really go out and take the gospel message into new territory. And so when we come to chapter 13, that is what happens.

And that's why this is one of the most exciting chapters in the book of Acts to me, because this is the beginning of the missionary movement, really. And it's still going on today. It's still happening today.

And I think that, you see here in the book of Acts, sometimes you do see that even today with churches, you find that people are being touched by God and people, you know, are going out into different places. And as they go, they're taking the word of God with them and God is using them. And the truth is being spread that way.

And yet there's not necessarily a real concerted effort to get the word out in that sense, to get churches planted. But then there comes a point where God begins to formulate things in such a way and then a vision is imparted to, you know, let's really put forth our efforts toward this particular goal. And interestingly, as I look at the movement of Calvary Chapel, it seems to me that in a lot of ways we have been sort of, you know, just going about our business and the Lord has been touching people's lives and they've been going here, there and everywhere.

And the word's been being spread like that. But over the past few years, you know, 10 years ago and, you know, five, five years back, maybe even a more concentrated effort. But as a movement, we really began to be stirred with a missionary vision and God began to give specific direction and instruction to send people into new places and to plant churches and things like that.

And so, you know, as I look again at this 13th chapter, it's dear to my heart because it seems like this is, in a sense, where we're at in the movement of Calvary Chapel. We're we're at that place where now we're seeing that God has done a great work in the United States. And of course, not to say that the whole country has been saturated by any stretch of the imagination.

But but, you know, God has done a significant work here. But we're at a place now where we're saying, but what about going beyond our own borders? What about going out to other nations? What about going into Europe? What about going to South America? What about going into Asia? And people are starting to think more in those kinds of terms. And that's exciting to me.

That's what was happening here in Acts 13. And so we pick up the story. Remember, Barnabas and Saul, they had been sent to Jerusalem from the church in Antioch where they were now more or less based, and they had been sent with a gift to minister to the saints in Jerusalem because there was a famine and they were suffering.

And so they were there during the events that we studied in our last time together. They were there during the time that Herod struck out against the church and he put James to death. As we saw, he imprisoned Peter and he sought to actually kill Peter.

But the Lord miraculously delivered him. And then you remember, as the story went on, Herod was dealt with by God as he stood before that crowd there in that theater in Caesarea and was speaking and they were, you know, saying the voice of a god and not of a man. And right in the course of that moment, the angel of the Lord struck him.

And within five days he was dead. And so all of that has been happening now. Barnabas and Saul have come back to Antioch and there they are back in the fellowship in Antioch.

And Antioch is now, in a sense, also going to become sort of the new center of focus in the book of Acts. Jerusalem has been the center of focus up until this point. But now Antioch is going to emerge as the new center of activity, and Jerusalem will increasingly just sort of fade into the background.

And so now in the church that was at Antioch, there were certain prophets and teachers. There were certain prophets and teachers. Now, a prophet was.

One who had more of a ministry to the overall body of Christ and more of an itinerant sort of a role, the teachers were those who were more settled into particular fellowships, and they're on more of a permanent basis instructing the local body of believers. But I think in the case of many, you you have a lot of times a crossover of gifts, and so as we read about these people here that are designated prophets and teachers, some say, well, a few of them are prophets and a few of them were teachers. Others believe that they were both they were prophets and teachers.

I tend to agree with that. I think they were both prophets and teachers. But the difference with the prophet was that, you know, their their ministry was not isolated to a local congregation, but more a ministry to the body in its entirety.

And a prophet would speak. In more of a spontaneous sense rather than a studied sense, not to say that the prophets weren't studied men, but as they would speak, there would be sort of an immediate anointing to sort of give a word for that particular moment where the teacher would be studying the text of scripture, studying and meditating upon the doctrines of the faith and communicating those things in more of a systematic manner. So the prophets would be more along the lines of exhorters, as Paul said in in First Corinthians 14, that the prophet speaks to the church edification, exhortation and comfort.

So the prophet was one who would stand and speak and there would be just sort of an. An immediate sense of of God's word coming to, you know, their their ministry was not isolated to a local congregation, but more a ministry to the body in its entirety. And a prophet would speak.

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An immediate sense of of God's word coming to people, just sort of a direct flow from the Lord, not to say that a teacher couldn't have that going as well, but the teacher would be more systematic, just, you know, going through the the doctrine, the apostolic doctrine. And so here are the men that were there in the church in Antioch, and they had quite a great lineup of of leaders there. Barnabas, of course, we're familiar with Barnabas because we've been reading about him.

And then there's a man named Simeon, who was called Niger. Now, he was called Niger because he was an African and he probably came from the region known today as Nigeria. And then there was Lucius of Cyrene, and he would have also been from the area of North Africa.

And then there was Menean and Menean had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch. Now, this is an interesting person here. He was brought up with Herod the Tetrarch.

Literally, it could be translated. He was the foster brother of Herod the Tetrarch. Now, Herod the Tetrarch is Herod Antipas.

We talked about him last week. Herod Antipas is the one who executed John the Baptist and also tried Jesus. And so this man, Menean, he was brought up with Herod.

Now, whether it was that he was his foster brother or that he was his close, intimate friend, nobody's quite sure, but he definitely was part of that Herodian aristocracy. And yet we find now that he is a believer and he's not only a believer, but he's a he's a leader in the church in Antioch. It's interesting, the people that God saves and and then puts into the ministry.

And it's interesting here as we look at this this different group of people and then finally. Last but not least, Saul is mentioned, and so there's Barnabas, he's a Levite from Cyprus, a Jew, and there's Simeon, who was probably Jewish as well, but yet from that area in Africa, because Simeon is certainly a Hebrew name, Lucius would have been more of just, you know, an African himself and Menean, who knows what his nationality might have been. But Saul would have, of course, been, as we know, a Jew.

And here they are. They're gathered together. This is the leadership of the church in Antioch.

And so as we go on, it says, as they ministered to the Lord. And fasted, the Holy Spirit said, now separate to me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them, that having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So during the course of some waiting upon God, some ministering to the Lord that they were all doing, probably gathered together just really for a worship service, a time of praising God, a time of just really thanking him and glorying him in him.

And all it was it was during that time that the Lord moved and began to speak about what he wanted to do. You know, sometimes I think we forget that. It's not.

Ministry for the Lord, that's the important thing, it is important, but it's equally important or maybe even more important to have ministry to the Lord. You can get all wrapped up in ministry for the Lord and not really, you know, be connected to the Lord in a lot of ways. And so ministering to the Lord, just blessing his name, praising his name, thanking him.

You know, sometimes as we as we get together and, you know, we want to pray together or whatever, so often our prayers immediately move toward the area of petition and we start to tell God about our problems and everything that we'd like him to do to help us out and so forth. And there's certainly a place

for that, no doubt. But yet I think we would be much wiser and much better off in many ways if before we even got to the petition part, we just spent time focusing on the Lord and who he is and just ministering to him for a while, just thanking him, praising him, blessing him.

You know, it's interesting when Jesus taught us how to pray that model prayer given to us in Matthew six, for example, it's recorded there. He he teaches us to pray. He says, when you pray, say our father in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

And what Jesus is really teaching us to do is to begin our prayer with praise, to begin our prayer with blessing God, acknowledging his holiness, his greatness, his transcendency, his glorious majesty above us. And and I think that's what they were doing here. They were just ministering to the Lord.

And, you know, we often wonder, well, how come we're not hearing the Lord speak? What would the Lord have to say about this? Why isn't God giving us insight on this? Maybe it's because we're not taking the time to minister to him and then opening up the opportunity for him to speak to us, because here I think there's a direct connection. They're ministering to the Lord. And as they're ministering to the Lord, then he in turn speaks to them.

You know, when I was pastoring in Vista, California, the Lord would have us on a monthly basis. We would do these sort of afterglow kind of services for the whole church. And what we would do is we would just open it up for a time of ministering to the Lord.

And that was our focus. We're just going to take this next however long and we're just going to minister to the Lord. We're going to thank the Lord.

We're going to praise the Lord. We're going to bless his name for what he's done. We're going to just thank him for all of his benefits.

We're going to sing songs to him that are focused on him and what he's done. And in the course of doing that, we're going to just be open to perhaps God wanting to speak to us. And we would find that the Lord would do that a lot of times when we have what we commonly call an afterglow.

What I see happening a lot is, you know, we start the afterglow and immediately we're trying to get God to say something. And what ends up happening is people are saying a lot of things and God probably isn't saying too much at all. But you have people, you know, they're getting all worked up and suddenly thus saith the Lord and they'll say something.

And you're thinking, wait a second. No, the Lord, the Lord's not saying that. I don't bear witness to it, you know, but we're we're so anxious for God to say something.

We try to help them out. And, you know, it's almost like we feel that kind of pressure whenever I get in those kind of situations today. The thing that I notice is everybody's so antsy.

You can't sit for very long just waiting on the Lord or praising the Lord. We got to get the ball rolling. We got to get something happening.

And then pretty soon you got people all around saying things and supposedly prophesying and all this stuff. And as you're listening, you're thinking, no, this isn't the Lord. He's not.

You just your spirit's not bearing witness. You see, when God begins to move and speak to us and prophetic words begin to come, it's not something that I have to sit there and work up. It's something that God just does, but I think the problem is, again, that so often we are so hurried and so busy and so anxious to, you know, see something happen.

We don't take the time to do what these guys were doing. And I think we'd be much better off in our lives personally and in our church life if we would do this more often, if we would just say, you know what? We're just going to minister to the Lord. We're going to have a time of just ministering to the Lord.

Let's just stop and let's just minister to the Lord. Let's just tell him how appreciative we are of his love for us, his goodness, you know, and that sort of a thing. And I wonder if we didn't do more of that, if, you know, perhaps we wouldn't have more understanding and insight into what God is doing and what God wants to do.

I think it's a good lesson for all of us personally and for us as a body collectively. So they were ministering to the Lord and they were fasting as well. And it was there in response to that the Holy Spirit spoke.

Now, here's the question. How did the Holy Spirit speak to them at this time where they gathered together, they're ministering to the Lord, and suddenly a voice just sort of interrupted the meeting. Saying, separate unto me, Barnabas and Saul.

Probably not, it was probably through the prophetic giftings that were there with those very men, they were probably there ministering to the Lord, waiting upon God. And because it was Barnabas and Saul that were to be separated, perhaps it was Simeon, perhaps it was Minion, perhaps it was, you know, Lucius. One of these spoke up, but it was by inspiration of the spirit.

God just showed them that he wanted to speak this into that particular meeting, and the message was now separate to me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them. That's the way you want it to happen. You want the Lord to be speaking.

You want the Lord to be giving direction for our lives, for our ministry and things like that. We we don't want to sit around and, you know, get out the chalkboard and map out the five year plan and say, you know, this is what we're going to do. That's not the way it works.

Now, that's the way it works in business. Sometimes that's the way it works in the world of marketing. And unfortunately, a lot of churches are gravitating toward that sort of thing.

Many churches you go into today, the first thing they'll tell you about is their five year plan. This is where we're going. This is what we're doing now.

I don't think it's a bad thing to plan ahead in a sense of, you know, this is what we like to see the Lord do. But. In the end, we need to just be sensitive to God, what are you wanting to do? Where are you wanting to take us? What is the thing that's on your heart that you have for us as a fellowship at this time? I believe the Lord has a plan, a purpose.

He has direction. He wants to guide us as a church, just like he wants to guide us as individual people. And so what God wanted to do with Antioch at this time was use Antioch as this springboard to start getting the gospel out into the uttermost parts of the earth.

And Barnabas and Saul were to be the ones through whom it was going to happen. And so having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them on their way. So they had been fasting, they're praying now, and it says they're laying hands on them.

And, you know, there are portions of scripture where it talks about the laying on of hands and through the laying on of hands, the impartation of gifts. Paul said to Timothy that the gifts that were in him were the result of the laying on of the hands of the elders. Paul even said the gift, this particular gift was there because I laid my hands on you.

And there is that place where sometimes through the laying on of hands, gifts will be imparted. But I don't think that's what was happening here, because these guys were already prophets and teachers and apostles and everything else. I think it was more or less just the churches here sort of identifying with these guys and saying, we're connected, we are with these men, we're bearing witness that God is sending them out and we're in support of what they're doing.

We're going to be praying for them. We're going to be undergirding them. We're going to be blessing them and helping them.

They're our emissaries going out from here to take the gospel out. I think that's what happened when they laid their hands on them. And so verse four, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

So that's a key right there. For they were sent out by the Holy Spirit, they were sent out through the church, but it was the Holy Spirit who was the one who actually gave the vision, the empowering, and the church was simply just recognizing what God was doing and sort of just affirming what God was doing by getting behind it. You know, sadly, many churches today and throughout the long history of the church have really failed in the area of having a vision to get the gospel out.

Many churches have just sort of become very much self-focused and. Concentrated their efforts on just, you know, developing the little thing that they have going wherever they're at and not really, you know, having that vision to go out. And unfortunately, because of that.

There have been times when great missionary opportunities have been missed. Thank God that even at times when the churches were. For the most part, uninterested in mission efforts, God would raise up individual men and women here and there with a passion and they would go having been sent by the Holy Spirit back in the 1700s, a man named William Carey.

Who was a shoemaker in England. He began to get a burden and a vision to take the gospel to what they referred to then as the heathen. They wanted to take the gospel to those in the far reaches of the earth.

And for him, it was India and China. He wanted to go to those places. And as he would seek to arouse interest in the Christian bodies around him, he would every time meet with the same sort of response.

That's not our problem. That's not our business. We don't need to, you know, the heathen there.

God's going to take care of that. And there just was no vision. There was no passion coming from the churches or the leaders to get the gospel to these people.

But thank God for a man like William Carey, who was convinced that it needed to be done and that God was calling him. And so on his own, he ventured out. And some of the greatest missionary endeavors in all of history have been wrought without the support of the existing churches at the time.

How sad that wasn't the case back here in Antioch, the church was 100 percent behind them. But unfortunately, throughout history, the church didn't learn the lesson of what happened here in Antioch, because over and over again, this has happened now. Here's the twist on it.

Whenever the mission work begins to be established and grow and fruit begins to come from it, then all the churches want to jump on board. Oh, this is great missions. Yes, let's get involved.

And quite often, too, they want to take over everything. But, you know, when the people were there pioneering and going out and there was nothing there, oh, we're not interested. No, that's a waste of time.

Don't bother with that. But thank God for these adventurous people that just said, no, I believe the Lord wants to do something and they would go into these uncharted places. Cheryl just read a book and inspired me to read it.

I'm in the process of reading it called Mission to the Headhunters. And it's about this young couple who graduated from Bible College and went to missions training and then ended up in the forest in Ecuador ministering to the headhunters down there. And the things that they went through and, you know, the whole thing is you read it, you just think, boy, these people were called by God.

You could have never gone and did what they did without that sense of God's calling, and God gave them a love and a passion for these people that were very unlovable in so many ways and, of course, very dangerous. They this particular couple, they were friends with the men that were killed by the Indians, Jim Elliott, Nate Satan. Then they were they were friends with them years before that ever happened.

And they were all ministering in that in that same region. But, you know, as I read these missionary stories, I just I thank God for the faith of these people and for the impact they've had on the people they've ministered to, for the impact they have on the church, for the impact they have on our lives and the inspiration. So they were sent out by the Holy Spirit.

The apostles were and so were these and so are many today being sent out by the Holy Spirit. That's the important thing that the Holy Spirit send someone, you know, with missions. I would say this as well.

Missions can be romanticized and can be presented in such a way as, you know, come and live the life of adventure and all of that. And sometimes people can be stirred up and motivated with the wrong things and they can go out into the mission field. Under the wrong impression and actually have a disastrous experience, that's why you have to be sent out by the Holy Spirit.

I've known people that have gone out, somebody's prophesied over him and said, you're going to be used by God powerfully. Prime ministers and kings will bow at your feet, nations will be humbled in your presence, and God's going to bring great revival. You go and they go and get there and they find it's not what they heard, not what they thought.

And they're there for a while and then they come back disillusioned. But the problem was the Holy Spirit didn't send them in the first place. I believe when the Holy Spirit is going to send somebody out, he's going to speak it to their heart and then he's going to confirm it over and over and over again through so many

ways that it just becomes just almost impossible to miss what God is calling you to do.

So it is something that we need to be a bit careful with because you can hear about what people are doing on the mission field and get all inspired and think, oh, things are miserable here. You know, I lost my job and got all kinds of bills. I'll go out of the mission field and do great work for God to get out there.

And if I got the same problems, you're just in another country with no language skills and all kinds of difficulty. It's not a good thing. We got to be sent out by the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit is sending out, will send out, wants to send people out. And so they went now from Antioch, they traveled down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. Now, Cyprus was where Barnabas was from.

He was a Levite. But he was a resident of Cyprus, and so in their missionary journey, they begin their ministry on the island of Cyprus, which is about 90 miles off the coast there out in the Mediterranean. And they come first to the southern end of the island to Salamis.

And so it says when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant. Now, the John here is John Mark.

And he is the mark of the second gospel. He was the nephew of Barnabas. He was the helper of Peter later on.

He was probably a fairly young man at the time, and he was coming along now, as it says here, as their assistant. He wasn't designated by the Holy Spirit to go on this journey. Barnabas and Saul were, but they included John Mark to come along to help them with the practical aspects of the journey that they were going to go on.

So now when they had gone through the island to pathos. So here, Luke, just as he does so often is very brief and they've gone through the whole island all the way to the other side of the island now. And they've gone through preaching.

But evidently there was nothing that Luke felt that he needed to give any detail about. He wants to get to the things that happened when they came to pathos. Now, pathos was the center of the governmental center of the island.

And Cyprus, by the way, was a wonderful place, as it is even to this day. A lot of Europeans vacation in Cyprus. It's sort of the Hawaii for them over there.

And at the time it was called the Happy Isle. That was another name for it. And it was called the Happy Isle because it was they felt it was the ideal place for a man to find happiness.

Many opportunities existed there. There were all kinds of natural resources. And probably the most wonderful thing about it was the climate.

Just like Hawaii, you know, everybody wanted to move there because the weather was great and like California. So. There was a large Jewish population on the island, but it was a center of culture, it was a center of sin, as were all of these ancient places there in pathos was the temple to Venus, the goddess of sex.

And some commentators say that that there was actually a requirement. For the women of Cyprus to serve in the temple for a period in their lifetime at some point in service to the goddess Venus, which would have basically come down to being prostitutes for a period of time in their service to the temple. And so that's the kind of environment that you would find there.

And when they came to pathos, they found a certain sorcerer, a certain magician, or it could be translated wise man, as it is in Matthew's gospel in reference to those men who came to pay their respect to Jesus as a baby. A certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar Jesus. Of all names, can you believe it? Bar Jesus, the son of Jesus, or literally would be the son of salvation.

But here's this Jew. Now, here's Barnabas and Saul. Barnabas is a Levite.

Saul is a rabbi. And they're traveling through pathos and they come across this sorcerer, this magician. Now, these people like Simon that we read about back in the eighth chapter, who was in Samaria, they would be, you know, sort of the equivalent today.

They were sort of a mixture of of, you know, there was a religious element. There was a mystical element. There was a sort of a pseudoscientific element to everything that they were wrapped up in, almost like a Sigmund Freud or somebody like that, you know, who developed a science that's not a science, sort of mystical pseudoscience, you know, caught up in all kinds of weird, different types of theories and ideas and mystical things.

And that's the kind of person this person would have been. So, you know, much like what we have today, these new age practitioners, you know, you can find these people who maybe they have their Ph.D. and, you know, some strange thing that they've concentrated on metaphysics or something. And then, you know, their doctor, so and so, and you go to see him and they've got this hodgepodge of things, you know, it's all this new age, mystical, weird stuff, you know, a little bit of science involved in it.

You know, there's a lot of that kind of stuff today. Well, that's more or less what this guy would have been like. But there was also obviously a strong false religious element to it and very much something that was in opposition to the gospel.

And so bar Jesus. And remember, he's a Jew. So he was with the pro council, Sergius Paulus.

Sergius Paulus, Luke tells us, was an intelligent man. Now, Sergius Paulus, we have information about him outside of the scriptures. He was indeed an intelligent man.

He was the author of several books in the ancient times. And he's quoted by Pliny, who's a Roman historian. Some of what he wrote, he was a man who was interested in science and philosophy and things like that.

So you could see that this bar Jesus guy and Sergius Paulus would have that connection on that sort of intellectual, philosophical level. So somehow they had become acquaintances, friends. But Luke goes out of his way here to mention that Sergius Paulus was an intelligent man.

He was not only an intelligent man, but his family was a famous family within Roman governmental circles. And as you read up on some of the history, you will find this name occurring over and over again. It was probably many of his in some cases, probably his father and other cases, his son and maybe even his grandson that remained in the service of Rome.

So he was a very influential man, a significant person. He was the pro council. He was the governor, basically, of this place.

And this man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. So we don't know the details of how he found out about the ministry of Barnabas and Saul. But somehow word got back to him about these itinerant preachers.

And as we go through the remainder of acts, we're going to find that this is what they do from place to place. This wasn't an uncommon thing at the time. At the time, teachers, philosophers would travel around from city to city and they would lecture, they would go into a hall and, you know, lay out their philosophy and sometimes they would, you know, like do a seminar and charge some money or whatever.

So to have people come through preaching wasn't something that was totally unheard of in that day. The message, of course, these guys was preaching. Was entirely new, but just that that method wasn't uncommon.

And so Sergius Paulus would have been you know, this would have been something that, OK, there's some there's some teachers in town lecturing. And because he's an intelligent man, he wonders, well, you know, I'd like to hear what they have to say. And so he calls for them that he might hear the word of God.

But Elamas, the sorcerer, for so is his name translated, withstood them seeking to turn the pro council away from the faith. So, again, this is one of those things I wish we had it on film or something that, you know, we could have been there to see exactly what was going on. Sergius Paulus probably invited Barnabas and Saul in and they were sitting there discussing things and they were beginning to lay the gospel out to him.

And perhaps this man was there the entire time or perhaps he came in. He had had an encounter with them before, but now he seeks to turn the pro council away from the faith. He starts to contradict and to oppose.

Then Saul, who also is called Paul. Filled with the Holy Spirit. Looked intently at him and said, oh, full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straightways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time and immediately a dark mist fell on him.

And he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. I wish I would have been there. That's powerful stuff.

I wish I could have done that many times in my ministry experience, hopefully I can do it in the future when needed. But here's here's the thing, this guy's opposing the word of God. And so Saul, who notice here, Saul, who is also called Paul, who will now be called Paul from this point on and never to be referred to as Saul again.

Interestingly, some people wonder, well, why the sudden name change? It probably wasn't a sudden name change because most people, especially Jews, had two names. They had their Jewish name, which would have been their name that they would use among their family members and among their Jewish brethren. But then they would also have Greek names that they would use as they would go out and encounter the world at large.

And oftentimes they would have a name that meant. The same thing as their Hebrew name would mean it would just be the Greek version of it, like, for example, Thomas in Thomas in the Aramaic means twin. In the gospel, we read that he is also called Didymus.

That's the Greek for twin or Cephas means stone, but he's called Peter. Peter is the English transliteration of Petra or Petros. So that's, you know, the Greek with or the Hebrew or Aramaic with the Greek equivalent.

But then sometimes their names would be changed, not based on having the same meaning, but based on having the same sound. So Saul's name would have been Shaul and in Greek it would have been Paulus. So he actually has the same man of the same name as the man that he's speaking to, Sergius Paulus.

He would have been known as Paulus as well. And some people have speculated that he decided to take the name of Paulus as a result of his encounter with this man and just the encouragement that came through seeing his conversion. I don't think that was what happened.

I think what happened is he had already had the name Paulus because he was, remember, a Roman citizen. He was born in Cilicia, and so he would have had a Roman name as well. But from this point on, because his ministry is going to become a predominantly Gentile ministry, he's going to take his Gentile name and be referred to by his Gentile name from this point forward.

The name Paulus, by the way, means little. And some people say he took the name because he wanted to present himself as little or as humble, as meek, as small, not someone who was arrogant or proud or lifted up or whatever the case. But from this point on.

We know him as the Apostle Paul, and this is where it took place in the history. But notice he's filled with the Holy Spirit. And here's the interesting thing to me, it wasn't that Saul was sitting there and him and Barnabas were ministering to Sergius Paulus and this guy starting to interfere.

And he's sitting there thinking, oh, I better say something. What should I do? This guy's going to create a problem and, you know, sort of working himself up and then finally saying, hey, listen, buddy. But what happened is the spirit of God came upon him and as the spirit of God came upon him, he was emboldened and he was moved by the spirit to pronounce this judgment on this person.

And that's what I do believe will happen in our lives, experiences at times and in our ministry experiences as well. There will be times when the occasion. Necessitates a fresh outpouring of the spirit of God, when the occasion necessitates the spirit of God moving upon a person and in a sense almost, you know, taking control of them and pushing them forward to do something that they wouldn't have normally done through their own energy.

And that's what's happening here. And I think it's a key thing to remember that he was filled with the Holy Spirit and this was God pronouncing judgment on this man through Paul. It wasn't Paul just pronouncing some sort of a judgment upon him.

The other thing to note is we have a fresh filling of the spirit occurring here. Which, as you study the book of Acts, what you begin to discover is that this whole idea of the baptism of the spirit or the filling of the spirit is something that reoccurs in our lives as believers as needed. And thank God for that, I don't have to go on the baptism that I had 20 years ago.

I have fresh baptisms of the spirit all throughout my life and throughout the calling that God has given me to serve him. I can anticipate that when the occasion arises and the need is there, God will give me a fresh empowering of his spirit. And so he pronounces this judgment and notice what he says to him, though.

And remember, Peter encountered a sorcerer named Simon. Simon was not a Jew. Simon was a Samaritan, probably because he was in Samaria, but he wasn't a Jew.

Peter says to him, your money perish with you. You remember, he tried to buy the gift of God when he saw the the miraculous aspect of that baptism in the spirit. He tried to buy that gift.

Peter said, your money perish with you. Your heart is not right in the sight of God. I can see that you're poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.

Peter was fairly mild with Simon in comparison to Paul with Jesus here, Illumus, and I think the reason for this strong judgment is because, remember, this guy is a Jew. This guy is an apostate Jew. In other words, he's a Jew who sold himself out to the occult.

He sold himself out to the devil. And that's why Paul says to him, full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil. He's a son of Abraham.

He's supposed to be a son of the covenant, but. He's become a son of the devil by selling himself out for wickedness, so he's the enemy of all righteousness, he says, and then, of course, he's perverting the straight ways of the Lord. There are many today, of course, that would be just like this person, many today who would seek to pervert the straight ways of the Lord.

Sometimes you've maybe experienced it. Some perhaps you've shared the Lord with somebody. Perhaps you've been in the in the course of sharing the gospel with someone and someone else comes up and begins to contradict and begins to seek to turn people away and cast doubt and all that.

I've had those kinds of things happen. Like I said, I wish I could have done this. So the judgment falls upon him, there's a blindness that comes upon him immediately, then the procouncil believed when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord, Sergius Paulus was converted.

He believed. And it was the combination. He was drawn by the word of God, the teaching of the Lord is what captured his heart.

But no doubt this demonstration of the power of God over the power of this sorcerer, I think probably sealed the deal for him. It was evident to him right before his eyes that what these guys had just proclaimed to him was indeed the truth based upon the power that he saw demonstrated through them. And we do need the power of God accompanying our proclamation of the gospel.

We do need those gifts of the spirit, sometimes in this judgment kind of a sense. And we really ought to be seeking the Lord for that and longing for that power of the spirit in our lives. Cheryl was reading me something today that she read in a devotion, and I think it was an F.B. Meyer devotion.

He was talking about how God never intended the church to function or to operate apart from the person and therefore the power of the Holy Spirit. God never intended for a moment that we should operate in our own energy. Through our own intellectual powers or our own human resources to spread the gospel, that's not how it's done.

It can't really be done that way. We need the dynamic power of God and God has provided us with that through the spirit and the gifts of the spirit. But we must be depending on him.

We must be seeking him. And these men were full of the Holy Spirit. They were living for the Lord and he was the great passion of their lives.

And so they're there. It was that power was there when the occasion arose. So verse 13 tells us now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia and John, John Mark, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

So Sergius Paulus is converted. Their work is accomplished there. How much longer they spent in Cyprus, we don't know.

But now they head off to Perga and so they're going to sail from the lower what would be sort of the backside of Cyprus up and around and across to Perga, which would be in the southern region, southeastern sort of region of what is today Turkey. And so as we follow them in this first missionary journey, we're going to be following them through again what is today modern day Turkey. But it was known as Asia Minor at the time, and it was all, of course, under Roman control and all of these different Roman cities that they would visit and minister in as they go.

And so they go to Perga and there they take up their ministry once again, but they take up their ministry initially in each place. They will they will start in the synagogue and then they will work their way out from the synagogue. Now, in closing, Sergius Paulus really is probably the first purely Gentile convert in the sense.

Now, we looked at. A few weeks ago in Chapter 10, we looked at Cornelius and the conversion of Cornelius. He was certainly a Gentile ethnically.

He was a Roman, but we know from his story that he had been impacted by Judaism. He had encountered Judaism and he was impressed and he was he was fearing the God of Israel, the one God. And those other Gentiles in Antioch and different places, they probably were all of them prior to their conversion, probably in some way or another influenced by Judaism.

Here's a man who is purely a Gentile in not only the ethnic sense, but he's a Gentile in every sense, the cultural sense, religiously. This guy is just a full blown what you would call a pagan. He's not hasn't had any influence from the Jewish religion.

And yet we have here the record of his conversion, and I would imagine that Paul. At this moment, probably had a vision bigger than anything he'd ever had before of the masses of Gentiles that were potential converts. And thinking, man, if Sergius Paulus, the governor of Cyprus, if this guy could get saved.

Then the sky's the limit, let's go to the Gentiles. I'm sure this just greatly encouraged them. And, you know, I look around us and I think here we are in Southern California and we've got so much.

We've got so much Christianity around here, it's unbelievable. And, you know, if you don't like one church, just you don't even have to go far, you can walk to another one practically, you know, all over the place. And that's a good, you know, in a sense, the more churches, the better, because there's still a bunch of lost people around this.

But yet I think about the world out there. And I think, Lord, get us out there. Think of all those people out there that haven't had the opportunities that we have and to go into a place where, in a sense, it's virgin territory in that spiritual sense.

And, you know, there are people that have not heard and would love to hear and are dying to hear and to see those people receive Christ and. Be transformed and come to love God, this book I was telling you about, I haven't gotten to all the great parts yet that Cheryl already told me about, but I'm anticipating getting there. But, you know, she was telling me about, you know, the chiefs of these tribes and I've read the part now about the shrunken heads and how they did all of that and they murdered their enemies and cut off their heads, you know, and but then the chiefs, the guys who are leading this, that all, you know, the ones that were filled with hatred and envy and murder and all that, how they get converted and then they have a passion.

They want to go take the gospel to these other tribes that have been their enemies for centuries. And you just you read about that, you think, Lord, how glorious, how wonderful. And I just think about, you know, again, here we are and we're all clustered together, we're all huddled together and it's wonderful, it's great, it's good.

But maybe God would say to some of us, I want to send you somewhere. There's a Sergius Paulus somewhere. I want I want him to come to know God and he's going to influence his culture for me and there are many people that have never heard and I personally know of cities in Europe.

Especially in Eastern Europe and still in the former Soviet Union, where there are no churches, none zip, no churches and there are places you can actually go to. There are places that are open, there are places you could go in and start a church and people would welcome you. And so, again, as we started tonight looking at this whole thing, just, you know, from the perspective of the mission potential.

God wants to still reach those multitudes of people that have never heard the message, people who are very much like the people were when Paul went out into the Gentile world. Things haven't really changed much at all. As a matter of fact.

The only change that's taken place really. Is that for a brief period of time, Christianity has influenced a part of the world and now the influence has died and we're back to where we started before. With almost a purely pagan.

Situation all around us. And so. Let's.

Wait on the Lord, let's be separated to him. Remember, God said separate to me, Barnabas and Saul. And of course, God could separate them because they were already separated to him.

And as we would just say, Lord, I separate myself to you, who knows what God might do? We don't know. But I can tell you this, it'll be an adventure. It'll be exciting, it'll be glorious.

And it'll be well worth whatever the sacrifices might come when we get to the other side and we see those people. That we were able to touch, and if we don't go. If God doesn't send us out, perhaps he would use us to help send others out.

You see, we've got to remember that, too. I think of Barnabas and Saul and how that church got behind them and said, go for it, get the gospel out. We're going to be your base.

We're going to be your support center. We're going to make sure you get taken care of as you're out there. We're going to be behind you in prayer.

We're going to be laboring for you in the Lord. We're going to make a contribution and help you. And, you know, again, kind of going back to what I was talking about earlier with some of these great missionaries that went out because the church didn't get behind it, because there there wasn't an organization that would endorse what they were doing because everybody had just become so, you know, sort of self-focused.

What would oftentimes happen is a few people with means would look and say, I believe in this person. I believe in the call of God in their life. I believe that God wants to do them and they would commit themselves to supporting those individuals and a lifelong relationship would develop.

And you know what? Those that never could go to the field themselves, they will reap the same reward in heaven for those that went and labored because they helped them to get there and sustained them there. So I pray God would just give us a mission's vision. He might even send some of us out, but he might use many of us as well to send others.

As these guys were sent, let's pray, Lord, we do think of this world of ours and of the masses of people there are this very night that have never heard the gospel, but would believe it if they heard it. Lord, we pray that you would get the word to them and Lord, we pray that you'd use us to do it. Lord, if there are some of us here that you would actually want to send somewhere.

Lord, we just separate ourselves to you and Lord, we just say we're willing. Lord, if you want to use us to send others. Oh, help us, Lord, to have that vision.

Help us, Lord, to see. The importance of such an endeavor. Help us, Lord, to think in terms of eternity and of the kingdom of God.

Free us, Lord, from the things that bind us here on the earth, the things that preoccupy us, the things that take up all of our resources, things that we don't need, perhaps. And Lord, show us how to be wise and how to invest for the real future, the eternal future. Lord, thank you for this story and thank you for this segment in this great book of Acts.

And Lord, as we study the missionary journeys of these men, Lord, give us that mission's heart that you have. We pray in Jesus name.

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