

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 31ST, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

GOD'S CALL (ACTS 13:1-5) THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

Luke names five of their leaders: Barnabas (encourager, pastor), Simeon (likely a black Believer), Lucius (from North Africa), Manaen (connected to royalty), and Saul (former persecutor of Christians).

- The church at Antioch was diverse in background, personality, and story yet **united around Jesus and His mission.**

WORSHIP AND FASTING

The church didn't start with strategy meetings, branding, or programs. It started with **worship, prayer, fasting, and dependence.** They slowed down long enough to hear God's voice.

- **Sometimes we are so busy doing things for God that we stop spending time with God.** Ministry without worship eventually becomes exhausting.

THE SPIRIT INITIATES THE MISSION

The mission was not man-made. God called, equipped, and sent them. Sometimes we try to force doors open that God never called us to walk through. **God's calling often requires surrender, trust, and sacrifice.**

- **Are we asking God what He wants for our lives—or are we just asking Him to bless our plans?**

OBEDIENCE REQUIRES ACTION

- "So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went..." There comes a moment when prayer must turn into obedience. They went in teams to local synagogues in areas where they had personal connections.
- **The church is not called merely to gather—it is called to go. Where is God calling you to go?**

DIFFERENT RESPONSES (ACTS 13:6-12)

SAUL AND BARNABAS ON THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

They went to an island off the coast of Syria and "proclaimed the word of God." When they arrived, they encountered a Jewish "sorcerer... false prophet named Bar-Jesus."

- Bar-Jesus means *son of Jesus* (Joshua). More than likely, this was not a charlatan but a man of "science" and the occult.

INTERESTED IN THE TRUTH

Teachers often traveled from town to town for a living. Sergius Paulus, a Roman governor, had heard of Christianity and "wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas...tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith."

- **If Satan can't destroy the gospel, he will try to distract people from hearing it.**

THE FIRST TIME SAUL IS REFERRED TO AS PAUL

Saul was his Hebrew/Jewish name. Paul was his Roman/Greek name. Luke begins using "Paul" regularly right as the gospel begins moving heavily toward Gentile people and Paul steps into his missionary calling more publicly.

- **God often uses broken people with redeemed stories to reach others.**

PAUL BOLDLY CONFRONTED ELYMAS

Paul, "filled with the Holy Spirit," confronted Elymas directly. **We can only combat evil and its deception with the power of the Holy Spirit.**

- We cannot fight spiritual battles with worldly weapons. We must be spiritually alert which means **we must read, pray, and stay connected to God.**

PEOPLE RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO JESUS

Elymas resisted and experienced literal blindness. Sergius Paulus believed. The same gospel produced two completely different responses. Some people harden their hearts; others surrender. Our role isn't to force results but to be faithful to share Jesus.

- **We choose if we want to see. If we will believe, God will give us clarity.**

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS (ACTS 13:13-25) RELATIONAL CONFLICT

The mission continued but not without tension. John Mark left the team and returned home. Paul didn't appreciate this departure (Acts 15:36-41).

- Ministry will always involve imperfect people. Even strong teams can experience disappointment, conflict, or unmet expectations.

PAUL IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Paul and Barnabas arrived in Pisidian and immediately went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. Paul was invited to give "a word of encouragement."

- Paul had spent years studying Scripture, years being transformed by Christ, and years growing through hardship. Now, when the moment came, he was ready.

GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN FAITHFUL

Paul walked through Israel's history to remind the people of one powerful truth: **God has always been faithful.** God chose Israel, rescued them from Egypt, carried them through the wilderness, gave them the Promised Land, and raised up leaders like David. **The focus is not on how great Israel was but on how faithful God was.**

HISTORY WAS LEADING TO JESUS

After walking through Israel's history, Paul brought everything to its climax: "From this man's descendants, as He promised, God brought to Israel the Savior, Jesus." Every part of the story was pointing toward Christ.

- **All of history was moving toward one moment, one Savior, and one name—Jesus.**

WHERE IS GOD CALLING US TO?

- **The church is not called just to gather but to go. Where is God calling you to go? The gospel was never meant to stay inside church walls.**
- What is God calling you to surrender today? Are you truly listening for God's voice, or are you distracted by everything else?

WILL WE RESIST OR SURRENDER?

- The same gospel that blinded Elymas opened the eyes of Sergius Paulus. The greatest blindness is not physical blindness—it is seeing truth and still refusing to believe. How will we respond to Jesus?
- Resistance keeps people spiritually blind. Surrender opens our eyes to the truth.

ARE WE FAITHFUL WITH THE GOSPEL?

- Our responsibility is to faithfully share Jesus. Changing hearts is God's role.
- Faithfulness means **continuing to love, pray, serve, and speak truth**, even when results are not immediate.
- Never underestimate what God can do through one conversation, one invitation, or one faithful act of obedience.