

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 30TH-31ST, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

### **CALLED (ACTS 13:1-5)**

#### **A DIVERSE AND THRIVING CHURCH**

Luke tells us a little about the leadership in the church in Antioch. Barnabas is named first, implying he was the pastor. Then Luke mentions some missionary prospects.

- Niger (dark complexion) was possibly Simon from Cyrene, an African Jew who helped Christ carry the cross (Luke 23).

#### **STRUCTURE AND INTENTIONALITY**

This church was obviously following the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). They had been **discipled** (v. 2), **prayed and fasted for, equipped,** and **commissioned** to minister.

- **The Church should be holy, organized, efficient, and excellent because people are invaluable and souls are eternal.**

#### **"BEING SENT OUT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT"**

**All the structure and work in the world cannot compensate for the power of, and our submission to, the Holy Spirit.**

- These disciples were humble servants who offered themselves up for whatever God had. It was not about personal gain because the work would be grueling and thankless.

#### **THEY ALSO UNDERSTOOD AUTHORITY**

The disciples being sent out were submitted to Jesus and their local church.

- **God will never bless hubris, divisiveness, or rebellion. If we aim to be used in a big way for Christ and His Kingdom, we must be humble people who understand authority.**

#### **AND THEY HAD A PLAN**

The disciples did not leave Antioch without a **plan**. They went in teams, with an itinerary, to cities and local synagogues in areas where they had personal connections.

- **Being a Christian does not excuse laziness or carelessness.** It is actually quite the opposite (1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17).

### **MIXED RESULTS (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."

- Sergius accepting Christ would end his need for Elymas.

#### **THE FIRST TIME SAUL IS REFERRED TO AS PAUL (V. 9)**

Paul's Roman name and citizenship worked well because this was the first time he ministered in a completely Roman setting.

- **God uniquely creates us, allows certain circumstances,** and even **uses our mistakes, if we are humble, to equip us better to minister to certain people.**

#### **STARING DOWN EVIL**

Paul "stared straight at Elymas" and called out his "deceit" and "trickery." Paul said he was a "son of the devil," an "enemy of all that is right," and he "pervert[ed] the...paths of the Lord."

- **If we are deceitful, dabble in and condone evil, or twist the Bible to fit our desires, we become enemies of God.**

#### **WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR SPIRITUAL BATTLES**

Paul was also "filled with the Holy Spirit." **We can only combat evil and its deception with the power of the Holy Spirit.** If not full, we open ourselves up to spiritual losses.

- **To be full of the Spirit, we must pray, read the Bible, be obedient and repentant, and distance ourselves from evil influence.**

#### **TWO RESPONSES**

Willing blindness to God's Word resulted in literal blindness for Elymas because "the Lord's hand [was] against [him]." On the other hand, "the proconsul believed, because he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord."

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

### **HISTORY LESSON (ACTS 13:13-25)**

#### **THE BEGINNING OF A NEW DIRECTION**

The conversion of Sergius marked the beginning of the shift from *Saul* ministering to Jews to *Paul* reaching the Gentile world.

- We also see some division in the church. In v. 5, John (Mark) was with Paul. Now, we see that he went back to Jerusalem over some minor disagreements (15:37-39).

#### **"ANY WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT"**

Paul and company were in central Turkey when they were invited to speak at the synagogue. This would have been a formal setting of prayer and Torah reading.

- Paul addressed both ethnic Jews and "you who fear God" (Gentiles who had converted to Judaism).

#### **A LOT OF HISTORY IN A LITTLE TIME**

Paul skipped most of Genesis, began with Exodus, and quickly went through 450 years of history because the crowd was very learned.

- His point was that **God controlled history, Israel's place in it, and the future.** In essence, **God chooses, provides, leads, strengthens, and sustains** His people.

#### **FROM HISTORY TO THE MESSIAH'S BLOODLINE**

After Israel's evil desire for a king like the world, they degraded for 40 years before God raised up David, "**a man after [My] own heart**" (1 Samuel 13:14). From the bloodline of David, "God brought to Israel the Savior, Jesus."

- Paul's lesson shows not only God's **sovereignty** but His **grace** as well.

#### **PAUL ALSO MENTIONED JOHN THE BAPTIST**

John is widely considered the last prophet of the OT era. John made Jesus' arrival clear and participated in the launching of Jesus' ministry at His baptism.

- John also displayed great humility by acknowledging we are "**not worthy to untie the sandals on His feet.**"

#### **CALLED, WILLING, AND INTENTIONAL**

- All Christians are called to some degree to minister. To be effective, we must be **humble, respectful of authority, discipled, in prayer and fasting, and filled with the Spirit.**
- We must also be organized and intentional, have a **plan**, and put forth **effort.** **Eternity is too important to be addressed carelessly.**

#### **THE RESULTS ARE NOT UP TO US (1 CORINTHIANS 3:6)**

- God has made us all unique with unique experiences. Along with the Spirit's help, this enables us to reach more people.
- We can be close to Jesus and be great witnesses, but **we cannot control the results. Our responsibility is the communication and demonstration of Jesus and the Word.**

#### **WE MUST WANT TO SEE HIM**

- Acknowledging a sovereign Creator requires understanding that something is greater than us. Acknowledging a Savior requires enough humility to admit that we need saving.
- **One will only see the reality of Jesus if they objectively desire to know the truth.**

#### **THIS IS NOT JUST FOR NON-BELIEVERS**

- Many of us know many truths but **fail to dig deeper or submit** to biblical teachings that challenge how we think or act.
- At best, **this will hinder our blessings from God and our effectiveness as witnesses.** At worst, **it may give us a false sense of security in our salvation.**
- *This is how we know that we know Him: if we keep His commands. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and yet doesn't keep His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly in him the love of God is made complete. This is how we know we are in Him: The one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked (1 John 2:3-6 CSB).*