

Paul the Missionary

Acts 13:1-3

1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 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."

3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. NKJV

I. Missions is God's idea.

A. Remember it was the Holy Spirit that said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

B. We have recorded that Jesus gave the church a commission 4 times in the New Testament.

1. Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV) 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.
2. Mark 16:15-16 (NKJV) 15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
3. Luke 24:46-48 (NKJV) 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things.
4. Acts 1:8 (NKJV) 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

II. God has chosen to use His people for the missionaries.

A. God could have done it Himself.

B. God could have sent angels like He did to Mary.

III. Paul and Barnabas were the first missionaries.

A. Galatians 1:15-17 (NKJV) 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me,

that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

- B. Notice that it was the church that sent them out.
 - 1. This is significant, for the authority of church work is in the church not in the preacher.
 - 2. The commission came to the church.
 - 3. The church laid hands on them and sent them out.
 - 4. Also we should notice that after each of Paul's missionary journeys, he came back to the church at Antioch to give a report.
 - 5. Warren Wiersbe rightly says, "The modern mission board is only a "sending agency" that expedites the work authorized by the local church." Bible Exposition Commentary - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Daring (Acts 13-28).
- C. Notice they first go to the homeland of Barnabas.
 - 1. Missions must always begin at home.
 - 2. If we do not do missions in our own community, we will not be interested in missions.
- D. John 4:35 (NKJV) 35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!
- E. Matthew 9:36-38 (NKJV) 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

IV. But many more have followed.

- A. There are various traditions as to the Apostles
 - 1. The Holy Spirit did not choose to give us an inspired record of their work.
 - 2. Most of them had to flee Jerusalem in 70 AD
 - 3. They went to different parts of the world to proclaim Jesus Christ.
 - 4. Many were reported to have died a martyr's death.
- B. For over a hundred years the USA has predominated the mission field with thousands upon thousands of missionaries.

- C. But today many other, much smaller countries are filling the gap left by our withdrawal from the mission field.
 - D. Whereas once Europe was the mission sending part of the world, now places like Africa are sending missionaries to Europe.
 - E. And even today other countries are beginning to send missionaries to America.
 - F. Decades ago many were calling for missionaries to the Moslem lands but we didn't go. Now it is much more dangerous to go into those lands.
 - 1. Although there are many there, but not nearly enough.
- V. Churches in the USA have gone into maintain and survival mode.
- A. Most of their money is given to be spent upon themselves.
 - 1. When churches loose their vision for the spread of the Gospel it is only a matter of time until they will close the doors.
 - 2. It is a problem that even newer church established as little as 30 - 50 years ago have to contend with.
 - 3. Many of them have plateaued, they are simply holding their own.
 - 4. Some of the churches that once have several hundred in the Peoria area as few as 10 years ago are now struggling to maintain 70-80.

To be a missionary is a calling.

To tell others about Jesus is our privilege and responsibility.