

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

April 30, 2023

S.C. Brown, Pastor

Series: Acts

Sermon title: Preaching the Gospel in Cyprus

Scripture reading: Acts 13:1-12

Well, we come again to the book of Acts after some time to pick up where we left off.

Where did we leave off?

We left off at Acts 13. Jesus has commissioned the apostles to take the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and even to the ends of the earth.

After Stephen was murdered in Acts 7 by a mob a lot of things have changed.

The gospel spread as the disciples fled the persecution. They went about preaching the word. The gospel has finally left Jerusalem.

Saul, the ringleader who was trying to kill and imprison Christians, has become a Christian himself. He's been discipled and now he is up in Antioch, where the church is growing.

In Acts 13 we see a major shift. I preached a sermon on this some time ago. We will recap a bit today.

Here's what we need to know from the book of Acts:

The Holy Spirit is working to fulfill God's global purposes by calling out laborers through the church.

How does God want to use CBIBC in his global purposes?

Where is CBIBC to take the gospel?

How is CBIBC to send out?

What is your place in God's global purposes?

Let's pray.

I want us to see 3 things today in this passage.

I. How missionaries are sent

II. Why missionaries are sent

III. The results of being sent

IV. Application

I. How missionaries are sent

1 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping

the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

The church in Antioch is worshipping and fasting and while they're doing these things....the Holy Spirit speaks- seemingly through someone there.

The Holy Spirit has called. The Holy Spirit has worked in these guys hearts.

But we see the church continues to fast and pray...to confirm the Holy Spirit's calling.

They affirm by laying their hands on them.

They support by sending them off.

They are partnering together.

Paul and Barnabas are sent FROM the church in Antioch and they come back TO the church in Antioch.

Acts 14:24-28

24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, 26 and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been

commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. 27 And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they remained no little time with the disciples.

How are missionaries supposed to be sent?

From the Holy Spirit- by and through the local church.
From the church-- back to the church.

II. Why missionaries are sent

5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. 6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos,

1. Notice the purpose

- proclaimed the word of God
- Sergius Paulus sought to 'hear the word of God'
- he was astonished at the 'teaching of the Lord'

The missionary task is the task of proclamation.

No matter what you may do: teacher, accountant for a missions organization, ...preacher, in some way....the task should be leading to gospel proclamation.

Ministry....doesn't have to always do that. Serving.
Missions does.
Missionaries are sent to proclaim the gospel primarily.

In **Acts 13:47**, these guys are clear about what the Holy Spirit had called them to....**47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."**

That's the purpose here.
We see that's what Paul and Barnabas are sent out to do.

2. Notice the scope

5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. 6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos,

They started with Jews and ended up with the governor of the whole Roman island.

They preached freely.
They preached broadly.
They preached indiscriminately.
Whoever, wherever then need to.

III. The results of being sent

1. Opposition

they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. 7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.

Now we don't want to spend all our time on this character. He's not the main point.

What we really want to see is that he is OPPOSED to the gospel and trying to TURN people AWAY from the gospel message.

You know people like that?

They are against Jesus Christ. Not you really. Jesus!

He's a magician, same word as 'wise man' who came to see Jesus from the east.

But he's not from the east. He's Jewish.

A false prophet.

Name is strange. Bar-Jesus. Bar is 'son of' Joshua.

Ironic that he is the same name as Jesus.

His real name is Elymas.

9 But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.

Interestingly, Paul calls down a 'judgement miracle' on him, one of the few in the New Testament.

In fact, it's almost the same thing that happened to Saul of Tarsus himself on the road to Damascus.

There is a touch of grace in the judgment in the words, "for a time" and he isn't killed but simply judged for his opposition to the preaching of the gospel.

No missionary should be surprised that there is opposition to the preaching of the word. Nor should any of us. Jesus said that it would be so....

Luke 21:17 You will be hated by all for my name's sake.

But opposition is not the only result of the preaching of the gospel.....they also see...

2. Gospel fruit

12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

This is a pattern we see in Acts and in our own lives, if we dare to share....

Some will be opposed.

Some will be saved.

Lucius Sergius Paulus was the proconsul of the whole island. He was the governor put in place by Rome.

Of all the people....the Roman governor.

Not the Jews in Salamis.

Not the Greeks along the way to Paphos.

The Roman leader.

He believes! He's saved.

He could be the first non-Jewish believer in Cyprus.

[Barnabas, whose real name is Joseph of Cyprus was from there himself and was in Christ since Acts 2.]

Now, there are all kinds of things we can take home from this text. The plain truth of this text is this:

The Holy Spirit is working to fulfill God's global purposes by calling out Paul and Barnabas through the church in Antioch and they are obeying Christ to take the gospel to the nations- Cyprus is their first stop.

But there are some things we can glean for ourselves and our context and our lives from this narrative.

IV. Application

Who God uses? he uses the former persecutor of the church and a Jewish Levite to take the gospel to Cyprus. They hadn't been believers that long really. Not as long as most of us! God can use you.

Who God can save? think of the most unlikely person you know to come to Jesus? [PAUSE]
Do you think God could save them?
You think they're worse off than a Saul?
Can God save a high official in Hong Kong?

Who needs the gospel?

Sergius Paulus had everything in the world's eyes.
How'd you like to be a rich governor of an island in the Mediterranean?

He was a man of intelligence, it says.

Are you a man of intelligence? Maybe you're a professor. Ph.D.

He needed Jesus.

So do you.

Mark 8:36

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

You need Jesus to forgive you of your sins.

Trust him to forgive you.

Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.

He will give you eternal life.

Who is opposed to your gospel sharing?

Don't curse them.

Bless them.

Pray for those who say all kinds of mean things about you.

Keep sharing.

You will bear fruit.