

Acts 13:1-5, 14:27-28, Missionaries and the Church
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Overview

1. 12-15, Three Characteristics of the Church, each bracketed by the departure and return of Barnabas and Paul:
 - a) 12, a Loving church
 - b) 13-14, a Missionary church (this section)
 - c) 15, a Disciplined churchObjective: a case study for the things the church should do.
2. Structure of 13-14, the first missionary journey:
 - a) 13:1-3, Sending Out by the church
 - b) 13:4-14:26, The Travels
 - 1) 4-5, Sending by the Spirit
 - 2) 6-12, Paphos--Elymas the Sorcerer
 - 3) 13-52, Pisidian Antioch--Paul's sermon
 - 4) 14:1-4, Iconium--strong Jewish opposition
 - 5) 5-18, Lystra--Healing the lame man
 - 6) 19-26, Return Trip--confirmation and continuing evangelism
 - c) 14:27-28, Reporting back to Antioch
3. Today's objective: understand basic principles of missionary activity in the early church.
 - a) The context from which they are called;
 - b) The manner in which they are sent out;
 - c) Their responsibility to the sending church after they return.

A. 13:1-2, The Context of the Call

1. 1, Leadership of the church
 - a) Led by prophets and teachers, Eph. 4:11 the two gifts for resident work. How about elders?
 - 1) Might not have any yet; Cf. Didache 15:1. But there certainly were in Jerusalem, 11:30.
 - 2) Alternatively, note that there is no gift of elder. Focus on function rather than official position. (But "minister" suggests official function; see Westcott on Heb, pp. 232ff.)
 - b) Plurality of leaders
 - c) Diversity
 - 1) Racial (Simeon is probably black)
 - 2) Cultural (mostly hellenistic, from Cyprus [Barnabas], Cyrene [Lucian], and Asia [Saul])
 - 3) Social--Manaen.
 - 4) *Application*: Things that don't matter in the church (Gal 3:28; 5:6; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 3:11): race, previous religion, gender, social status. Their common thread is the Holy Spirit. Beware lest social homogeneity take His place.

2. 2, Ordinary functioning of the church

a) Ministering to the Lord

Lit. "doing priestly service."

- 1) See Rom. 15:16 for an extension of this metaphor, applied there to the work of evangelism. We are not told what the ministry here was; no need to restrict it to the Eucharist. The point is that they were exercising their gifts in the service of God, as believer-priests.
- 2) 2 Cor. 9:12 "[priestly] service" shows that this is not restricted to church officers.

b) Fasting

- 1) Always associated with prayer
- 2) Different from just missing a meal; different word used in Acts 27:33. Deliberate subjugation of the body to spiritual interests; cf. "watching," depriving body of sleep, Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2, again associated with prayer.
- 3) *Application*: Psa. 90:12: You can only do so much; you have only so many hours in the day. What priority do spiritual exercises have with you? Are you willing to set aside normal bodily appetites in order to seek the Lord?

B. 13:2-5, The Manner of the Sending

1. 2, How the Lord Calls

- a) Communicated to the church as a whole, not just the individual.
- b) In context of existing ministry. Minister where you are now, and the Lord will show you where he wants you next. The call is not just TO a ministry, but IN one. "I being in the way, the Lord led me."
- c) "Separate." Set these apart from the body of men who minister. They cannot do the task that is before them if they are burdened down with the church at Antioch.

2. 3, The Church's role. Note three participles and finite verb

- a) Fasting--they made it a special priority to seek the Lord's face about this matter.
- b) Praying--made possible by the fasting.
- c) Laying on hands--identification. Though absent in body, B&S represent the church and minister under its authority.
- d) Send away, *apoluw*, better "release." Used frequently of dismissing a meeting. When it does mean "send away," Matt. 15:23, it's in a condescending sense that cannot be intended here. The church's role is to let them go, not to get them out there.

3. 4-5, The Spirit's role.

- a) "Send forth," an active sending, in contrast with the church's "releasing."
- b) Grammatical marks of contrast on 4a and 5b. The Spirit sent Barnabas and Saul out, but they took John as their assistant.

Suggests that his participation was perhaps more out of expediency than the HS's direction, and leads to an unfortunate stumble when he leaves the work prematurely in v.13.

C. 14:27-28, Reporting the Results

Back in Antioch

1. Necessary to come back to the sending church to report.

2. Description of God's work

a) "Do with" (= 15:4) has two meanings in English:

1) Instrument ("He did it with a hammer")

2) Accompaniment ("He did it with his wife")

Elsewhere in the NT, this expression appears only in the second sense (e.g., Matt. 26:18; Mark 3:6?; 15:1);

instrument is *en* (Luke 1:51), not *meta* as here. 1 Cor.

10:13 is *sun*. Heb. 8:9 is dative.

Application: Cf. 1 Cor. 3:9, fellow laborers together with God. Matt. 11:29, taking on Christ's yoke. His work is impossible--yet with him laboring alongside us, it is easy for us.

b) "Open door of faith." Cf. use of this expression elsewhere, 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3, for an opportunity that must be taken. God has made it possible for the Gentiles to believe; has given them an opportunity.

3. 28, they stayed a long time with the church, not just a short deputation visit!

Summary:

Basic lessons about missionary work:

1. It is an extension of the basic ministry of the church, and its practitioners may be expected to emerge from that ministry.

2. It is the Spirit who sends them forth. The church's task (and it is the church's, not just the individual's) is to recognize the call and release them.

3. Having emerged from the ministry of a local assembly, they bring back a report to that assembly.

Psalm: 72, "Christ Shall Have Dominion"

Analysis

13-14, A Missionary Church

A. 13:1-3, Sending Out

1. 13:1)^Hsan de\ e)n)Antioxei/a| kata\ th\n ou)^san e)kklhsi/an profh^tai kai\ dida/skaloi

- a) o(/ te Barnaba^s
 - b) kai\ Sumew\n o(kalou/menos Ni/ger,
 - c) kai\ Lou/kios o(Kurhnai^os,
 - d) Manah/n te (Hrw/|dou tou^ tetraa/rxou su/ntrofos
 - e) kai\ Sau^los.
2. 2 leitourgou/ntwn de\ au)tw^nw kuri/w| kai\ nhsteuo/ntwn ei)^pen to\ pneu^ma to\ a(/gion,
 - a))Afori/sate dh/ moi to\n Barnaba^nw kai\ Sau^lon ei)s to\ e)/rgon o(\ proske/klhmai au)tou/s.
 3. 3 to/te nhsteu/santes kai\ proseuca/menoi kai\ e)piqe/ntes ta\s xei^ras au)toi^s a)pe/lusan.

B. 13:4-14:26, The First Journey

1. 4-5, Traveling
 - a) 4 Au)toi\ me\n ou)^n e)kpepfqe/ntes u(po\ tou^ a(gi/ou pneu/matos kath^lqon ei)s Seleu/keian,
 - b) e)kei^qe/n te a)pe/pleusan ei)s Ku/pron,
 - c) 5 kai\ geno/menoi e)n Salami^ni kath/ggellon to\n lo/gon tou^ qeou^ e)n tai^s sunagwgai^s tw^nw)Ioudai/wn:
 - d) ei)^xon de\ kai\)Iwa/nhn u(phre/thn.
2. 6-12, Paphos--Elymas the Sorcerer [Later message]
3. 13-52, Pisidian Antioch--Paul's sermon [Later message]
4. 14:1-4, Iconium--strong Jewish opposition [Later message]
5. 5-18, Lystra--Healing the lame man [Later message]
6. 19-26, Return Trip--confirmation and continuing evangelism [Later message]

C. 14:27-28, Reporting

Back in Antioch

1. 14:27 parageno/menoi de\ kai\ sunagago/ntes th\n e)kklhsi/an a)nh/ggellon
 - a) o(/sa e)poi/hsen o(qeo\s met' au)tw^nw kai\
 - b) o(/ti h)/noicen toi^s e)/qnesin qu/ran pi/stews.
2. 28 die/tribon de\ xro/non ou)k o)li/gon su\n toi^s maqhtai^s.