

Hello All!

I pray that everyone is doing well during this time. This past week, Governor Cuomo has extended the pause until May 15. Hearing this news can be frustrating, but I pray that during this season we would find refuge in the Lord (Psalm 91). Let's get through this season together by praying for one another!

Announcements:

1. **Friday Night Fellowship:** Join us during our Friday night Zoom meetings. We are going through the book of Ephesians and praying together!
 - a. 7:45 pm @ Zoom.
2. **Prayer Requests:** Please let me know if you have any prayer requests.
 - a. Please continue to pray for those affected by the coronavirus, first responders and health care workers, government leaders, your families and our church.

TIME TO DO SOME BIBLE STUDY!!

Take out your Bibles and turn to Acts 13:1-12

A. Called to go out (vv. 13:1-3)

Reading this passage, we begin to see a shift in the book of Acts. Luke, the writer, shows the reader a new expansion of the gospel through the faithful calling of Barnabas and Saul. The calling of Barnabas and Saul happen during the context of worship led by teachers and prophets who have been fasting in the church of Antioch.

- Who were the five people mentioned by Luke?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- What does the Holy Spirit say to the church? _____

Here, marks the end of spontaneous ministry to the Gentiles, but instead there is this official outreach planned by God. And the only task the church was given was to be faithful.

One fascinating point in this passage is this commission is happening in the church of Antioch. If we remember the previous chapters of the book of Acts, we begin to see that when it came to new advancement of the church it all happened in Jerusalem. But in today's passage, it does not

happen there, God is commissioning Barnabas and Saul here in Antioch. Jerusalem was not just the hub for God to do his work, but now it was through every church.

The second fascinating point we see is the context of the commission. The Holy Spirit speaks during this time of worship, prayer and fasting. There is nothing more beautiful than seeing God's people worship together. Here, we don't just have any group of worshippers, but we have the most diverse group of individuals. We see this in verse 1 as Luke names 5 individuals who come from very different backgrounds.

Application:

As the people are drawing near to the Lord, the Lord speaks to the people. The church of Antioch sees the need to reach out to the world as they are drawing near to the God. Their heart has become united with God's calling. Therefore, they commission Barnabas and Paul faithfully. Today, worship and mission go side by side. We need to worship God always and there is also a need for us to go out and share the love of Christ to the world. We are not able to do these tasks individually, but we must do it together. Worship allows us to draw near to God as mission allows us to do the work of God.

Let's take a couple of minutes to worship God and pray for the lost. Sing/ play your favorite worship song (*Recommendation: All glory be to Christ*). Next, please pray for those who do not know Christ. May the lost be found in this season! All glory be to Christ.

B. Confrontation at Cyprus (vv. 4-12)

In this section, we see that Saul's name is changed to Paul. From here on out, Saul will be called Paul unless he is referring to himself in the past. Looking at this text, we see this confrontation between Paul and this false prophet named Bar-Jesus or Elymas the magician. This confrontation happens because of this one man named Sergius Paulus. Sergius wanted to hear the word of God being proclaimed by Barnabas and Paul so he summoned them.

What causes Sergius Paulus to believe? He believes because he saw what God can do against this magician. We have this judgment scene happening. As Paul sees the intention of this false prophet, he pronounces judgment upon him through the Holy Spirit. Or in other words, he speaks as the true prophet to the false prophet.

Let's closely look at the three characters in this passage:

- Paul
 - o Paul was very forceful as he controls this man who denies what he represents. In an interesting way, Paul is dealing with Elymas who is similar to Saul in the past. Remember, Saul was once in the way of God as he persecuted the church. But

now Paul is standing in truth and he was not going to let anyone stand in the way of God.

- Elymas the magician
 - o Elymas was judged with temporary blindness. Here again, we see this similarity of Saul's conversion. In a sense as Paul is pronouncing judgment on this man, he is judging his former self. And here we see that Elymas was no match for what God was doing in this land. No matter how much obstacles you can create in the path, there was nothing going to stop God from doing what he wanted.
- Sergius Paulus
 - o Sergius was known as this intelligent man. He was the one who came to faith after seeing everything unfold. He had no background of Christianity, but he still had an open heart to hear the word of God.

Application:

Today, as Christians, we are called to stand firm in our beliefs like Paul. There are moments when we evangelize where we will be confronted with people like Elymas, who do not want anything to do with the message. And then, there are moments where you encounter someone who is curious like Sergius who believe after hearing the teaching of God's word. May we not be discouraged by those who are outside of the faith, because you never know who will one day believe in the message of Christ—just like you and how you believed in the gospel.

God's grace meets us where we are as sinners, but our Lord and Savior Jesus comes in the form of the human to take our sins to the cross and bear God's wrath. And through Jesus's death and resurrection, we are now raised with Christ to be children of God. Today, God has taken us from being those who rebelled against God or stood in the way of God as his enemy and we are met by his grace. And it's because of this grace, we are now able to even believe and be called children of God.

Let's take a couple of minutes thanking God for all that he has done for us and in our lives. And even during this time, let's thank the Lord for all the blessings he has graciously poured out upon us. (*Hint: Read Ephesians 1*).