

"The Start of the Missionary Journeys"

Part 2

Acts 13

Introduction: Last week in our study of the book of Acts we stepped into chapter 13 which is a chapter of change. The first 12 chapters were mostly focused upon the acts of Peter but as we come to chapter 13 the focus will be upon the acts of Paul.

Notice Acts 13:1-2

Here we were able to see that the church that started at Antioch became the sending church for Paul. This church had several teachers and prophets who came from various backgrounds. One of the most interesting characters in verse 1 is Manaen. He was raised as the foster brother of Herod Antipas who was the Herod who killed John the Baptist. He was raised under the authority of Herod the Great. This man was raised in a very ungodly family yet he made the choice to be different. Let me just point out something here that needs to be noted, God delights in saving people who appear to be unsavable and then uses them to make a difference for Him.

1 Corinthians 1:25-29

²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Getting back to Antioch, the Spirit made it clear that Barnabas and Saul were to be separated for the work God had for them. It is important that they heard from the Holy Spirit when they were ministering and when they were fasting. This means they were serving the saints and they had set aside the meal activities to be focused upon the Lord.

This now brings us to where we are tonight.

➤ **The Grace of God**

Notice Acts 13:3

When they laid their hands on them, they identified with them and showed their approval.

Notice Acts 13:4-5

They went to Cyprus possibly because this was the homeland of Barnabas and he had a burden for the people there. We can only speculate but what we do know is that they were led by the Holy Spirit. When they came to Salamis they went into the Jewish synagogue and preached Jesus Christ unto the Jews. At the synagogue they would be given an opportunity to speak and it would be then that they would share the Gospel. They were following the Divine pattern found in Romans 1.

Romans 1:16

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

This is a wonderful demonstration of the grace of God. These men are led by the Spirit to go first to the very people who rejected and crucified the Son of God. This was not another chance to receive the Kingdom but this was an opportunity to be forgiven for every sin that they had ever committed. This truly magnifies the love that God has for ALL of mankind regardless of what they have done.

John 3:16

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Let us notice Paul's prayer for the saints at Ephesus.

Ephesians 3:14-19

¹⁴ For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁵ Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

¹⁶ That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

¹⁸ *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height:*

¹⁹ *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

- ✓ The breadth of God's love means that it reaches the entire world.
- ✓ The length of God's speaks of how far He will reach to save us.
- ✓ The depth of His love speaks of how far He will reach down to save a sinner who is deep into sin.
- ✓ The height of His love speaks of where He places us after we are saved.

Ephesians 2:6-7

⁶ *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

⁷ *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

Notice Acts 13:5 again.

Here at the end of verse 5 we are told they had John to their minister. This would be John Mark. He went with Barnabas and Saul as a helper on this first missionary journey. He is certainly worth spending time within our study. John Mark seemed to be a humble man based upon how he describes himself in his Gospel that he wrote, the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 14:50-52

⁵⁰ *And they all forsook him, and fled.*

⁵¹ *And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him:*

⁵² *And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.*

We cannot be exactly sure but many believe this was Mark's description of himself. He was therefore an eyewitness to what happened the night Jesus was arrested. I want to take a few moments and point out the encouragement we can see in the life of Mark. He fled the night Jesus was arrested. We then see him joining with Barnabas and Paul on this missionary trip. Then as we move on through this chapter something else happens.

Notice Acts 13:13

Here we see that Mark left Barnabas and Paul and he returned to Jerusalem. We do not know why he departed the missionary journey but Paul seen it as unjustified.

Acts 15:36-40

³⁶ *And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the LORD, and see how they do.*

³⁷ *And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.*

³⁸ *But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.*

³⁹ *And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;*

⁴⁰ *And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.*

In 2 Timothy we can see that the relationship between Paul and Mark was reconciled.

2 Timothy 4:11

¹¹ *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*

Application:

Here is a man who made mistakes just like we do. He fled when Jesus was arrested, he departed the first missionary trip for a reason that Paul determined was not justified, and yet he is used by the Lord to write a Gospel letter to the Romans. He repented and he and Paul became good friends to the point he was profitable to Paul.

The point we need to grasp here is that even if we have made mistakes we can still be used by the Lord. He wants to use us for His glory. There have been many believers through the years who made mistakes and then went on to be used by God in a mighty way. Peter denied the Lord, Abram lied to Pharaoh, Moses killed the Egyptian, Elijah fled from Jezebel, and all these men accomplished great things for the Lord.

Notice the words of McKee and Zeller.

"God can use broken, flawed and imperfect people. Our strength lies neither in ourselves nor our perfections, but in our God. Our Saviour is perfect. He is the God of the flawed, the defective and the damaged. Moses was a stammerer. John Mark was a deserter. Jacob was a deceiver. David had an affair. Abraham was too old. David was too young. Peter was afraid of a servant girl. Paul was a murderer, as was David. Jonah ran from God. Gideon and Thomas both doubted. Elijah ran away. Martha was always worrying. Noah got drunk. Moses was hot-tempered. We are not an impressive lot, but Jesus is an impressive Saviour. He is superb in who He is and in all that He does. God doesn't call many wise, mighty and noble (1 Cor. 1:26). The truth is, we are so flawed that each one of us is unworthy to be called into the service of the Lord Jesus. Yet, there is no bruised reed whom Christ cannot restore and heal. Not one of His people has gone beyond His grace. Not one of us is useless. Perhaps too many people have told us that we are useless, and that God has finished with us. Oh, and yes, that quiet, accusing, inward voice has continually endorsed that sentiment. But God does not go down to Perfect Street to choose His material. God can and does use the unusable. Have you failed the Lord in the past? Take it to the Lord, confess your sins, and then move on with life. You are made righteous by the blood of the Lamb (Romans 5:9; Hebrews 9:22; 1 John 1:7; Romans 3:25). If God can use the dead, dried jawbone of an old donkey (Judges 15:11-17), He can use you, and He can use me."

1 John 1:8

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Hebrews 9:9

⁹ Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;