

Sent By The Spirit

Acts 13:1-16

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In Acts 1:8 you have kind of an outline of the book of Acts, and I just wanted to refresh your remembrance. Jesus actually said...it's kind of Luke's account of the great commission in Acts 1, when He was on the Mount of Olives about ready to ascent back into heaven, Jesus said, "But ye shall receive power," dynamis, dynamic power, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses," we get our word "martyrs" from that, "unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Let me refresh your memory. This is giving us a real outlay of the book of Acts. First of all, Jerusalem is chapters 1-7; the witnesses, they went out, was Judaea and Samaria, chapters 8-12; and then the uttermost parts of the earth, chapters 13-28. That's what we begin tonight—the gospel is going out to the uttermost parts of the earth. This begins the mission endeavor of the church to really take the gospel outside of their local area to peoples that have not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These missionary journeys of Paul, kind of come through the end of the book of Acts, changed the world. They changed the world. As Paul went out in these missionary journeys and took the gospel of Jesus Christ, it actually changed and transformed the entire world. The world that you and I live in today is the direct result of this gospel preaching of Paul going out and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. By the way, the gospel is going from the east to the west. A lot of times people think that Christianity is just a western religion—it started in the east and came to the west.

In Acts 13:1-4 we have the events in Antioch. Let's read those verses. Follow with me in verse 1. Luke says, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers," I want you to note that the word "prophets and teachers" is in the plural, so there were more than one prophet and more than one teacher. No doubt, he's mentioning some of them here. "...as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger," which means "black," "and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul," whom we know as Saul of Tarsus who becomes Paul the Apostle. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

The church that was in Antioch, verse 1, is what is known as Antioch of Syria. Earlier in the book of Acts, after Stephen had been stoned, there were Jewish believers—Christians—who were spread out. They were fanned out and went as far as Antioch taking the good news of Jesus Christ, and the church in Antioch was born. Barnabas went there and began to minister. Then, he went and got Saul and brought him back down. They began to teach the Bible there for three years, and the believers were first called "Christians" in this church at Antioch. (We'll

see it in just a moment on the map, I believe, when we see the missionary journeys of Paul.) This is known as Antioch of Syria. Notice that it's a church. The word "church" is ekklesia, which means a called out assembly. The church is not a building. The church is not an organization—it's an organism. It's a group of believers in Jesus Christ that have been called out and called together. In the church at Antioch, they had prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Simeon, which is called Niger, and it lists the names of them there in verse 1. These were the leaders of this amazing church there in this place called Antioch.

In verse 2 it says, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted," what is he describing there? It's describing that they were worshipping God. They were waiting on God. They were praying. They had fasted. Fasting is not commanded us in the New Testament. Nowhere in the New Testament are we commanded or told that we have to fast. It's kind of assumed that we will fast. The Jews fasted twice a week, but again, that wasn't even commanded in the Old Testament. They were only required to fast once a year on the day of Atonement, but they had kind of a regimen of fasting twice a week. It's believed that many of the Christians who were Jewish fasted maybe twice a week.

Fasting is just the denial, generally of food, for the sake of looking to God, waiting on God, praying to God, desiring to hear from God, and desiring to experience God. It's the denial of the physical to put the emphasis and the focus on the spiritual. Sometimes it's just because you really need to draw near to God or you want to hear from God or you need direction from God. You're earnest as you're seeking the Lord. You're not trying to merit, deserve, or earn anything from God. You can't bend God's arm by your fasting, but it's basically saying that I'm putting the priority, the emphasis, not on my food or what I need but on really seeking and pursuing after God.

This church had prayed and fasted. In the midst of this time of worship...by the way, this "ministered to the Lord," verse 2, we get our word "liturgy" from that word "ministered." It indicates that they were probably just singing songs, praying, worshiping. They were looking to God, and then the Holy Spirit spoke and said...

There's so much kind of going through my brain, I don't really know where to start. I want to point out, lest I forget, that the Holy Spirit is speaking; thus, the Holy Spirit is a Person. This is one of the many references in the Bible that indicate the Holy Spirit is not a force. The Holy Spirit is not an "It." The Holy Spirit is a Person, and the Holy Spirit is the third Person, we call Him, of the triune God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That doesn't mean that He's any less divine than the Father or the Son.

Did you know that the Holy Spirit possesses all the same attributes of God the Father and of God the Son? And, the Holy Spirit is every bit as divine, being God, as the Father or the Son; so they're all equal in essence—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As we begin this great missionary thrust, it's obvious that the writer, Luke, as inspired by the Spirit wants to make clear of the role and the part that the Holy Spirit played in sending these believers out to reach the lost, in sending them out to fulfill the great commission. Jesus said,

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel.” The church has been around now for several years, and they haven’t really thrust out in a full effort to take the good news to lost peoples who needed to hear about Jesus Christ, and so the Spirit speaks.

How did the Spirit speak? He doesn’t tell us, but in the context it’s assumed, and probably rightfully so, that the Spirit spoke through the prophets or maybe through the teachers who were teaching and preaching. Now, at this time the church is in its early stage. The New Testament hasn’t been written or completed, so it only makes sense that in the foundation of the church were the apostles and the prophets. These were men who were speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaking directly from God and that God could speak through these prophets.

Then we have teachers, and they’re listed, I believe, “Barnabas, and Simeon.” Barnabas is that great man whose name means “son of consolation.” He was a great man of God in the Scriptures. He was a companion and traveler of Paul. There was also Simeon, who was called “Niger” or “black” is what the word means. Some assume he was from Africa. His name is Jewish, so it could have been that he just had dark skin or just had the name “black.” There was also Lucius of Cyrene who has a latin name. Manaen, “which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch,” was most likely a Gentile. This Herod at the end of verse 1 is Herod Antipas. He was the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist, and Jesus stood before him when He was going to go to trial during the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. That’s when the Holy Spirit spoke, and He specifies that I want, “Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.”

Let me say a few things about this church and some of the qualities that it had that became this missionary-sending church. First of all, it was a church that was taught the Word. Saul had been brought by Barnabas, and he taught the Bible for three years. They were becoming strong and built up, so they were a strong Bible-centered, teaching church. They were teaching the Word. When you hear me say he was teaching the Word, he was teaching the Old Testament. He was taking the Scriptures and pointing out the things of Messiah and of Jesus Christ. They were a strong church. They had great leadership, verse 1. They had multiple ministers, and they were also a sending church. They sent out their ministers, and they were a seeking church because they wanted to reach those who needed to hear the good news about Jesus Christ. They were a worshiping and praying church because they knew that that’s where the power lie—the power came from God. It doesn’t come from our own devices, plans, or programs. So, out of this church, and I believe that the church should be the missionary arm of what God is doing in the world today, that the church should be the ministry of sending and thrusting out people to preach the gospel to spread the good news.

I don’t believe that we should get rid of parachurch organizations, but I don’t believe that the parachurch or the groups that are not churches are really what God is all about today. I think God is all about the church. The local church should be the sending agency of missions. We

should be the mission organization. In the early days, that's all there was—the church. They didn't have any mission organizations. We, the church, were those who sent out the missionaries, and they're being sent born out of a prayer meeting. They got together and prayed, and they were worshiping. Out of that, it was an outflow of their fasting, praying, and their seeking God. They're also being sent by the Holy Spirit, so the Holy Spirit is the One that's leading, guiding, and calling the shots. It's not just people saying, "Hey, I want to be a missionary. Hey, I want to go on a mission trip." No. The Holy Spirit was actually speaking, leading, and guiding what was going on.

I think this is interesting because clearly the God of the Bible is a missionary God. Just a real quick thought, when God first called Abraham, he called him from Ur of the Chaldees. He said, "I want you to leave your family, and I want you to journey into a strange land that you know not of." You say, "Well, why would God want someone to leave their home? Why would God want someone to leave their family? Because He's a God who wants to reveal Himself. How does He reveal Himself? Through us. He wants us to go into all the world and preach the gospel, so God sent Abraham and Abraham goes into this land. Abraham was to be a witness to the people of that land. He was to be a light to them. God wants us to be that "salt" of the earth, that "light" of the world.

When Jesus came, did you know that Jesus was a missionary? He came from heaven. He left His Father and came to earth. He came to a place where He was rejected and despised. He came to seek and to save the lost. He came as the "Light" in this darkened world. He was a missionary. He came on a rescue mission, and when we get into the book of Acts, what do we find? That's it's a missionary church. They're reaching out. They're being led and directed by the Spirit to go and to share the good news. The thought that there are people in this world that haven't heard about Jesus Christ should motivate us to pray and to go. The thought that there's people who need to hear the good news...we are sitting here being stuffed with gospel blessings while people are starving for just a little morsel. We're here, we have the whole light of God's revelation, and there's places where they haven't even heard of the Word of God. They haven't heard the Scriptures. They haven't heard about Jesus Christ, and we need to take the good news to them. Amen?

It may be that God may not call you individually to actually go, but I think that every Christian should be a missionary Christian. Every Christian should have a burden for the lost. Every Christian should pray for missions. Every Christian should give for missions. Every Christian should desire to see God's blessing on people in other places that need to know about Jesus Christ. We should all have a burden that everyone hears the good news of Jesus Christ.

This is marvelous! These first four verses are so marvelous, that you have this church that is taught and strong and has good spiritual leaders. By the way, when they sent these two, I understand the Spirit told them to send Barnabas and Saul, but notice that they sent their best. We have a tendency to think, Well, you know, they don't know how to do much, so let's make them missionaries. Let's just send them somewhere else, and let's keep the best for ourselves. I think we should send our best to other countries. I think we should send our best to be doing

missionary work for the good news of Jesus Christ, but they were a worshipping church and a praying church. I think we need to be a worshipping church, and we need to realize that we need the balance both of work and worship. The tendency today is the church is all about worship, it's all introverted—it's all about us and God and worshipping God. They don't really look out or reach out. There's also the danger that we could be all about reaching out, but we forget about worshipping God.

I believe the church has a three-fold mission. First of all, we worship God—we look up and worship God. Secondly, we look in and build up and edify the body of Christ through the teaching of the Word. Thirdly, we reach out. So, we look up to God in worship, we reach in and build up, and then we reach out to the world around us. You know the mission field is everything outside these doors, by the way. When you go home tonight, maybe you have unbelievers in your home, you've got a mission field in your home. When you go to work, you work around people that aren't saved, there's a little mission field in your office. When you go to the grocery store, you're entering into the mission field—you're going to buy groceries among the heathen, you know. Why not pray before you go in and say, "Lord, just fill me with Your Spirit, and open up the doors as I'm getting these bananas, Lord, just lead me and guide me to someone that really needs to hear about You." Wherever we go, the world's a mission field, and we need to reach out and have a heart for the lost.

God said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul." Why did they lay their hands on them? There's nothing magical about laying hands on someone, but it's a symbol of association and fellowship—we're a part of this ministry. By the way, when a church sends a missionary out, that church, in their prayer and by their support, is sharing in the work that missionary is doing. If you don't go to the mission field but you pray for the missionary, you are partnering with them. You're participating with them in the ministry that is going on in that mission field. So, you can be home in your living room and you can be instrumental in seeing people come to Christ in a foreign country. You can take time to pray and God can work through that missionary to lead others to Christ, and then when you get to heaven, you're going to share equally in the spoils as we participate together by giving, serving, and praying for those missionaries that are going out and doing the work of the Lord.

Let me throw the map up on the screen for just a moment. I want you to look at verse 4 before we look up at the map. Notice it. "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." On the screen, over here to the far right, we have Antioch. This is where the church actually sent the missionaries. This is Antioch of Syria. They left from Antioch and sailed about 150 miles to the island of Cyprus, which is in the Mediterranean Sea, and they came to the first little seaport town called Salamis. Then, they're going to minister across the island to Paphos and sail up to the area known as Pisidia. They come to Pamphylia. They go to Phrygia. They go up to Antioch. They go to Iconium. They go to Lystra. They go to Derbe. Then, they come back the same way they went and sail back to Antioch in Syria. That's just a little feel. This area that these churches are in is also the area of Galatia, but you get familiar with the layout of the first missionary journey.

When they went to Cyprus, this island (which I said was about 125 miles off the coast) is the home of Barnabas. Barnabas probably recommended that they start there because, "It's my home, and I know it would be a great place to minister. There's a lot of cities, places, and synagogues that we could preach in and people that haven't heard the good news of Jesus Christ."

In Acts 13:5-13, we have the events that took place in Cyprus, so follow with me in your Bible. "And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews." It's believed that little island had many synagogues. Wherever there were 10 male Jews, they would build a synagogue where the Jews could congregate and be instructed in God's Word. So, what did they do? They were preaching the Word of God, and they believed that the gospel should go first to the Jews. "...and they had also John to their minister," you need to take note of that at the end of verse 5. This is the fellow we call John Mark. He's the one who wrote the gospel of Mark, and he becomes this traveling companion with Barnabas and Saul. He's Barnabas' nephew, and we're going to see in a few moments that he actually got cold feet, left the missionary group, and went back to Antioch.

"And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos," so they went across that island, as I pointed out, to the western side, Paphos, "they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus." The name "Barjesus" means son of Jesus, "Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus," the word "deputy" there means that he was proconsul. He was actually appointed by the Roman Senate over the entire area, so he was a man of great stature and influence under the Roman government. He was like the head guy. His name was Sergius Paulus. He was called also, verse 7, "a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God." This man was wealthy. He was intelligent. He was a smart man. He was a man of influence. He was a man of stature under the Roman government, but he had an emptiness in his life. He had a hunger for God, and he heard about Paul and Barnabas and their preaching, and he calls, "I want you to come and tell me about this Jesus." He had a hunger for the Word of God. That's what you call an open door. When the Holy Spirit is guiding, directing, and leading, God opens doors; and it's wonderful to see the Lord open those doors.

"But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation)," this fellow was also, as we read, called Barjesus or son of Jesus, "withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith." Whenever you go out in a missionary endeavor, you go out into foreign lands, you find out you're invading satan's turf. You find out that the opposition and the spiritual warfare is great—not that it doesn't happen here. It certainly does! When you go out in those areas where satan has a hold on people's lives, he really opposes. Many times Christian missionaries find that the opposition comes to them from even people who profess to be believers in God. This time, it was a sorcerer by the name of Elymas. He was probably fortune telling and got in with Sergius Paulus by telling him he had certain power and could predict the future and so forth, but he was withstanding Paul and Barnabas, "seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him."

This is the first time in the book of Acts where Saul is referred to as Paul. We know him as Paul the Apostle; and from this point on, that's the name he's going to adapt. Actually, the first part of Acts deals with the ministry of Peter and the second part deals with the ministry of Paul. Paul had two names. He had the name Saul, which is his Hebrew name. It means "asked for." He had the name Paul, which means "little" or "small." My middle name is Paul. Why they called Paul, little or small, we don't know; but it was a Greek name or his Gentile name. Why he began to use that name we can only theorize it's because he's in Gentile territory—he's starting to minister to Gentiles, and he was the apostle that God sent to the Gentiles. Most Jewish boys had two names. Many times they would have a Hebrew name and a Greek name. They could use either name depending on what was going on at the time.

"Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost," this is a fresh filling. He had already been filled with the Holy Spirit. Again, as the Bible teaches, being filled with the Holy Spirit is an ongoing experience. It's actually in the present tense in the Greek—it's being filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 commands us to be filled with the Spirit, and it's in the present tense, so this is a fresh filling. It's interesting because the Holy Spirit sent them. Now, the Holy Spirit filled them, and the Holy Spirit was with them. So, He sent them, filled them, and He's with them. We cannot do the work of missions or any kind of ministry without the filling, the powering, the leading, and the guiding of the Holy Spirit. There would be no church today without the Holy Spirit and His power. So, a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit, and Paul "set his eyes on him," this Elymas the sorcerer, "And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

Who would've ever imagined that someone filled with the Holy Spirit would speak like this! Right? Think about that. Don't we have this idea in our minds that when you're filled with the Holy Spirit you always smile and say nice things? You say sweet, nice...(excuse me for a little southern twang there). "I'm filled with the Holy Ghost. God bless you! God loves you! God just wants you to be happy. God just wants you to have a great time. God bless you." We always think that if the Holy Spirit's filling us, that we're going to be smiling and be happy and everything's wonderful. Well, that's not always the case. There's a time to rebuke. There's a time to take a stand for truth. There's a time to be confrontational—not for the sake of being confrontational—but for the sake of truth and standing on the truth and speaking the truth in love.

What Paul did, he did under the power of the Holy Spirit. He was filled with the Holy Spirit; which, by the way, means he was being controlled by the Holy Spirit, and the first thing out of his mouth is, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil," who is he talking to? He's talking to Barjesus, "son of Jesus." Paul is actually saying, "You're no son of Jesus. You're a child of the devil is who you are!" I can't help but wonder if it wasn't an intended contrast there, "Thou child of the devil, you're not the son of Jesus by any means!" By the way, Jesus was a common name in those days, so "son of Jesus" was probably in no way a reference to Jesus Christ but certainly he didn't live up to his name. He was a child of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness, and he was trying to pervert the right way of the Lord.

“And now, behold,” Paul says in verse 11, “the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy,” that is, the proconsul, “when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. 13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.” Paul confronts this sorcerer, this Elymas, this Barjesus and says, “You’re full of subtlety and mischief and you’re opposing the truth!” He says, “You’re going to go blind for a short period of time.” Interesting, because what happened to Paul, who was at that time Saul, when he was converted in Acts 9 on the road to Damascus and taken into Jerusalem? He was blinded, right? He had to be led to Damascus by the hand and for three days he sat there in total darkness. Could it be that Paul realized that this might be an act of mercy of God upon him because being shut off in this darkness he had to think? Maybe he would repent and turn back to God? I don’t know. It’s kind of interesting.

It’s interesting that Paul had experienced this darkness, this blindness, and now he brings this judgment upon this evil man. The proconsul, verse 12, this deputy, Sergius Paulus, “when he saw what was done, believed.” That’s all it tells us about him, but I believe it’s right to assume that the man was converted. It doesn’t say that he was filled with the Holy Spirit. It doesn’t say he spoke in tongues. It doesn’t tell us anything more about him, but it says that he “believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” I believe that God used this miracle. By the way, this is the first recorded miracle at the hand of Paul the Apostle as it’s recorded in the Scriptures. It brings about the conversion of this very influential man, Sergius Paulus, and he believed in Jesus Christ, the doctrine of the Lord.

Notice verse 13, “Now when Paul and his company,” there’s a change that now takes place that I want to point out. Up to this point it’s Barnabas and Saul, Barnabas and Saul, Barnabas and Saul, always in that order—always Barnabas and then Saul. Now, it switches to Paul and his company. Then, it’s going to say, Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Barnabas. Again, it’s assumed, and I think rightfully so by Bible students, that there was a shift in the team. Instead of Barnabas being the leader of the missionary outreach, the leadership shifted to Paul, which could be one of the reasons, or a reason, why John Mark got bothered or upset and left the missionary group. Notice verse 13, “Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos,” which is the island of Cyprus, “they came to Perga in Pamphylia,” (can you throw the map up there for me again, real quick?) they loosed from Paphos here on the west side of the island of Cyprus and sailed all the way up to Pamphylia, and then they go into Phrygia. As I said, these were the churches of Galatia. (You can take the map down.)

Notice what it says at the end of verse 13, “and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.” This is John Mark. I point this out because it becomes significant in the story of the book of Acts and in the New Testament. When they go to leave on the second missionary journey, what happens? Barnabas says, “Let’s take John Mark with us again.” Paul says, “No way, Jose!” That’s actually from the Greek—I’m kidding. He said, “It ain’t gonna happen. He flaked out on us!” Again, I’m paraphrasing. “I don’t want to take John Mark.” Barnabas said,

“He’s my nephew, we’re taking him.” “No we’re not taking him.” “Yes, we are taking him.” These two great missionary men of God had an argument. “OHH! Men of God arguing?!” Yes, men of God have feet of clay. Men of God are just that—men. Don’t forget that. We get the idea that men of God glow in the dark; they float around off the earth, you know. No. They’re men like anyone else.

There was an issue there that something for whatever reason John Mark left the missionary journey and went back. We don’t know. Let me repeat myself—we don’t know why John Mark left the missionary group. What we do know is that Paul was upset with John Mark, and there was a rift between Paul and John Mark for quite some time; but at the end of Paul’s life in 2 Timothy 4 (which is one of my all-time favorite chapters in all of the Bible), he’s writing to his protege Timothy, the pastor, and tells him to preach the Word. He tells Timothy that you need to send John Mark to me because he was at one time unprofitable but now he’s profitable in the ministry. So, John Mark redeemed himself, and John Mark and Paul were restored once again in their serving the Lord together so that Paul said, “I need John Mark to come to me. He’s profitable unto me.” By the way, John Mark took up his pen and wrote the gospel of Mark. It’s believed that Peter had a great influence on John Mark as he wrote that gospel. There are a lot of different reasons, I’m a bit hesitant to start speculating, but Bible students say it’s because they got into Gentile territory or because the travel was hard.

Have you ever tried to imagine how hard the travel was in those days? I mean, we fly on comfortable jets and have food and movies and airline stewardess’ that wait on us and everything, but it’s hard! It’s difficult. In those days, they had boats, donkeys or horses, but they walked with sandals for hundreds of miles! They slept under the stars. There were no Am/Pm’s, no In-N-Outs—pray tell me, what would you do without In-N-Out? Where would you go? I mean, Paul couldn’t ask his smartphone, “Where’s the nearest In-N-Out?” “Take the next offramp,” you know. I mean, it was difficult. They were shipwrecked, beaten, stoned, bitten by snakes, and all kinds of horrible things happened to them. I can’t even imagine how rigorous and difficult that travel must have been. Some think that maybe John Mark was young, he never traveled before, and maybe he was a Mama’s boy, “I just want to go home!” I don’t blame John Mark. I’m starting to cry right now thinking about it. Do you know how many times I’ve traveled around this world and just cried, “I just want to go home!” It’s hard. Again, that’s possible.

Some feel that it’s because he wasn’t called. I think that’s interesting. “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” The Spirit didn’t say, “...and John Mark.” We don’t really know, but it could be that Barnabas just thought, Hey, he’s my nephew and he’d experienced some of the life of Christ. Do you know that John Mark, in his gospel, is believed to be the young man in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested that was grabbed by the soldiers and fled away naked, it says, as they held his garment and he ran off naked. So, John Mark was one of the first streakers in the Bible, but he was a young boy and saw Christ and was around Christ and the things of Christ. Some believe that it was in his home that Mary had the disciples and maybe his home was the upper room and the things that went on up there. But, when Barnabas and Paul were in Jerusalem, taking that offering to the poor saints,

they brought back John Mark to Antioch with them. As a matter of fact, that's mentioned in the last verse of Acts 12, which introduces us to chapter 13.

There's a lot of different reasons believed to be why John Mark...one of them, though, in the context is that maybe because Paul began to take the lead and Barnabas was pushed to second fiddle and he was bothered by that. We don't know. When we get to heaven, we'll have to ask John Mark why he flaked, and a lot of preachers will have to apologize to John Mark for bashing him in their sermons, and I probably will have to, too.

I want you to notice that in verse 14, and it runs actually down to verse 52, the end of the chapter, of what took place in Antioch. We won't be able to cover it all tonight, but I want to read just a few verses. In verse 14 we have the Antioch of Pisidia. (Can I get the map back on the screen.) You see the Antioch way up here? This is Antioch of Pisidia. This over here is Antioch of Syria—there are two Antioch's. They left the church to start the missionary journey from Antioch of Syria, now they're all the way up here in Antioch of Pisidia, is the area where they are; so don't get those two Antioch's confused. That's why looking at a map kind of helps you keep them separated.

In Acts 13:14, "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch of Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." I never imagined in a million years that I wouldn't be able to get through my text tonight, that I would actually get stuck in a spot like this, but I'm going to have to wrap it up because of the time. It kind of leaves us hanging in the middle of this story with Paul in verse 17. It's just so exciting that it's like I'm almost tempted to try to cover a lot of verses in just like five minutes here, but it's so exciting because what we're going to have is Paul's first sermon recorded for us in the Bible. I really don't want to hurry through it, especially the latter portion of that sermon. You read it. Make it your homework. Paul's sermon goes from verses 17-41. In verses 17-25, he rehearses the preparation of God to send Messiah in the Old Testament; in verses 26-37, he declares the Messiah is Jesus Christ; and in verses 38-41, it has the application. But, too much for us to race through, and too many good things to study and to glean from, so we'll pick it up next week.

Let me just wrap it up by saying this: We as a church need to reach up to God in worship and prayer. We need to also reach out in missions, wherever it might be—in the workplace, in our neighborhoods, in our home, out on foreign fields. We need to pray, give, back it up with serving and going. Our God is a missionary God. Jesus came on a rescue mission. The Holy Spirit is a mission Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was the One that, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." God's heart is for the lost. God's heart is for others who need to hear the good news. We can't just sit idly by when people are perishing who need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen?