

CP — 2/19/23

## Acts 12:25–13:3 - The Church in Antioch

### Sermon Outline:

#### Recap

Up, Down, Out

- So far in Acts, the church has been reactive.
- Chapter 1–12 center around the church in Jerusalem and the ministry of Peter.
  - Pentecost, Arrest, Stephen
  - Everything was reactive in a sense.
- Chapter 13- The landscape is the church in Antioch and switches from Peter to Paul.
  - The church becomes less reactive and more proactive.
  - They begin sending.
  - They didn't know what was next, but they were sure they were dependent upon God to do whatever it was.

#### What we already know about Antioch:

- Made up of both Jew and Gentile believers (11:21, 24)
- Devoted to the teaching/hearing of God's Word (11:25–26)
- Their witness and testimony (11:26b)
- Their love for God's people (11:29–30; 12:25)

### Four Characteristics of the Church in Antioch

#### 1. They were served by leaders (13:1–2a)

- Prophets and Teachers
  - Saul and Barnabas
  - Simeon who they called Niger - dark skinned - Africa
  - Lucius of Cyrene - North Africa
  - Manaen - Foster brother of Herod Antipas
    - Herod of the gospels
    - He beheaded John the Baptist and participated in the trials of Jesus
    - God can save anyone from anywhere.
- They were worshipping the Lord
  - Ministering to the Lord
  - To discharge public office
  - They were faithfully fulfilling the call that God had placed on their life.
- But it was seen more than just a public office
  - It was used as priestly service (worship)
  - Serving God within the church must be viewed as an act of Worship to God
- Notice it was to the Lord
  - God is the audience for all spiritual ministry
  - Seen as holy work
- Our serving is first to the Lord, not for the approval of man

- We can't be driven by the applause or fear of man and expect to please the Lord.
- As pastors, our duty is to teach, lead, protect the flock that God has entrusted us with for His glory and your holiness.
- Our job is not to cater to the desires of men but seek the will of the Lord and faithfully worship him by serving you.
  - When pastors function to simply serve man, there is compromise and watering down.
- Some take the "they" of this verse to mean the church as a whole was worshipping and fasting.
  - This may be true, but the same point applies.
  - Our service to the Lord is first a holy work.
  - We don't serve for the applause of man, but the glory of God.
- 2 Corinthians 8:5, 2 Timothy 2:15, Colossians 3:23-24
  - "Whatever"

\*Do you see your service to the Lord as first worship to Him?

\*Are you serving the Lord?

\*How has God called you to serve?

## **2. They sought the Lord's will. (13:2)**

- They were fasting and would fast again in verse 3.
  - Fasting not commanded but assume (Matthew 6:7, Luke 5:33-35)
  - Contrasted to the Pharisee (Matthew 6:16-18)
  - Always connected with vigilant, passionate prayer (Nehemiah 1:4, Psalm 33:13, Daniel 9:3)
- Fasting wasn't for the sake of fasting but a tool to seek the Lord more deeply.
- \*\*They didn't just pray fervently in time of crisis\*\*
- That's the picture here: "What do we do next?"
  - They didn't just plan or dream.
  - They sought the Lord's will.
- They weren't complacent.
  - They still had breath in their lungs.
- They didn't just feast on God's Word, They wanted to serve God and do His will.
- I'm convinced more than ever that we have to pray for God's direction and help in our lives.
- Physical/Spiritual Dynamic
  - There is more than what meets the eye.
  - We have to stop thinking merely physical.
  - We must learn to think/live spiritually .
  - Prayer and fasting tunes the physical to the spiritual.

\*Have we spent time seeking the Lord's will?

\*Have we passionately and sacrificially sought the face of the Lord for His will and help?

\*Have you for your family? Workplace?

\*The extent to which we pray is the extent in which we trust in ourselves.

### **3. They were sensitive to the Spirit. (13:2b)**

- “the Holy Spirit said...”
  - Man, what a great verse!
- We have a God who speaks!
  - He doesn't leave it up to us to figure it out.
- I want you to notice something about the church at Antioch though...
  - They weren't just sitting around waiting to hear what's next
  - They were obeying what they already knew to do.
- We don't know how the Spirit spoke; we just know that He did.
  - Was it through a prophet, in their hearts, through the Word?
- God still speaks through His Holy Spirit today!
  - Through His Word
  - Through others
  - Through circumstances
  - Through dreams\*\*
- May we tune our hearts to hear from Him!
- They were in a position to hear.
- I truly believe that God hears us and speaks to us.
- Will you learn to position yourself in a place to hear from Him?
- Another principle here is that it is God who calls men to serve.

### **4. They were submissive to Lord's will. (13:3)**

- Fasting again - clarity and assurance
- Catch this: they were seeking the Lord's will
- And they got it!
  - “I want you to send your best”
  - This couldn't be what they expected and probably didn't love it.
- Nevertheless, they asked the Lord's will, and they got it. Now, will they obey it?
- They laid their hands and sent them.
  - Affirmed it and commissioned them
- Partnership between God and His people in the work of sending
- But their obedience came at a sacrifice for them
  - They didn't serve themselves, they were obedient
- Are we obeying that which the Lord has revealed to us?
  - Ministry?
  - Work?
  - Family?
  - Friends?
  - Anything and everything?

**God doesn't reveal truth to you just so you could know His will but that you would do it!**

### **Small Group Discussion:**

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Bible passage and sermon Sunday?
2. What were the characteristics of the church at Antioch that Justin mentioned?
3. What does it mean to see service to God as worship of God? Does this mean only at church? Why is it impossible to seek to please both man and God? What does it look like to do “everything” as for the Lord? Does the “whatever” of Colossians 3:23-24 really mean whatever?
4. We see that the church prayed fervently for God’s direction, not just in times of crisis. How does this encourage you? Why do you think we do not give as much time to fasting as we should? Do you think it helps? Why or why not?
5. What is the last thing the Lord has spoken to you? Do you have a hard time hearing the voice of God? How do we decipher if it is God or not? How does God speak to us?
6. Pray for one another about walking in obedience to the Lord’s call on our lives. Spend time praying for direction and discernment. Pray that the Lord will use us this week to serve Him first and to serve others as well.