

## ***Barnabas and Saul Appointed***

<sup>25</sup> And <sup>t</sup>Barnabas and Saul returned <sup>8</sup>from Jerusalem when they had <sup>u</sup>fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also <sup>v</sup>took with them <sup>w</sup>John whose surname was Mark.

**13** Now <sup>a</sup>in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: <sup>b</sup>Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, <sup>c</sup>Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup> As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, <sup>d</sup>"Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work <sup>e</sup>to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup> Then, <sup>f</sup>having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

Winning, Building, Sending (Acts 12:25-13:3)

### **Introduction**

The **but** (δέ) of Acts 12:24 makes the statement about the **word of God** more than a continuation of the story. Luke says look at the contrast in outcomes when persecuting God's people and pocketing God's glory vs promoting God's gospel - *shame and pain versus success*. Luke would have us see in this conclusion the stark contrast between Herod's word and God's word; where a vile and violent voice has been silenced and an evil influence has died, the voice of God is getting louder and is bringing forth more preachers. God is having the last word.

### **Barnabas and Saul - Making the Most of their Moments (Acts 12:25)**

**<sup>25</sup> And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.**

Barnabas and Saul have been away from the church in Antioch on a mission to Judea. These two men of God were sent out of the predominantly Gentile church in Antioch with aid for the predominantly Jewish church in Jerusalem. The famine relief mentioned Acts 11:30 has now been delivered. Take a moment with me to review the mission of Barnabas and Saul. It is recorded in Acts 11:27-30.

<sup>27</sup> And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup> Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. <sup>29</sup> Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. <sup>30</sup> This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 11:27-30, NKJV)

**Barnabas and Saul returned from a fulfilled ministry.** In their service to the saints of Judea they brought three things: (1) relevant aid to an ailing region, (2) practical proof of God's life-changing work in the Gentiles of Antioch, and (3) the Master's plan for making a difference - *discipleship*. Where, you might ask, is the text talking about Barnabas and Saul bringing the Master's plan? It is so subtle you might not see it. It is so plain in the presentation of early church history that it has to be pointed out - **and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark**. In that brief description of their company is a communication about how they made the most of that

missional moment: they used it to mentor John Mark. This is the way of our Master. Consider the words of Robert E. Coleman from his well-known work *The Master Plan of Evangelism*:

Having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program—just letting his disciples follow him.

When one stops to think of it, this was an incredibly simple way of doing it. Jesus had no formal school, no seminaries, no outlined course of study, no periodic membership classes in which he enrolled his followers. None of these highly organized procedures considered so necessary today entered into his ministry. Amazing as it may seem, all Jesus did to teach these men his way was to draw them close to himself. He was his own school and curriculum.

Coleman, Robert E. (2006). *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (p. 33). Grand Rapids, MI: Revell.

Story: Don't Miss Your Mark - Youth Pastors at Alamo Stone (Jason Edwards, David Fry, and Tristan Harris).

It is important that we stay on the lookout for people to mentor while we are engaged in the ongoing mission of reaching the community with the gospel. How do we include them? The answer is as simple as the Lord's approach to evangelism - keep them with you as you do what you do.

- • Keep them with you when you visit with the sick and shut-in.
- • Keep them with you when you are planning worship.
- • Keep them with you when you are working on financial matters for the church.
- • Keep them with you when you are working on the sermon for Sunday.
- • Keep them with you when you are going into the community with the gospel.
- • Keep them with you when you go to lunch.
- • Keep them with you when you prepare a meal for your family.
- • Keep them with you when you work on your yard.
- • Keep them with you when you do maintenance on the building.
- • Keep them with you when you take time to pray for the fellowship.

To be sure, that will mean a ministry that, comparatively speaking, moves a little slower and looks a little lackluster. And working with them will initially make your work take longer. But in due time they will help to multiply the effectiveness of your efforts to make Christ known. We are often so focused on doing things faster and cheaper that we lose sight of the main thing - *making disciples* (Matthew 28:18-20). When we go it alone we become more efficient but less effective. To really make a difference according to the manner of the Master and his men don't miss your Mark.

### Three Outcomes of Focusing On Your Mark

1. Your ministry becomes less efficient but more effective.
2. Your ministry becomes less scary and more scalable.

3. Your ministry becomes less about ownership and more stewardship.

### **Barnabas and Saul - Serving and then Sent Out (Acts 13:1-3)**

<sup>1</sup> Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup> As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup> Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

The local church (little "C") can be so hard at work to gain and keep people that it misses the greater goal of getting people ready for the work that God is wanting to do through them in the Church (big "C") Universal (Ephesians 2:10). The determination to have and hold people is sometimes found contrary to the goal of the Spirit: to save, to serve, ... and send. Concerning the sending of Barnabas and Saul from the church in Antioch the renown Bible commentator FF Bruce has this to say:

It is perhaps worth noticing that the two men who were to be released for what would nowadays be called missionary service overseas were the two most eminent and gifted leaders in the church.

[Bruce, F. F. \(1988\). \*The Book of the Acts\* \(p. 246\). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.](#)

Growing the fellowship is good. But it must be seen as part of the greater goal of preparing people that belong to the Lord for the work of His ministry - inside and outside the local church. The ministries that your local church prepares people for may be elsewhere. Yep. Your church may be only a small part of what God is wanting to do in the lives of people that are currently with you. But you can do the small part well if you keep the greater King and kingdom in mind.

If we are focused on building the King's kingdom we can rejoice in the sending away of saints that have been prepared to serve the Lord in another place. If we are focused on our own kingdom the leaving of a mature Jesus follower is only viewed as a loss. It is seen as betrayal, as a lack of loyalty, and merely a sad day.

### **Ministering to the Lord and Fasting (Matthew 25:31-40; Isaiah 58:3-9; Matthew 6:16-18)**

The church in Antioch had the kind of kingdom-mindedness that makes for a great missions program. When the Holy Spirit spoke to them about releasing Barnabas and Saul for His work they responded promptly in obedience (Acts 13:1-2). (Do not overlook that they heard the Holy Spirit as they were fasting and ministering to the Lord.) With the authority vested in them by Heaven they sent top-tier talent away (Acts 13:3). They realized that the mission was not to have and to hold Barnabas and Saul. It was, having had a season of being served by them, to send these saints out for the glory of God and the good of His people elsewhere.

Are you trying to keep someone who should have been gone a long time ago? Think bigger than having and holding. Have the courage to trust that God is going to keep raising up talent. Let the elders convene to endorse and send the called into their calling.

The laying on of hands in this instance imparted to Barnabas and Saul no spiritual gift or authority that they did not already possess; but by this means the church of Antioch, through its leaders, expressed its fellowship with them and recognized them as its delegates or "apostles." They were sent out by the whole church, and it was to the whole church that they made their report when, in due course, they

returned to Antioch (14:26–27)

Bruce, F. F. (1988). *The Book of the Acts* (p. 246). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

## Conclusion

Illustration - Sending me to Brazil when I was in college. My grandfather said that it would be a sign if the money came in. My grandmother spent time with God and then agreed that I was supposed to go.

## Questions for Review

1. Do you have a Mark in your life? In what activities do you allow Mark to join? Is there room for improvement? Note: Sons and daughters are our first Marks.
2. Have you considered or employed fasting as a way to focus on God or draw nearer to Him for resolution? What are some things to avoid in our fasting (Matthew 6:16-18)? What are some things to include in our fasting (Isaiah 58:3-9)?
3. When people leave your ministry for other things that God is calling them to do is it a celebration or sad day? What could you do to change that (Acts 13:3)?

## Scriptures for Review

### Prophets and Teachers

- 1 Corinthians 12:28-29

### Fasting

- Matthew 4:2
- Matthew 6:16-18 vs Isaiah 58:1-9
- Matthew 9:15; Mark 2:20; Luke 5:35
- Matthew 17:21

### Laying on Hands

- Healing - (Matthew 9:18; Mark 5:23; Acts 9:17; 28:8)
- Holy Spirit - (Acts 8:18-19; Acts 9:17)
- Spiritual Gifts - (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6)
- Doctrine and Rules - (1 Timothy 5:22; Hebrews 6:2)