

The Holy Spirit Sends Out (Acts 13:1-12)

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Introduction

This month we have been focusing on the Holy Spirit and his role in our lives. So far we have looked at the Power of the Holy Spirit, the Fruit of the spirit and Gifts of the Spirit.

Ultimately, as believers, He has not left us alone, we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide, empower, and equip us for the work God has called us to do

- **Read Acts 13:1-12.**

This passage takes us on a journey with Barnabas and his companion Paul as they embark on their first missionary journey. It's a powerful account that teaches us valuable lessons about the purposes of God for our lives and how he equips us to fulfil that purpose.

1. The Holy Spirit Sends us out

We hear it loud and clear in verse 4, ***"The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus."*** Sent by who? The Holy Spirit.

In this passage we see that the Holy Spirit selects Barnabas and Paul for a special task – His desire is to send them out to reach a non-Jewish world.

I think it is important to point out that when the Holy Spirit sent out Barnabas and Paul He was reflecting the heart of God for the world. ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"*** (John 3:16). God's sending is motivated by His deep love for the world.

In John 20:21 we read, ***"So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*** It is out of His love and desire for restoration and redemption of His creation that the Lord Jesus sends us out to bring His message of hope and salvation to others.

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus gave us the Great Commission, ***"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."*** Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to be active participants in sharing the love of Christ and leading others to a saving relationship with Him.

Our story is one of being sent

- Started with the Holy Spirit speaking to Joe – Joe heard a missionary speaking about the street kids in the Philippines. One night he started to cry when Jenny was putting him to bed. When Jenny asked him why he said asked if we could move to the Philippines to help the street kids.
- Around 1 year later we went on a short term missions trip to help out a missionary in the Philippines. We enjoyed ourselves and felt we had done what God had called us to do. No intention of returning at all. However, we had a short stopover in Singapore and that's when we both felt the call to go back.

- On our return to NZ Jenny handed her notice in at work, and I resigned as the national director of Cleansing Stream Ministries and started a foundation called Hands of Hope Ministries.
- It was as simple as that. The only problem was that when people asked us what we were going to do in the Philippines we sort of said, we don't know as God had not shown us that part yet. We felt a bit like Abraham, pack your bags and go to a county I will show you....and God did reveal it to us...
- 12 months later we moved back in the Philippines to live and were there for 10 years
- Agoon, the church, small groups and the school. Like just in a few sentences with a few pictures to give some context.

Missions teams to Mindanao

- The Holy Spirit moved and we saw lots of people responding to the gospel. One of the foundational principles we established within all age groups - adults, youth, young adults - was this, the Holy Spirit sends us into the world to reach it – to establish the Kingdom of God
- When working with poor people you sometimes have to address and break a sense of entitlement they have. Poor people know how to milk the system and are happy to accept handouts.
- One of the ways we choose to do this was taking teams of young people into the mountains of Mindanao. Our Youth Pastor was from that area so that was the connection.
- Yes, it was hard work, you often walked up mountains, crossed flooded rivers and did your best to avoid terrorist groups, to reach remote villages.

The demonic story (If there is enough time),

- I love the story in Mark 5 about the demon possessed man in the Gadarenes.
- This man had an unclean spirit, lived among the tombs, was able to break chains that had shackled him, and during day and night would cry out and cut himself. In other words – he was a mess.
- Jesus sets him free and then in v18 -20 we read, ***“And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marvelled.”*** (Mark 5:18–20)
- This man wanted to go with Jesus but Jesus said no, go back and tell people what great things the Lord has done for you.

In 1 Peter 2:9 says, *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”*. Our identity as children of God and ambassadors of Christ shapes our perspective and empowers us to fulfil our mission - to bring people out of darkness into God's wonderful light.

2. As we go the Holy Spirit empowers us

“Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.” And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.” (Acts 13:9–11)

Verses 5-12 recount the events that transpired during Barnabas and Paul's ministry in Cyprus, specifically their encounter with Bar-Jesus (also known as Elymas), a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet.

In **verse 6**, they met Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus, who wanted to hear the Word of God. However, Elymas, the sorcerer, opposed their message and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith. In response, Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, confronted Elymas and pronounced a temporary blindness upon him (verses 9-11). This miraculous act reveals the truth, authority and power of the Gospel message.

The proconsul, witnessing this event, believed in the teaching of the Lord and became a follower of Jesus Christ (verse 12). This episode shows the authority we have as Christians and how the power of God can work thru us.

The key sentence here is “Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, confronted Elymas...” It wasn’t in his own strength, it was with the power of the Holy.

When Jesus prepared to depart from His disciples, He assured them that they would not be left as orphans. In John 14:16-17, Jesus said, ***“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.”*** Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would be a constant companion and guide to His followers.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus promised His disciples, ***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*** The Holy Spirit empowers and equips us with spiritual gifts, and guides us in fulfilling our mission.

- Maribeth testimony – Our school secretary (Lory) is a disciple of Maribeth.
- Marivic
- When we built our first church we faced a lot of opposition from a person who was in a position of authority.

Often, we may feel inadequate or incapable of fulfilling our mission. However, the Holy Spirit empowers us in our weaknesses. 2 Corinthians 12:9 reminds us, ***“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”*** The Holy Spirit's strength is made perfect in our weakness, enabling us to accomplish God's purposes despite our limitations.

3. The importance of the Body of Christ in sending.

“Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” (Acts 13:3) Notice who sends in verse 3. What does it say? **They**...the church – the Body of Christ.

There was a diverse community of believers in Antioch, which included prophets and teachers. The body at Antioch recognised God’s call on Barnabas and Paul, laid hands on them, commissioned them and then sent them out. This demonstrated to Barnabas and Paul that they had a group of people, standing in unity, behind them and supporting them in what they were doing. They were not alone!

We have a number of people supporting what we do in the Philippines. People pray for us, people support us financially and mission teams come over to get involved in what we are doing. In fact, a team from Tauranga is heading over in Early December. Truth be told, it’s a picture of the body of Christ working together to fulfil the mission on God. To make His name known in the nations, to be the light within a community of people, to proclaim His Word, bringing salvation and hope to people.

Currently we are not missionaries overseas like Barnabas and Paul. In fact, though I will still own and run the school and oversee the churches from NZ, we have always believed that the best people to reach Filipinos are Filipinos so it always was our goal to make ourselves redundant. However, we still have a mission field where we live, work, interact with people. I retrained as a teacher when I returned to NZ 3 years ago.

As with the Body in Antioch, this Body of Christ (MBCC) is also diverse – different nationalities, different occupations - students, IT professionals, engineers, doctors, nurses, plumbers, electricians, shop assistants, teachers, and many more. I have already mentioned that we are all sent. However, though we are not all called to go overseas we are all called to reach those in our places of influence, work places and neighbourhoods - this is our mission field.

As we go, each one of us should have the same attitude that members of the Church in Antioch had toward Barnabas and Paul, praying and fasting for each other, supporting and encouraging one another. Look, we need each other to fulfil God’s call and to reach our communities, nation and the nations of the world. In God’s eyes I believe it has never been about one person, it’s been about the body of Christ working together in unity to fulfil God’s purpose.

Conclusion

Overall, Acts 13:1-12 highlights the pivotal role of the Holy Spirit in the early Church and the calling of Barnabas and Paul for their missionary work. This passage shows that

1. Holy Spirit sends us out in His power to reach the world,
2. The Holy Spirit’s power helps us to overcome opposition and bring people to faith.
3. Finally, it also reveals the importance of the Body of Christ in sending. We are here to pray, fast, and encourage one another. God wants His Church to expand and we need each other to make it happen.