

THE METHOD OF MISSIONS

ACTS 13

Text: Acts 13:1-4

Introduction:

Someone once said, “The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to Him the more intensely missionary we must become.”

Someone else said, “The church exists by missions, just as fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no church; and where there is neither church nor mission, there is no faith.”

Over the next few weeks we will consider the method of missions. We must remember when it comes to the work of God that our motive must be right, and our methods and means must be biblical.

As we look at the methods of missions we must remember that they must be biblical.

Missions is a mandate given to the church. Therefore missionaries must be sent from the local church.

Notice the characteristics of this church and the work of missions.

1. HAD THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE

A. A Well-Taught Church

Acts 13:1

¹ Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Teaching was a priority in this church

They were following the instruction in Matt. 28:

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

They understood their responsibility to evangelism.

B. A Welcoming Church

Sadly, most churches can be put into a category as – White or Black Church, Spanish Church, Rich or Poor Church, Southern or Yankee Church.

Too often churches will support a missionary serving in Africa, but don't welcome black people to their church.

They'll send money to missionaries in Mexico, but want nothing to do with Hispanics.

May I say this is the **"HEIGHT OF HYPOCRICITY"**

But that wasn't the case with this church.

Note those that made up this church:

Acts 13:1

¹Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

- Barnabus – He was a Levite who was born in Cyprus who would have understood the Greek culture.
- Simeon who was called Niger – His name meant "black". This may have been the same one mentioned in the Crucifixion account.
- Lucius – Who was born in Cyrene which was located in Northern Africa
- Manaen – Which had been brought up with Jeord the Tetrarch
- Saul – a leader in the Jewish religion and was from Tarsus

Because of their welcoming spirit they reaped the benefits:

- Barnabas was a kind and generous man who was responsible of good works
- Simeon who probably carried the cross of the Lord was a man who had been to Calvary. Every church needs people who have been to Calvary, and who haven't gotten over it.

Some think that Lucius was won to Christ by Simeon when he returned home to Cyrene

Manaen knew the importance of compassion because of the deeds of Herod.

With Saul they understood that God makes new creatures and didn't hold his past against him and he became one of the greatest Christians and servants.

C. A Working Church

Note: - As they ministered to the Lord

Acts 13:2

² 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.

The work was centered on the Lord

They did what they did not for applause, a pat on the back, or an earthly reward, but because they loved the Lord.

They had a sacrificial spirit.

D. A Waiting Church – Fasted

- They expected God to speak to them
- They were willing to wait on the Lord to get guidance from Him
- They wanted to honor and please the Lord more than anything
- But wanted to be sure they had clear direction

This church was a well taught, welcoming, working, and waiting church.

They had the right atmosphere.

2. THEY WERE UNDER THE RIGHT AUTHORITY

Acts 13:2

² 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.

Acts 13:4

⁴So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

A. The Holy Ghost Was in Charge

The call didn't come from a man nor a board or even the church.

The call came from God.

The Holy Spirit is the key person working behind the scenes.

He:

- Equips people for the ministry
- Enlists people into the ministry
- Empowers them in the ministry

This church had the right atmosphere, and was under the right authority, but note also they had:

3. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Acts 13:2

²As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Notice who God called:

- Not novices
- Not new converts with great zeal but no knowledge
- Not men who had come forward under the high pressure of a preacher
- Not men on a fast moving itinerary looking for support from a local church that don't know them, had never seen them, and would never see them again if they failed to support them. (I'll say more about this later on in this series.)
- These men had proven themselves in the local church.
- They had and were still laboring in the church
- They had led people to the Savior
- They had demonstrated their ability to teach and their desire to serve the Lord
- They were loved, trusted, and respected
- They were gracious in their manner, gifted in the word, glorious in their achievements

- These were not dropouts from the business world or someone who couldn't or wouldn't hold a job (AS WE WILL SEE IN ANOTHER MESSAGE) or men who could succeed in the ministry anywhere else.
- These were the 2 best men that the church at Antioch had.

For this church to send these men to the mission field would be like cutting off an arm or a leg.

- They would be greatly missed
- They didn't know who would fill the gap when they left

They:

A. Prayed for Barnabus and Saul – fasted and prayed

Acts 13:3

³ And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

B. Partnered with Barnabus and Saul – laid their hands on them

C. Parted with Barnabus and Saul – they sent them away.

Imagine just for a moment the scene:

- They may never see them again
- No doubt many tears were shed

What should our attitude be?

- We can't afford to lose them
- How will we replace them
- Let's try to talk them out of it

Our attitude should be!

- Pray for them
- Partner with them
- Part with them

My prayer for this church should be: "That we would have enough missionaries on the field from our church that the sun would never set on the Gospel being proclaimed by one of our people."

Close:

What kind of missions church would my church be;
If every member was mission-minded just like me?

Can you do a little more?
Could you give a little more?
Could you pray a little harder?

Think when you enter that beautiful city,
and the saved around you appear.
Just think how you will feel,
when you hear it was your effort
that invited me here!

If not you, then who?

If not here, then where?

If not now, then when?