



CrossRoads Notes:

Turn your Bibles to Acts 13:1-3

Title: Biblically Sent Off

Theme: Enjoying the Protection of Healthy Oversight

Series: Laboring Together With God

Introduction: *The Body of Christ as represented in the local church can be a great assistance to foreign missions.* There is a great difference of opinion in how missions should be overseen, but all deep studiers of the Word of God agree that Acts 13 is a valid starting point for consideration of how to Biblically oversee foreign missions. The Word of God, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, gives us guidelines for nurturing, organizing and training those who are responding to the high calling of missionary work. "The procedure of evangelizing found in the [Word of God] is reproducible and should be reproduced." (Mark C. Vowels, Director of Missions at Bob Jones University)

Interrogative Sentence: *Just how can the truths known and lived out in the first century be reproduced in our lifetime in regard to missions?*

Proposition: *I would propose to you that the Word of God gives at least five key truths for the enjoyment of foreign missions.* Understanding these truths enables us to 1.) Embrace the Source. 2.) Be Submitted to the Separation. 3.) Participate in the Sending. 4.) Give Healthy Supervision. 5.) Biblically Support Our Missionaries.

Transitional Sentence: *The first step to enjoying a healthy missionary ministry is to embrace the source.* (Matthew 9:35)

To embrace Christianity is to become a disciple of Christ. The New International Dictionary of the Bible tells us that a "Disciple, (*mathetes*) is a pupil of some teacher. [The personal application] is the acceptance in mind and life of the teacher. The heart of the "Great Commission" is to make 'disciples' (*matheteuo*) or followers of the doctrine [of Christ]." (The Complete Dictionary of the Bible)

Can you name the missionaries support by CrossRoads Church?

- 1.)
- 2.)
- 3.)
- 4.)
- 5.)
- 6.)
- 7.)

Do you know their heart in regard to shepherding those to whom they are sent?

Those whom we should partner with, regarding missions, are to have the same compassion as that of Christ. All true missionaries have the heart of the Apostle Paul whom the Holy Spirit led to make this great plea, "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2)

Those we should partner with in missions must embrace the heart of Christ for the souls of mankind. True missionaries trust not in the efforts of man but "...the Lord of the harvest, ...to send out workers into His harvest field."

Transitional Sentence: *Embracing the heart of God and Christ in the work of missions prepares the heart for Biblical separation for missions work.* (Acts 13:2-4) The heart of this part of the message is "set apart" (*aphorize*) meaning to select to some office or work of the Lord. (Acts 13:2; Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:15; The Complete Word Study of the New Testament)

Though the missionary's call begins in the heart of the person being sent, the Lord's people should also confirm it. Director of Missions at Bob Jones University, Mark C. Vowels writes, "Missionary candidates should not go to the field without the approval of Godly counsel from those who know them."

Are those who oversee missions people of prayer, men and women who seek time to get alone with the Lord and obedient to pray to completion what the Lord calls them to do?

In Acts 10 we read that this vision came to Peter after he went to pray. (Acts 10:9) In many different places in the Word of God we read of the people of God being led of the Holy Spirit including Jesus. (Acts 16:6-7; Acts 13:4; Isaiah 6:1; Matthew 4:1)

The New International Dictionary of the Bible tells us, "As the Heavenly Father is God and His Son Jesus Christ is God, so the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit as well as the Son was active in creation; He was active on certain occasions in His own person in Old Testament times and more intensively in the Gospels; and in Acts and the Epistles He becomes the resident divine agent in the church and [her] members. Teaching concerning the Holy Spirit has been neglected and [sadly] distorted, but the subject deserves careful attention." Romans 8:14 says, "...those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

Let the Holy Spirit take His sword, the Word of God, and place it deep within your heart. The church at Antioch was first to set forth the workings of the organized church. (Acts 14:23; A Commentary Critical and Explanatory) The Christian Church was becoming more organized with heart of deliberately evangelizing the world. Because the church wanted to enjoy God's plan they were willing to be overseen by "prophets" and "teachers." These prophets spoken of in Acts 13 were preachers who had given their hearts to listening for the word of the Lord and at every opportunity provided they took

God's Word and made it known. The teachers were men in the local area whose duty was to instruct new converts in Christian doctrine. (Daily Study Bible Series)

"Fasting" (*nesteu*) and prayer in our key text is often the model set forth for the organized church when appointing people to oversee a great work for the Lord. (Acts 13:3; 14:23) Fasting in the right spiritual heart means to be so consumed over a matter that spending time away from food or other desires of the flesh is for the key purpose of determining the will of God. (The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible) Satisfying the flesh is replaced with the sole desire of being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading for the purpose of achieving the perfect will of God. "Reasons given for fasting are to strengthen in prayer [and] to prepare for revelation..." (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament) In Scripture we see several purposes for fasting. It's self-control submitting to the control and enabling of the Holy Spirit. It is a way of depending upon God alone and drawing all strength from Him. It is a way of focusing totally on Him when seeking His guidance and help. We tend to think of fasting as going without food, but we can fast from anything. We can choose not to do something we like in order to do what is better so we can spend time with the Lord and give Him proper adoration. (Isaiah 58) There is no power in fasting. It is simply a way of expressing a heart attitude before the Lord that you would rather be with Him and know His will.

Let the Holy Spirit of Christ lay this truth deep into your heart. When spiritual leaders take seriously the call to reach lost souls for Christ, there will be obedience in separating themselves from living for the flesh, being influenced by the world and listening to the lies of the devil. They will be involved in fasting and prayer, thus, enjoying separation unto the Lord's work.

Transitional Sentence: *Holy Spirit leaders and Christians enjoy separation unto the Lord's work and participate in the sending of missionaries.* Acts 13:3 says, "So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off." Because the term "sending church" is so used in the Body of Christ today to challenge people to become involved in missions, it is important to understand what the Holy Spirit is teaching here.

The laying on of hands identified the church with their missionaries' work and acknowledged the Lord's direction for the missionaries being sent. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Is there a core group in your church that identifies with the work your missionaries are sent out to do? Do they willingly separate themselves from the pleasures of the flesh, overcome the lures of the world and regularly pray for God's anointing upon the work the missionaries are involved in?

Just as Christ took the battle for the souls of men seriously, missions minded Christians take this battle seriously. Fasting and praying for the work our missionaries are sent on is being Christ like because it shows a Biblical concern for their expeditions.

It is imperative that missionaries and the church that sends them are aware of the work God has placed before them and that this work is blanketed in fasting and prayer. Holy Spirit led churches that are missions minded set aside times when the congregation is offered the opportunity to agree in prayer and fasting for their missionaries as the Lord leads.

Are you aware of the times set for praying for your missionaries? Do you know the needs of your missionaries?

Transitional Sentence: *Churches led of the Holy Spirit to be involved in missions enjoy Biblical supervision for the congregations and the spiritual leaders who provide direction in fasting and prayer. Acts 13:4 holds a powerful truth that must be grasped, "The two of them [Barnabas and Saul], were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit."*

Mission boards and the local church are not the ones to tell missionaries where to do a work nor who can be on their support team. When missionaries are truly separating themselves unto the Lord and fasting and praying for Holy Spirit guidance, it will be clearly revealed to them what the Lord's directions are. There will be a support team working with them and that team is set up by the missionaries already working in the field.

Do your missionaries oversee a ministry that is lead of the Holy Spirit? How do they respond to the Lord's opening and closing of doors?

When both the Body of Christ and missionaries are sold out on the work of the Lord they get to enjoy the benefits of that work. (Acts 14:27; Acts 15:4) Which of the missionaries supported by CrossRoads show the Biblical maturity of Peter? Do they have witnesses of God doing a work among them? Is there a rejoicing among the Body of Christ of the work being done by the Lord?

The Biblical account of Peter's call and ministry to Cornelius's household spells out so clearly God's working through a believer who is called and supervised by the Holy Spirit. Peter was a man of fasting, prayer, and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading. He clearly explained to all just what the Lord had called him to do as well as what the Lord did. This powerful obedient servant of the Lord even took six men with him to Cornelius's household and to the church in Jerusalem so they could bear witness to the ministry that took place. (Acts 10:23; 11:12)

Missionaries who are valuable to the work of the Lord will show Biblical maturity in accountability. This enables the Body of Christ to rejoice in all that God is doing through those for whom the church is fasting and praying.

Transitional Sentence: *Biblical Supervision enables missionaries to complete the will of God. All who have joined hands together with them enjoy the reports of the work the Lord is doing.*

Churches who are missionary minded may also participate in financial support of their missionaries. (1 Timothy 5:18; 1 Timothy 5:17; Luke 10:7) All true missionaries are sent and commissioned by the Lord to make disciples of Christ Jesus. Christians who devote themselves to fasting, prayer, and hearing the voice of the Lord and are sold out to taking the gospel message to wherever the Lord sends them are entitled to compensation. The great missionary, the Apostle Paul, lays a principle which is not always followed as it should be regarding missions. The idea in this is to reward for work done well. (New Bible Commentary: 1 Corinthians 4:2)

The missionaries who are supported by any certain Body of Christ have, out of spiritual maturity, proven themselves faithful in living the Christian life, faithful in preparation in what the Lord has called them to do and faithful to pray through to completion the ministry to which the Lord has called them. They have shown themselves able to trust in God regardless of the trials of life and conflicts that come in battle for the souls of mankind. They live the life that says as the Missionary Paul when he wrote, "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many." (2 Corinthians 1:8-10)

In Closing: Charles Inwood wrote, "The sob of millions of poor souls sound in my ears, and this moves my heart. And I try to measure, as God helps me, something of their darkness, something of their blank misery, something of their despair. Oh, think of these needs! I say again, they are oceans depths. And, beloved, in my Master's name, Jesus Christ, I want you to think earnestly about them, until they appall you, until you cannot sleep, until you cannot criticize." (Knight's Treasury of 2,000 Illustrations)

There is complacency in many who are involved in missions and those who attend church today.

When the church and missionaries fail to embrace the heart of Christ, to be Biblically separated, to Biblically participate in the sending, or to provide healthy supervision and support for the work of missions, there will not be anyone whom God has called to tie on the rope of the Gospel and plunge into the lost world of souls. There will not be anyone who is on shore holding the ropes of fasting, prayer, and vision for missions.

Sir William MacGregor said, 'Its just that every Muslim regards himself as a missionary; the majority of Christians think it is another man's work.'" (AMG Bible Illustrations, Logos Library System) Let us Pray!!!