

Sermon Notes for May 12th

Acts 13:1-3; 14:8-18. "Start with heart"

We are in the middle of The Acts of the Apostles - which is the linkage between the Gospels and the Letters or the Epistles. Luke is the author of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts. The first half of Acts centers around Peter - now the attention shifts to Paul.

Acts 13:1-3 (Voice)

13 The church in Antioch *had grown strong*, with many prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon (a dark man *from Central Africa*), Lucius (from Cyrene *in North Africa*), Manaen (a member of Herod's governing council), and Saul. **2** Once they were engaged in a time of worship and fasting when the Holy Spirit spoke to them, "Commission Barnabas and Saul to a project I have called them to accomplish." **3** They fasted and prayed some more, laid their hands on the two selected men, and sent them off on their new mission.

Let's quickly look at these church leaders in Antioch - and with a Bible list, they usually are in order of importance: **Barnabas**, was a Greek-speaking Jew from Cyprus. Because of his ancestry, it is unlikely he would have had permission to worship in the temple...perhaps he was a "God-Fearer" like Cornelius the Centurion. **Simeon**, also called Niger NI-ger...which is Latin, for "black". The importance of the name is not the color of the skin - but that it isn't Greek - nor Jewish - it is a strong Gentile name. **Lucius**, it has been speculated, may have been with Barnabas at Pentecost because both are from the same Jewish outpost. **Manaen** was either a friend or a servant to Herod Antipas - the killer of John the Baptist. Our final name on the list was the former Pharisee, Saul, soon to be **Paul**. At the least, he "probably

held jackets so that others had full use of their arms for the stoning of Stephen.” (www.revgalblogs.org)

If you ever hear talk about someone MIGHT not fit into a particular church, look at this example. There were major differences in race, ethnicity, religion of origin, languages and cultures. Also, please note, three AFRICANS commissioned Paul on his first missionary trip.

Acts 14:8-18 (Voice)

8 In Lystra they met a man who had been crippled since birth; his feet were completely useless. **9** He listened to Paul speak, and Paul could see in this man’s face that he had faith to be healed.

Paul (*shouting*): **10** Stand up on your own two feet, man!

The man jumped up and walked! **11** When the crowds saw this, they started shouting in Lycaonian.

Crowd: The gods have come down to us! They’ve come in human form!

12 They decided that Barnabas was Zeus and Paul was Hermes (since he was the main speaker). **13** *Before they knew it*, the priest of Zeus, whose temple was prominent in that city, came to the city gates with oxen and garlands of flowers so the Lycaonians could offer sacrifices in worship *to Paul and Barnabas!* **14** When they heard of this, Paul and Barnabas were beside themselves with frustration—they ripped their tunics *as an expression of disapproval* and rushed out into the crowd.

Paul and Barnabas (*shouting*): **15** Friends! No! No! Don’t do this! We’re just humans like all of you! *We’re not here to be worshiped!* We’re here to bring you good news—good news that you should

turn from these worthless forms of worship and instead serve the living God, the God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that they contain. **16** Through all previous generations, God has allowed all the nations to follow their own customs and religions, **17** but even then God revealed Himself by doing good to you—giving you rain for your crops and fruitful harvests season after season, filling your stomachs with food and your hearts with joy.

18 In spite of these words, they were barely able to keep the crowds from making sacrifices to them.

This is the Word of God for the people of God!

Thanks be to God! Amen

Jesus and the Holy Spirit are with Peter from being a fisherman to being the leader of the church. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are with Paul from being a prosecutor to being a promoter of the church. The Holy Spirit gave Peter the power to heal the sick. The Holy Spirit gave Paul the power to heal the sick. The Holy Spirit changed Peter's heart as to who and what was in and what was out. The Holy Spirit changed Paul's heart in a similar fashion. Peter was mistaken for a god. Paul was mistaken for Hermes.

Both Peter and Paul became leaders. If we want to be leaders, we have to start with the heart.

(Brené Brown) "At the center of all our elaborate personal security measures and protection schemes lies the most precious treasure of the human experience: the heart. Rather than protecting and hiding our heart behind bulletproof glass, wholeheartedness is about integration. It's integrating our thinking, feeling, and behavior." By the by, integrate is to "be made whole."

(Brené Brown) “All of these situations lead to the biggest threat to our ego and our sense of self-worth: shame. Shame is the feeling that washes over us and makes us feel so flawed that we question whether we’re worthy of love, belonging, and connection.” Peter needed to be made whole because of the shame he felt by denying Jesus. Paul needed to be made whole because of the shame he felt by persecuting Jesus.

Peter and Paul became daring and effective leaders because the Holy Spirit provided them with the courage to always point to the truth.

Here is a final Brené Brown story:

“I spoke at a global leadership event for Costco. I was sitting at a table in the front row watching their CEO, Craig Jelinek, take questions from Costco leaders. The questions were tough, and 90 percent of the time, Craig’s answers were as tough or tougher. I’ve seen a lot of CEOs take unvetted questions, and more often than not, when the questions have hard answers, the leader zigzags like there’s a gator in hot pursuit.

You hear a lot of non-answers: ‘Great question. Let me give that some thought.’ ‘Wow. Good idea. Someone write that down so we can do some discovery.’ ‘Well, that’s one way to frame the question...’

But on this cold morning in Seattle, there was no zigzagging, just straight talk: ‘Yes. We did make that decision and here’s why...’ ‘No. We’re not going this direction and here’s how we got to that decision...’ I started thinking, (CRUD) I have to get onstage after this open question-and-answer session, and these people are going to be bristly. When Craig was done, the audience leapt to their feet, clapping and cheering. I was shocked.

I turned to the woman sitting next to me and said, 'That was really hard. He did not give them the answers they were looking for. Why is everyone cheering?'

She smiled and said, 'At Costco, we clap for the truth.'

We start with heart, and we stand for The Way and The Truth and the Life.

Romans 5:5 (Voice) "And hope will never fail to satisfy our deepest need because the Holy Spirit that was given to us has flooded our hearts with God's love."

AND THAT'S THE MESSAGE!