



Sermon Text: Acts 13:1-3

Sermon Date: March 25, 2018

At first glance, our text seems insignificant. Yet, upon closer inspection, we discover that this paragraph is the hinge upon which the entire book of Acts turns. The event of our passage alters the history of the world, as Barnabas and Saul are sent off on a global mission assignment. We examined our passage through three lenses—corporately, programmatically, and individually.

CORPORATELY

From a corporate lens, we discovered four qualities that defined the church of Antioch. First, Antioch was a **mature** church. They prioritized the teaching of God's Word (11:26) which resulted in an abundance of qualified prophets and teachers. Second, Antioch was a **diverse** church. Their leadership was composed of individuals of different colors, with different backgrounds and cultures. In their diversity, the church could credibly proclaim that the gospel was for everyone. Third, the church was **devoted**. It was committed to worship, fasting, and prayer—diligently searching for God's direction and sensitive to it. Fourth, Antioch was an **obedient** church. They submitted to God's instruction even though it cost them two of their best leaders. They obeyed even though it hurt.

PROGRAMMATICALLY

Examining our text programmatically, we learned an important lesson about the mission of the church: **Everyday evangelism is essential but inadequate; Cross-cultural evangelism is necessary.** A faithful New Testament church must be committed to both local and global missions. It must have a passion for its neighborhood and the nations. Even though there would have been hundreds of thousands of non-Christians in Antioch, God called the church to engage in cross-cultural missions work. Sharing the gospel in our daily lives with the people around us is absolutely essential. Yet, if we were to share the gospel with everyone we know and they shared the gospel with everyone they know and so on, there would still be enormous segments of the world that would remain unreached. For this reason, every church must prioritize cross-cultural evangelism.

INDIVIDUALLY

Lastly, we examined our text through an individual lens, and we saw how this text challenges our individual autonomy in three ways.

1. **Your church is not just your church.** Antioch is in its "glory days." Yet, in verse 2, the Holy Spirit spoke with authority and commanded them to send two of their most important leaders. In doing so, we are forced to remember that the church isn't ours; it is God's church.
2. **Your decisions are not just your decisions.** It would appear that God had already called Barnabas and Saul before He made it known to the church. Yet, they didn't just go—they waited for the church to send them. Stott says, "Although we have no liberty to deny the validity of personal choice, it is safe and healthy only in relation to the Spirit and the church."
3. **Your future is not just your future.** Barnabas and Saul were living a pastor's dream—big church, big city, big name, big influence. And yet, God commands them to go into the obscurity of the mission field. Here we learn that our future is not just our future. While we may have wonderful plans, we must always submit our future to God's will.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. How can the discipline of fasting strengthen your spiritual walk?
3. On Sunday, Justin read a quote that said, "One-third of the individuals in the world live within peoples with no church." Why must churches prioritize intentionally cross-cultures to take the gospel to them?
4. Of the three sub-points under the "individual" lens, which one was the most challenging for you, and why?