

Into a series called – Advance the Kingdom: Mission Requires Movement | God has one plan...

We are seeking: Salvation | Restoration | Discipleship – Who is your one:

We are into a sweet text...first New Testament Missionary journey is underway...don't get far...

Truth: Where there is divine advancement there is demonic opposition

- Throughout Paul's letters he continually uses **military metaphors** to describe discipleship
  - Phil. 2 & Ph. 1:2 = 'Fellow soldiers' | 2 Tim. = courage, loyalty and dedication | Eph. Armor I'm in the Lord's Army...Yes Sir! - I have a feeling stories like the one recorded in today's text There is no point in forming an army unless there is someone to fight and something to fight for

We call it a 'Mission Field' for a reason – We're behind enemy lines

We think we have to go far away to encounter opposition | North Korea – Afghanistan – Iran

As we see...the opposition started right away and Paul and Barnabas weren't in a strange land...

- (4) So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them.

- MAP...Cyprus (Barnabas) | Synagogues (Paul) | Close proximity and intimate familiarity Proximity + Familiarity = Opportunity | With opportunity comes opposition...Not just North Korea The forces of evil no more want to let go their influence in North Korea than they do Albuquerque

Big Idea – Mission Requires Movement – Anticipate Resistance

- When people seek to advance God's purposes...satanic opposition is unavoidable

Two – 'What to do in the face of opposition' and One 'Why' – PRAY – Our first what to do...

### 1. In the face of Gospel opposition: Seize Opportunities (6-8)

6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. 7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas (e-lee-mas) the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Right out of the gate we see the opportunity and the opposition

- Opportunity:** Sergius Paulus Proconsul – Roman Official over a Providence – Man of Intelligence
  - He summoned Barnabas and Saul seeking to hear the word of God
- Opposition:** Bar-Jesus (Elymas) – Who is a magician and false prophet | FRAUDULENT WIZARD
  - Magicians were different then than today...Not David Copperfield or Pen and Teller
  - Fortune tellers & dream interpreters...so Politically Powerful Persian Emperors were approved

IMPORTANT: Being a magician wasn't what made him dangerous (Mat. 2)

False Prophet – False Prophets are dangerous

People who bring messages that contradict the Word of God | Evil's Job...Keep people from faith

- Do we run into many 'Magicians' today that are influencing people away from Jesus? No
- Do we have many 'False Prophets' that are influencing people to turn away from Jesus? YES! You're not going to get many of these types of situation...will you come over and tell me about Jesus What you will find are people that are seeking truth | seeking restoration | seize those opportunities

(TIME 20) I MESSED UP: Ran after people who were determined not to believe in God...bummer

Anyone in here grow vegetables? Water concrete?

Look for soft hearts...people seeking the Lord...ACTIVELY LOOK | NOMINATE EVERY FUNERAL

When you find them...do what Paul and Barnabas did...Bring them the Word of God! JESUS

We're in enemy territory...until they receive the gospel, they are captive to sin...rescue mission

In the face of opposition: Seize Opportunities...

### 2. In the face of Gospel opposition: Stand Firm (9-11)

9 But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.

Where does the power to 'Stand Firm' come from? 'Filled with the Holy Spirit'

- Reminder: Evil isn't afraid of you...but is terrified of the One who dwells in you Demons remember the war in Heaven...didn't go well for them | Canoe - Red Rider vs. Aircraft Carrier
- Paul looked intently at him – Can you feel that look right now? "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? – Paul knows how to rebuke a guy...Scripture Memory

Paul is intentional with his words here:

- 'Stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord' – You're trying to impede the Lord's work
  - 'Son of the Devil' – 'Bar-Jesus' = Son of Salvation
- By calling him 'Son of the Devil' Paul is recognizing the real enemy
- Bar-Jesus isn't the enemy...he's ensnared by the enemy

We are not at war against people...we are at war for people

(11) And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. First...the Apostolic Age is over...don't get to command miracles anymore – would make my job easier What if this isn't as much a punishment...but an attempt to lift his spiritual blindness

God doesn't want to make people blind...He wants them to SEE Him

I believe Christians today have this whole thing a little off center:

- Sometimes I see Christians almost apologizing for their beliefs
  - Other times we do stand firm...but we are not gracious in our approach
- When Confronting People Opposed to the Faith: Be bold, truthful, clear and kind

I believe this temporary blindness was an act of kindness...

Better to see the power of God through blindness than to never see the power of God at all

What if...noting to prove this...what if being blinded was a way to bring Bar-Jesus to faith?

Paul would know something about that...in Acts 9 he was left blind for three days after his conversion

We don't know what happened to Bar-Jesus...but we do know what happened to the Proconsul

12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

In the face of Gospel opposition: Seize Opportunities | Stand Firm | Why...

### 3. Why - God uses opposition to save sinners (12)

Interesting...they went through the whole island (gospel) and this is the story recorded – Why?

- Shows us that even in the face of opposition God Saves Sinners
- How important is the salvation of sinners to God? JESUS

This is the first recorded conversion on the mission trip

- God sent two men from Antioch to the island of Cyprus
- They traveled the entire 90-mile width to meet with one man...not to preach an amphitheater...one What ended up changing the proconsul's heart?

12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

God used the opposition of evil to free someone from evil and save them!

Truth: Where there is divine advancement there is demonic opposition

Truth: Where there is demonic opposition God is at work

How important is the salvation of sinners to God?

How important is the salvation of sinners to you? RESCUE MISSION

There is no point in forming an army unless there is someone to fight and something to fight for

Proximity + Familiarity = Opportunity

Who is your one: Salvation | Restoration | Discipleship – Praying for your one?

Mission Requires Movement – Anticipate Resistance: Seize Opportunities | Stand Firm

Why - God uses opposition to save sinners