

Antioch | **WHERE EVERYONE USES THEIR GIFTS**

INTRO

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH WAS A CHURCH WHERE:

- Everyone shared the gospel
- Everyone was generous

TODAY'S TEXT:

- The church in Antioch was a church where gifts, talents, and callings were developed and implemented.
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Acts 11:25-27 ESV

²⁵ So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. ²⁷ Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

Acts 13:1 ESV

¹ Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

1: THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH REQUIRED THE GIFTINGS AND CALLINGS THAT GOD GIVES

THE WORK AND THE NEED WAS GREAT.

- A growing church in city of 500k people
- A church that is rapidly changing dynamics from a Jewish to Gentile ethnic background.
- These Gentile converts from all sorts of paganism would need good shepherds and teachers to help them!
- God had provided to meet the needs of the people through the giftings he gave.

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Ephesians 4:11 ESV

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

- “The miracle is in the house” isn’t merely a financial statement.
- The answers to our prayers are often a pew or two over.
- You (and what God has entrusted you with) might just be the answer to your brother/sister’s prayer!

BARNABAS SOUGHT OUT PAUL FOR THE WORK IN ANTIOCH

- Keep three things in mind when reading this:
 - 1) The church was rapidly becoming Gentile in Antioch
 - 2) Saul/Paul was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles.

Acts 9:15 ESV

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

1 Timothy 2:7 ESV

⁷ For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Galatians 1:15-16 ESV

¹⁵ But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace,

¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;

- 3) Barnabas was a nickname meaning ‘son of encouragement’ (real name was Joseph) [first noted in Acts 4 for his generosity]
- Here we see the Lord orchestrating needs with giftings:
 - Barnabas was using his giftings in helping Saul utilize his gifts and calling (ENCOURAGING).
 - This was a great blessing to the church (NEEDS WERE MET).
 - Saul was living out his calling and operating in his gifts in teaching and building up this fledgling church (APOSTLE TO GENTILES).

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THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH WAS FURTHER HELPED BY LEADERS WHO USED THEIR GIFTS TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH

- We have a list of 5 individuals operating in 2 gifts (prophets & teachers)
 - It'd only make sense that the other 3 'office/gifts' became present at some point.
 - Saul was an apostle (although didn't start that church as the apostle sent there).
 - Unnamed disciples broke the ethnic barrier in speaking to Gentiles - operating in the gift of evangelism?
 - There's also a difference between individuals who prophesy and prophets, disciples who evangelize and evangelists, members who teach and teachers, etc.
 - But the verse says prophets and teachers, and they were needed due to the nature of this startup church.
- Helpful context:
 - The church in Antioch was probably made up a numerous house churches spread out all across town.
 - These prophets and teachers would've been able to minister in each house, building up the saints.
- **These leaders came from diverse backgrounds:**
 - Barnabas (Joseph) was a prophet, Jewish, man of means
 - Simeon who was called Niger (Niger is of Latin [the language of ancient Rome] origin meaning "black" or "dark")
 - Probably from Africa/Northern Africa - Cyrene
 - This Simeon is often connected with Simon of Cyrene who carried Jesus' cross (but can't prove 100%)
 - Lucius of Cyrene
 - It's at least likely or probable that Lucius and Simeon were part of those men of Cyprus and Cyrene who first took the gospel to the gentiles in Antioch.
 - Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch (Herod Antipas)
 - Literally his foster brother or intimate friend.
 - Likely, based on the meaning of the word, is that they grew up or were raised together.
 - He would've been Jewish
 - He would've been present when John the Baptist was arrested, interrogated, and eventually beheaded by Herod.

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- Many scholars think he's the source in Luke's gospel for all that went on in Herod's household.
- Saul
 - From Tarsus
 - Of the Pharisaical tradition and schooling
 - Former persecutor of the church—many are in Antioch because of his persecution
- This team would've been able to relate to all sorts of people from every status, class, and educational background
 - They were a diverse bunch with diverse giftings
 - 1st three names: Barnabas, Simeon, and Lucius are speculated to be the prophets
 - Last two: Manaen and Saul to be the teachers
 - At least one scholar contended for the idea of 'prophet teachers'.
 - Surely, the church had other spiritual and natural giftings present, these are the noteworthy leaders that Luke pointed out to us.
 - The church thrived when they worked together for the advance of the gospel.

2: SO WHAT? HOW DO WE APPLY THESE IDEAS TO US TODAY?

1: RECOGNIZE THAT YOU HAVE GIFTINGS AND ABILITIES

- **Some gifts are natural**
 - Talents, natural abilities, personality/character traits
 - Some are naturally teachers or speakers
 - Some are naturally hospitable, welcoming
 - Some people are 'connectors' relationally
 - Some have administrative minds
 - Some have financial or entrepreneurial skillsets
 - Some have mechanical or engineering minds and hands - they can design, build, create, and fix
 - Others are naturally wired to be encouragers

- **Some gifts are spiritual**

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 ESV

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⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as he wills.

2: RECOGNIZE THAT SOME SOME HAVE A UNIQUE CALLING & OTHERS HAVE A GOD ORDAINED PURPOSE

- **CALLING** – When your **divine design** aligns with God's **specific mission** for you.
 - God has called me to be a Pastor (he put teaching and counseling gifts in me to work with His call to shepherd this church)
 - God called Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles (his background, skillset, anointing all fit God's plan and call for him)
 - Kelly has a calling to oversee and run our food pantry for decades.
 - Jocabeth has a calling to be a missionary overseas.
- **PURPOSE** – When your **interests and abilities** naturally connect with **meaningful opportunities** around you.
 - A business owner finds purpose in creating jobs, leading with integrity, and using profits to bless others.
 - A healthcare worker finds purpose in showing compassion and restoring dignity to the hurting.
 - A creative artist or musician finds purpose in reflecting God's beauty and truth through their craft.
 - A student finds purpose in learning diligently and preparing for a future that serves God's kingdom.
 - A retiree finds purpose in mentoring the next generation and praying faithfully for the church.
 - A neighbor finds purpose in simply being present, kind, and generous in their community.

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- A hospitality-minded person finds purpose in creating spaces where others feel welcomed and valued.
- A problem-solver or innovator finds purpose in using creativity to meet real-world needs.
- A faithful employee finds purpose in working with excellence and integrity, representing Christ in the workplace.
- A friend finds purpose in walking alongside others through joy and pain, reflecting God's steadfast love.
- **NOTE:**
 - These may not be specific callings in the same sense as vocational ministry, but they are God-honoring purposes that fulfill His greater plan.
 - HAVING A PURPOSE IS NOT LESS SIGNIFICANT THAN HAVING A CALLING – *just broader in scope and more generally applied to your life.*
 - FURTHER, Your **purpose** might not come with a title or position – it's simply where your **abilities and compassion meet the world's needs.**

3: RECOGNIZE THAT YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO USE THEM FOR THE KINGDOM

1. We Are Stewards, Not Owners

1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV

¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 ESV

¹ This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

2. We're Responsible to Develop What God Entrusts

Matthew 25:14-30 – The Parable of the Talents

V21 & 23: "Well done, good and faithful servant... you have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much."

➡ One of the clearest pictures of *stewardship*. God expects us to *invest and multiply* what He's entrusted.

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Luke 19:11-27 – The Parable of the Minas

V13: “Engage in business until I come.”

➡ Jesus’ command to *stay active and fruitful* while awaiting His return.

3. Gifts Are for Building Up the Body

Romans 12:4-8 ESV

⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

4. We Are Created and Empowered for Kingdom Work

Ephesians 2:10 ESV

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

➡ God not only saves us – He *designs us* for specific good works.

Colossians 3:23-24 ESV

²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

➡ Every vocation or task can become *kingdom work* when done unto Christ.

5. We Will Give Account for How We Use What We’ve Been Given

Romans 14:12 ESV

¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

2 Corinthians 5:10 ESV

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

➡ Stewardship is not optional – it’s accountable.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO USE OUR GIFTINGS FOR THE LORD WOULD LOOK LIKE THIS:

- Entrusted → Developed → Used → Empowered → Accountable.

RESPONSE:

CALL TO ACTION:

- (Re)Evaluate your God-given skillsets and assets (in this current season)
- Ask God for wisdom and creativity in using them for His kingdom
- Get to work!

PRAYER

- Thank you for the gifts, talents, abilities, callings and purposes that are represented in this church family today.
- Help us, by the power of Your Holy Spirit to:
 - Further develop what you've entrusted to us
 - Use the gifts to build up the church/kingdom of God
 - To your glory and honor.
- May you reward your people with the life-giving satisfaction, peace, happiness and joy that comes from spending our lives for you.