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**Antioch, The Missionary Church**

**Acts 13:1-3**

In the book of Acts we have been seeing the activities of the Holy Spirit through the men God chose to proclaim the Gospel, for salvation to all.

**1.** The church was birthed at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit fell and 3,000 were added to the church in Jerusalem, this is the existence of the church in Jerusalem. Acts 1-7

**2.** Then the church began to experience persecution and the word was taken to all Judea and Samaria, marking the expansion of the church. Acts 8-12

\* The Ethiopian eunuch was saved, Samaritans and the house of Cornelius.

God had been the one in control, directing the church for these twelve chapters, in fulfillment of the words of Jesus.

\* Now, God was about to accomplish the final word that Jesus had declared regarding His witness by them, to the ends of the earth, the extension of the church. Acts 1:8, 13-28

Luke gives three identifying marks characterizing the men of the church at Antioch, which became the missionary minded church. Acts 13:1-3

**I.** They were men of the word. vs. 1

- II.** They were men of the Holy Spirit. vs. 2  
**III.** They were men of prayer. vs. 3

**I.** They were men of the word. vs. 1

- A.** The church of Antioch was to become the missionary center in contradistinction to Jerusalem.  
 \* “Now in the church that was at Antioch.”  
vs. 1a
- 1.** The city at Antioch.
- a.** It was the third largest city of the Roman world, Rome being first then Alexandria
  - b.** It was located on the Orontes River, 15 miles from the Mediterranean Sea.
  - c.** It was founded by Seleucus Nicator of the Seleucid dynasty, was the capital of Syria, named after his father.
  - d.** It was a wealthy city called “The eye of Asia”, with a large Jewish colony but prominently Greek, the city was a byword for luxury and immorality.
  - e.** It had a temple to Daphne, who was said to have been changed into a laurel bush to avert Apollos sexual pursuit, the sacred priestesses in the laurel groves reenacted the account with sexual rites 5 miles outside the city.
  - f.** It’s population was about 500,000.

2. The church at Antioch.
  - a. The church as we said was established through persecution as they scattered from Jerusalem. Acts 11:19-20
    - 1) The word spread as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.” vs. 19
    - 2) The word was preached to the Greeks by men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus.” vs. 20
      - \* This marked the extension to the Gentiles.
  - b. The work at Antioch was confirmed by Barnabas, being sent by the church at Jerusalem. Acts 11:22
  - c. The church was taught by Barnabas and Saul for a year and the first place they were called Christians. Acts 11:26
  - d. The church at Antioch sent relief to the poor saints at Jerusalem by the hand of Barnabas, Saul and the elders, they were now back. Acts 11:30, 12:25

**B.** The church of Antioch was equipped with men who were prophets and teachers.

- \* “There were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.” vs. 1a-f
1. Prophets were men who spoke on behalf of God revealing His word.
    - a. The prophets “prophets” were the mouth-piece of God, usually calling the people of God to repent of their sin and rebellion against God.
    - b. They secondly, at times revealed future events, Agabus was one of them. Acts 11:27
  2. Teachers were men who expounded the word of God to instruct the people God.
    - a. These teachers “didaskalos” were men anointed by God to teach the things of God, revealed in the word of God.
      - \* The believer is to grow, develop and mature through the word of God.
    - b. These teachers were not functioning in this position by the own natural abilities but the super-natural gifts endowed by God sovereignly.
      - \* The believer must know the word of God in order to not be deceived.
  3. The men identified by their gifts are now named and they are five, which also could have been elders in the church.

- a. Barnabas was from Cyprus, a benevolent man and a leading member of the church at Jerusalem. Acts 4:36-37, 9:27,11:22-26, 30
- b. Simeon a Hebrew name, called Niger, a Latin name, meaning black, probably a proselyte from Africa.  
\* Some try to link him with Simon of Cyrene who carried Jesus cross but it is doubtful. Mk. 15:21, Lk. 23:26
- c. Lucius of Cyrene, a Latin name, he could of been one of the initial ones who preached the word to the Greeks first at Antioch. Acts 11:20  
\* Not to be confused with another. Rom. 16:21
- d. Manaen, whose name means comforter and was of the upper class, brought up with Herod the tetrarch who killed John the Baptist.  
\* The phrase could imply that he was an intimate friend, a foster brother or nursed by the same mother.
- e. Saul was God's instrument to the Gentiles.  
\* Saul, later called Paul becomes the central figure in the last half of Acts, instead of Peter. Acts 13-28

A.W. Tozer in his devotional Renewed Day By Day, September 24:

“I observe with pained amusement how many “water boys” of the Pulpit in their efforts to be prophets are standing up straight and tall and speaking out boldly in favor of ideas that have been previously fed into their minds by the psychiatrists, the sociologists, the novelists, the scientists and the secular educators.

“A new Decalogue has been adopted by the neo-Christians of our day, the first word of which reads, “Thou shalt not disagree”; and a new set of Beatitudes too, which begins “Blessed are they that tolerate everything, for they shall not be made accountable for anything.”

### Application

1. The indication that God raises a church up is that He equips it with the necessary gifted men.
  - a. The Lord Jesus calls and anoints men for ministry not man.
  - b. The fact that a man has degree from a seminary is not guarantee that he is called or anointed of God, some merely choose to go to seminary.
  - c. This does not mean that I am against education, only that you need to know you are called, so as to not allow education to be a substitute for anointing.

### Illustration

d. Once you get your education, get over it, used it but don't depend on it solely, don't wear it!

\* These men were God's gift given to the church, "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Eph. 4:11

2. The church is the community of God's redeemed, not a building.

a. Many today are becoming anti-church.

b. They want to have "house church" instead of gathering with the saints.

\* If you are stranded in an Island, then you can have "house-church" but if you live in a city, chose a church!

c. The church body will be equipped with the necessary gifted individuals to ensure the growth, development and maturity of the believer, as community. Eph. 4:12-16

1) The purpose, "For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." vs. 12

2) The duration, "Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." vs. 13

3) The reason, "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the

trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ." vs. 14-15

4) The efficiency, "From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." vs. 16

\* Where there is no vision the people perish. declares the Scriptures but the word "vision" "chazown" does not mean vision for ministry but rather "*the revelation of God's word*" "for guidance and instruction for life. Prov. 29:18

3. This is the reason so many people in the church get caught up in false doctrine today, they do not know the word of God, so they are impressed with the words and deeds of man.

a. Those that teach "positive confession" that you are to maintain and claim your faith and you will receive it, that is TM to create your own reality.

b. Those that teach you are "little gods" and God wants you to be wealthy and healthy, is New Age, which is revived Hinduism.

c. Those that teach that we need a "new reformation" embracing the diversity of cultures and religions to become one, in

order to establish the kingdom of God, is nothing but “ecumenicalism”, which is what “Seeker Friendly Pastor Rick Warren” is all about.

- 1) Rick Warren speaking to the Pew Forum on Religion in 2005 said, “Now when you get 25 percent of America, which is basically Catholic, and you get 28-29 percent of America that is evangelical together, that’s called a majority. And it is a very powerful block, if they happen to stay together on particular issues...I would encourage you to look at the evolving alliance between evangelical Protestants and Catholics”. (Faith Undone:148)
- 2) If people listen to what Warren is saying that contradicts Scripture and to what he is not saying that is always stated in Scripture, they would see the deception!
- d. Those that teach that the Bible is not the sole and absolute authority for life and practice to judge a Christian, that we can learn from other religions and anyone can experience God through “contemplative pray” by meditation, imagery, mantras to experience the presence of God and people don’t have to be born again, this is nothing but Hinduism and Monastic practices of the Catholic Church of the 4th century,

burning incense, candles, praying in prayer stations and through rosary beads.

- 1) This is the “Emerging church”, rejecting the Bible as the authority, despising anyone who takes the Bible literal, especially prophesy regarding the soon return of Christ.
- 2) Brian McLaren says the book of Revelation is about “the Kingdom of God now”, claiming Jesus had nothing to say about a period of catastrophic judgment. (Faith Undone:158)
- 3) Leonard Sweet, Dan Kimball, Thomas Merton, Richard Foster are some of the Gurus of the “Emerging Church Movement”, Warren embraces and is the stepping-stone to the “Emerging church”.
4. Men of the word stand up against false teaching and heresy and act as “Watchmen”.
  - a. Paul tells Timothy, “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia--remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say

nor the things which they affirm.” 1Tim. 1:3-7

- b. Paul tells Timothy, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” 1Tim. 4:1
- c. Paul says, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching **ears**, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their **ears** away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” 2Tim. 4:3-4
- d. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. 1Tim. 4:16
- e. Paul tells Titus, “For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.” Tit. 1:10-11
- f. Peter warns, “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And

many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.” 2Pet. 2:1-2

\* This is the pattern for leadership!

*The men at Antioch were men of the word!*

## II. They were men of the Holy Spirit. vs. 2

- A. The men were seeking and waiting on God, evident of being filled with the Spirit of God. vs. 2a
  - \* “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted.”
- 1. They were ministering to the Lord and fasting by the Spirit filled life.
  - a. The word ministered is “lutourgeo” we get our word liturgy from it.
  - b. The LXX uses it for the work of the Levite.
  - c. The word meant to occupy public office at ones own expense and also service to the state.
  - d. It appears three times in the New Testament, the other two times it is used to describe the gift to the poor in Jerusalem from the Macedonians. Rom. 15:26-27, 2Cor. 8:1-4
    - 1) These men served the Lord from their hearts not for gain or profit!

- 2) These men served with their gifts and giving themselves to God.
- 2. They were fasting to the Lord.
  - a. The practice of fasting “nesteuo” means to abstain from food, drink or both for different periods of time.
  - b. The practice of fasting was and is to seek the Lord’s direction and will.
  - c. Cornelius was fasting four days seeking God for salvation. Acts 10:30
  - d. They were in a point of transition in the church to reach the Gentiles, believed to be 49 A.D, Paul had been there since 43 A.D., six years.
    - 1) They had been witnesses to the Lord in Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria.
    - 2) They were now going to be witnesses to the end of the earth, through three missionary journey and the fourth Paul would be sent to Nero to preach the Gospel.
- 3. They were able to render this type of service, only by the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Jesus pointed out it was for empowerment for service. Acts 1:8
  - b. Paul told Galatians, I say, walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh...If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” Gal. 5:16, 25

- c. The believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit continuously. Eph. 5:18
- B. The men were sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, evidence of being one with God. vs. 2b-c
  - \* “The Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”
  - 1. They heard the voice of the Spirit speaking to them and the church, without any doubt through one of the prophets present, “The Holy Spirit said, ”Separate unto Me”. vs. 2b-c
    - a. This was an imperative command, the perfect tense indicates an action in the past and present, so this was confirmation to both men, not news. (Complete Bib. Lib:305)
    - b. When they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy **Spirit** to preach the word in Asia.” Acts 16:6
    - c. “After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the **Spirit** did not permit them.” Acts 16:7
  - 2. They heard two names called out for a special work, “Barnabas and Saul for the work”. vs. 2c

- a. Barnabas, the son of consolation had been used by God to help the church financially, bring Saul into acceptance at Jerusalem, to confirm the work in Antioch, now for this special work.
  - b. Saul had been called as God's chosen vessel through the confirmation of Ananias, in Damascus, preached in Jerusalem and worked in Tarsus for nine years in obscurity and now for this special work.
  - c. The special work involved going from Antioch, to Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, the first missionary journey.
3. They were called by the Holy Spirit, "to which I have called them". vs. 2c
- a. The verb is the middle voice, "I have called them for myself". (N.T Inter. Bible. Com, David Williams:222)
  - b. There is a difference between directed service and undirected service, one is effective the other is ineffective.
  - c. Even as when Jesus told the disciples to cast their net on the other side, after having fished all night and caught nothing.
  - d. Too often men called themselves to a work or just are copying the work of other men, not being directed by the Holy Spirit.

- e. The call is always personal followed by confirmation!

### **Illustration**

Hebert Lockyer, "The error of treating the Spirit in an impersonal way can be traced back to the third century when the theory was advanced that the Holy Spirit was a mere influence, an exertion of divine energy and power, an emanation from God." (A Cont. Wesleyan theology: Vol. 1:416)

### **Application**

1. The only way a church can function effectively and in the will of God is by men and women who are filled with the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not speaking in tongues.
  - b. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not being able to "slay people in the spirit".
  - c. Being filled with the Spirit is not barking like a dog, flying like a bird or laugh unconvulsive, that is all flesh, bringing attention to oneself.
  - d. Being filled with the Spirit is being able to say no to your flesh, your sin nature.
  - e. Being filled with the Spirit is denying yourself and esteeming others more than yourself.
  - f. Being filled with the Spirit is being transformed into the image of Jesus.



- g. Being filled with the Spirit is being the husband and wife, you are to be.
- h. Being filled with the Spirit is being obedient to all the will of God.

\* You shall be witnesses to Me... Acts 1:8

2. The only way a church can be effective for God is to have pastors and leaders who are filled and directed by the Holy Spirit.

- a. This does not mean they are perfect or that they can not make mistakes.
- b. This does not mean they are the only ones who can hear God's voice.
- c. This does mean, they do not allow the world, culture or academic religious institutions to dictate the agenda for the church, the pattern for leadership!
- d. This means they follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, who always confirm it by the word, not demons or familiar spirits through "meditation or contemplative prayer".

\* James said at the 1st church council, "For it seemed good to the **Holy Spirit**, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." Acts 15:28

3. The life of Paul demonstrates this principle through the book of Acts.

- a. "Paul was compelled by the **Spirit**, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ." Acts 18:5
- b. "When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the **Spirit**, when he had

passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." Acts 19:21

- c. "And see, now I go bound in the **spirit** to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy **Spirit** testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me." Acts 20:22-23
- d. "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy **Spirit** has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Acts 20:28
- e. "And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the **Spirit** not to go up to Jerusalem." Acts 21:4
- f. "When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy **Spirit**, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" Acts 21:11
- g. To many today are following the latest craze and methodology, be it "church growth", "power evangelism", "Seeker Friendly Church movement" or "Emerging Church movement", who defend themselves by telling us that the "end justifies the means".  
1) Look at all the good that is done!

- 2) Look at all the garbage used in contradiction of the Scriptures!
- 3) Would you drink 20 ounces of water with a drop of cyanide? No!

*The men at Antioch were men of the Holy Spirit!*

### III. They were men of prayer. vs. 3

- A. The men after having fasted and prayed believed God's revelation. vs. 3a  
 \* "Then, having fasted and prayed."
1. They accepted the revelation from the Holy Spirit as the next step in the will of God for the church of Antioch.
    - a. They prayed "proseuchomai" the idea is of worship and reverence and always use for God, never of man.
    - b. They were asking, seeking and knocking, as they waited for the Lord Jesus to speak to them.  
 \* Prayer and fasting go together, Daniel is a perfect example as he sought the Lord at the end of the captivity to see how he fit in the work of God!
    - c. "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; **knock**, and it will be opened to you."  
Lk. 11:9

2. They acknowledged the ongoing confirmation that God not only had begun the church but He was continuing to direct the church.
    - a. God had used men to preach the gospel in Antioch. Acts 11:20-24
    - b. God had used Barnabas to confirm the work and sent to bring Saul for the work. Acts 11:25-26
  3. They affirmed the confirmation of the third and last stage, through the word of God by the prophesy of Jesus to his disciples. Acts 1:8
    - a. Jerusalem.
    - b. All Judea and Samaria.
    - c. The ends of the world.
- B. The men after having fasted and prayed, cooperated with the Holy Spirit, as they laid their hands on them. vs. 3b  
 \* "And laid hands on them."
1. The laying of hands has it's roots in the Old Testament.
    - a. The priest and people would lay hands on the sacrifices to transfer their sins to the animal, to die in their place.
    - b. The practice was a symbolic practice of either transferring, confirming or commending a person.

2. The practice has already been implemented earlier in Acts.
    - a. The seven deacons were set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they **laid hands** on them.” Acts 6:6
    - b. The apostles Peter and John **laid hands** on the Samaritans, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:17
  3. The prophets and teachers at Antioch were commending Barnabas and Saul to the grace of God for the work they had been called. Acts 14:26
    - a. The church was attesting to the fact that they were not going out by your own impulse or origin but by the impulse and origin of the Holy Spirit, this was not their ordination.
    - b. The church was saying that they were behind Barnabas and Saul and in prayer for the 1st missionary journey.
- C. The men after having fasted and prayed, released Barnabas and Saul for the Lord’s work. vs. 3c  
 \* “They sent them away.”
1. They were not sending novice out but men who had proved themselves by life through the years, trustworthy, faithful to the Lord.

- a. Too often novice are sent, just because they have gone to school to be a missionary.
  - b. Too often they go only when they have all their support and not until.
2. They were not thinking of themselves in the loss of these men.
    - a. God would replace them with someone else in the church.
    - b. God would continue to call, anoint and used others.
  3. They were eager to see how and what God would do through these men.
    - a. This was a whole new territory.
    - b. This was to continue to be God’s work not man’s.
  4. They understood that though they in a practical way were sending Barnabas and Saul, it was God alone Who calls and sends out missionaries, not man.
    - a. God alone knows all things and therefore can very effectively send the right man, at the right time, to the right place.
    - b. God alone knows the heart of men and prepares them for the Gospel, through a man, like Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 8
  5. They mentioned nothing of financial support.
    - a. No money being raised for them.

- b. No pledges being promised.

### **Illustration**

E.M. Bounds said the about prayer and the church, “When the church is in the condition of prayer God’s cause always flourishes and His kingdom on earth always triumphs. when the church fails to pray, God’s cause decays and evil of every kind prevails. A prayerless pastor, church and Christian are denying God’s ability to direct and provide and man’s privilege to ask and receive.”

### **Application**

1. Obedience to God’s answers to prayer is paramount in the life of a Christian and the church as the corporate body of Christ.
  - a. The will of God is revealed in the word of God, this is the testing ground for the times when God speaks to us personally about specific situations or circumstances in prayer.
  - b. Like if God speaks to you about braking off a relationship or confronting someone.
  - c. Perhaps it is to let go of your wayward child or to stop facilitating them in their sin.
  - d. Or perhaps it could be a job decision, a move to a different city, if He speaks to you then obey but if you don’t hear His voice, then He allows you to make the choice according to the Scriptures and good common sense.

- 1) Paul says, “Be **anxious** for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:6-7
- 2) We are to pray without ceasing. 1Thess. 5:17
2. The Lord Jesus taught His disciples how to pray by giving to them a model prayer that contains the things our prayers are to have. Matt. 6:9-13
  - a. The model prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples begins with our privileged relationship, “Our Father”.
  - b. The prayer leads to his abode, “Who is in heaven”.
  - c. The nature of His person is to be acknowledged, “Holy is Your name”.
  - d. The Kingdom of God is to be the primary and central to the one making the petition, “Your kingdom come”.
  - f. The will of God is to be understood as what is perfect and best, “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”
  - g. The provisions for life are trusted for and depended on, “Give us this day our daily bread”.
  - h. The cry for forgiveness is to be based on the fact that we are also willing impart

forgiveness to others, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

- i. The need of guidance away from evil and deliverance from evil is to be a dependence constantly, “And do not lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one”.
  - j. Jesus exemplified a life of prayer and He was God, to show us the way to be on track with the Father’s will!
3. Through the years we have attempted to stay as close to the word as possible and pray about everything, when it comes to ministry.
- a. How exciting it has been to see God work, when He called me out to start a Bible-study in Alhambra, at the house of George and Rita Gutierrez.
  - b. The word was taught and it grew, we sought the Lord through prayer and He opened up the doors to start Sunday services.
  - c. For six and a half years, we were a tent ministry but He provided all the finances, buildings and people to serve in ministry.
  - d. As we were seeking and asking God regarding a building of our own, He directed us to Pasadena and gave us this building with 300 people.
  - e. From October 1, 1986 to the present day, God has been faithful to direct, guide and provide for all that we have needed, without ever having to make special appeals for money. No pledges, car washes, rummage

sails but simply through the one offering on Sunday morning by those who are obedience to God’s word and confirm to see the hand of God on Calvary Chapel Pasadena.

- f. The word of God and time is the test of all things!
- g. We have laid hands on many in ministry and for the mission fields as they have gone out.
  - \* “Do not **lay hands** on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.” 1Tim. 5:22

*The men at Antioch were men of prayer!*

### Conclusion

These are the three identifying marks that characterized the men of the church at Antioch, which became the missionary minded church:

- I. They were men of the word!
- II. They were men of the Holy Spirit!
- III. They were men of prayer!