



The 20/20 Vision

**SEND
MISSIONARIES
ACTS 13:1-3, 44-52**

VISION

By the year 2020 we envision God using us to...

- Create a disciple-making culture of multiplication with at least 100 trained personal discipleship coaches,
- Radically bless our city through acts of generosity & the mobilization of 80% of our small groups in local mission projects,
- Strategically plant or revitalize five churches in North America, and
- **Sacrificially send four long term missionaries from our congregation to the uttermost places of the world.**

WORD

Acts 13:1-3 (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. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14:44-52 (ESV) - ⁴⁴ The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. ⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ **For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."** ⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ And the word of the

Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. ⁵⁰But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. ⁵²And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

WHAT

What does the Bible say?

In this passage of scripture we see the remarkable reception that Paul and Barnabas saw when they shared the gospel on their first missionary journey. It seems that no one that heard their message was indifferent to it. They either accepted it enthusiastically or they rejected the message vociferously. Regardless of what their response was, it is without doubt that the power of the gospel shook things up and caused people to respond. In the second section of text (vs. 44-52) we see how some of the leaders of the Jewish faith responded in one of the cities on their journey.

When Paul and Barnabas first enter the city they visit the synagogue and are invited to speak by the leaders. Paul provides a very clear and systematic treatment of the gospel that clearly points to Jesus as the Messiah. The crowd receives it enthusiastically and they invite them to return the following week. When Paul and Barnabas return, the church is packed. The scene is easy to picture. The whole city is ready to hear the gospel from Paul on the next Sabbath, and this dramatic response makes the leaders of the synagogue envious, because they aren't in charge anymore! This is inevitable for those who are more concerned about being popular than serving God. When someone else is more popular, they get envious! We can't

all be popular to the same degree, but we can all serve and please God to the same degree in Jesus Christ.

The leaders of the synagogue respond with horrible accusations and threats. How did Paul and Barnabas respond? The scripture says they responded boldly (v. 46). Praise God for their zeal for the things of God! They wouldn't let this challenge go unanswered, because they really believed the truth about Jesus. They rebuke those who reject Jesus, letting the Jews know that it was a privilege that this message should come to them first, a privilege they are rejecting.

They respond with more evangelism to open hearts, now directing their efforts to the Gentiles, in obedience to God's command (Romans 1:16) and in fulfillment of prophecy (the quotation from Isaiah 49:6).

SO WHAT

What is the relevance to my life?

- What really stood out to you in today's message and lesson? What would you like to discuss further with the group?
- In verse 45 Paul's preaching is opposed as if he were conducting a debate, his opponents contradicting him, and contemptuously criticizing his character. The "reviling" mentioned in verse 45 probably has to do with abusive and degrading language directed towards Paul and Jesus, whom Paul preached. Why? Why would these religious people reject the Messiah they had waited for so long and do it in such an ugly and abusive way?
- Paul shows wisdom in not spending all his time trying to persuade hardened hearts. We know that even after he made Gentiles the focus of his

evangelistic efforts, he still prayed earnestly for the salvation of Israel (Romans 10:1), but he spent his missionary time ministering to more open hearts. What should this teach us about evangelism?

- In verse 49 we are told that as a result of the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas that the gospel was spreading throughout the entire region. It was being spread through the efforts of Paul and Barnabas, but especially through the lives of these people being brought to Jesus Christ. What should this tell us about our model for evangelism: making disciples who make disciples?

NOW WHAT How do I apply the word to my life?



How does this lesson change the way you think about our church's role in sending missionaries? Why did God choose this moment to bring this lesson to you?



What has God laid on your heart with this lesson? How does the story of Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey change the way you feel about your relationship with Jesus Christ?



What does God want you to do differently this week as a result of this lesson? What specific plan will you put in place to follow God's plan for our church? How will you demonstrate your obedience to God?

How can we help you and hold you accountable? How can we pray for you? What can we do to show our love for you this week? Who do you know that needs to hear this lesson?

4 Who can you share it with?