



gracefellowship

Series: Our Global Mission
Date: January 29, 2023
13:1-3

Title: A Call to Action
Passage: Acts

Scripture Reading: Revelation 7:9-12

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to give some good news?

- My child got all A's on their report card!
- My favorite store is having a huge sale- go check it out!
- The Vols are good at football again!
- Chick-fil-A reopened this week!

It's with this same enthusiasm we are supposed to tell people about the hope we have found in Jesus. The word gospel means good news.

Gospel = Good news

Good news is meant to be shared with other people. I can remember in the middle of the pandemic John Krasinski, who you would know from either The Office or Jack Ryan, started a weekly video series called Some Good News! https://m.media-amazon.com/images/I/811u20w9IYL._RI_.jpg
(Nelson, please include this image in the slides)

With all the terrible things we were hearing during that period of time and with all the negativity that existed in the world, a show was born that gave us good news from around the world. I can remember when a new episode came out having our whole family stop what they were doing and come to the kitchen table to watch "Some Good News" on my laptop. We would laugh together and almost every episode had something that would bring tears to my eyes as we watched the good in humanity be highlighted. It wasn't hard to share good news!

This month we have been talking about taking the gospel out to the nations of the world and determining what our roles are as individuals and a church to help people find hope in Jesus. We desire to be people who share the good news of Jesus and the mission field starts right outside the doors of this building when we leave here! You don't have to go thousands of miles from home to share the gospel! God calls each of us to have a role in spreading the gospel. This morning

I want to share about some different calls to action God may ask you to take as you prayerfully determine your role in global missions.

Look at Acts 13:1-3 with me and let's imagine together how a local church got involved in global missions.

:: Acts 13:1-3

1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with 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 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire at the time Barnabas and Saul were living there. Today this area is in southern Turkey on the Mediterranean Sea. The Jewish people who lived there were primarily in that region due to the persecution they faced in Jerusalem following the stoning of Stephen. You can read about that in Acts 7 if you're not familiar with the story.

These Christians know the command Jesus left them when He ascended to heaven to go into all the world and make disciples. Here's what we read in Acts 13 a minute ago-

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."

This church was doing some of the same things we have been doing for the past 20+ days, they were praying and fasting, asking God to reveal to them what they were supposed to do regarding his mission to take the gospel to the nations. Did you catch what that verse said? "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit [spoke]..."

As a church, if we want to hear from God times of consistent worship and fasting are vital.

I think if you read your Bible often you will agree there are a lot of times we see God's people fasting in both the Old and New Testaments- but we don't see that as something for us today. Why not? We have the wrong idea about fasting! Look at what Jesus said about this in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 6.

:: Matthew 6:16-18

16 “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,

18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

The first thing I want you to see here is that Jesus expects that His followers will fast and pray. Twice in this passage He says, “When you fast...” This is not just something for the super-spiritual; every Christian should spend time fasting to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

But second I want you to see a different perspective:

In our minds and hearts we need to move fasting from a burden to a blessing. It needs to stop being a requirement and we need to see it as a reward!

Jesus told us that when we fast we shouldn’t have a woe-is-me attitude telling everyone we are fasting to show how high and holy we are, but we should be refreshed and keep it to ourselves. Then, God see us and *rewards* us.

So, here is our first action step:

Don’t let fasting be something you avoid or you only do when prompted by church leadership. Make fasting part of your normal rhythm.

- Marriage struggling? Fast and pray!
- Major decision in your life? Fast and pray!
- Facing a hardship? Fast and pray!
- Seeking God’s direction? Fast and pray!
- Is it Monday? Fast and pray!

“Fasting is like turning the volume knob down on our flesh and turning it up in the spirit. We gain authority, clarity and closeness with God.”

- **Chris Hodges**

Now let’s read between the lines a little as we think back to Acts 13. I’m going to need some audience participation for this, so I want you to yell out some answers. When this church spent time praying and fasting to get direction from God they heard him say to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which he called them. This work was the first of three missionary journeys Paul went on during his ministry. Verse 3 says after they had fasted and prayed they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Here’s where I need your help.

Ask: What other actions do you think this church took to support Barnabas and Saul as they left on their journey?

- Continued prayer support
- Financial gifts
- Encouragement
- Providing rest when they came home

The reality of the church is that all of us are called to be part of God's global mission. Some of you may be called to different parts of the world on short term or long term mission trips. Many of us will never leave and go to another part of the world- but we still have a role to play in reaching the nations with the gospel.

Action Step 2: This morning you were handed a card when you walked in. There are 10 different approaches you can take to engage in missions on a local and global scale. (Walk through the card)

- Adopt
- Advocate
- Encourage
- Equip
- Give
- Go
- Learn
- Pray
- Send
- Welcome

Action Step 3: Look at the back of your JTerm booklet; there are incredible resources there for you to continue to grow in your awareness of the need for the gospel around the world and ways you can get involved from right where you live!

Action Step 4: Maybe you are someone who can go on a short term mission trip. This year we have several ways you can be involved. When you leave the service today there will be three tables you can visit for information about being involved globally.

1. El Salvador mission trip with Global Health Outreach
2. CCA (Concerned Christians for Afghanistan) This is a trip to Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina to serve missionaries to Afghanistan and refugees living here in the U.S.
3. Clarkston, GA 3 night trip designed to expose you to multi-cultural living and communities and training on how to do ministry with various people groups. There are over 60 countries represented in Clarkston who are refugees from their homelands.

Action Step 4: Pray for unreached people around the world. In the hallway as you leave today there are cards posted of people groups around the world that do not

have access to the gospel. We want you to take a card and pray for those places. Hang the card on your refrigerator or in the bathroom on your mirror or put it on your dash in your car. When you see the card pray for God to raise up missionaries to take the gospel to those places. Pray for them to have dreams and see visions of Jesus calling them to know Him. Pray for ministries that are attempting to reach these people and these parts of the world.

Action Step 5: God may be calling someone here to be a full time missionary and to take the gospel to the nations as your vocation. If you have questions about that John and Bethany Lufi will be at a table in the Gathering Area this morning and would love to talk with you!

We are going to end this morning where we started four weeks ago! Before the message today we heard Revelation 7:9-10 read for us.

:: Revelation 7:9-10

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Jesus allows us to see a picture of the future to know that His command to go into the whole earth and make disciples will be realized! We are part of a winning strategy. But there is still work to do before this reality comes to be. In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said this:

:: Matthew 24:14

24 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Why hasn't Jesus returned? There are still people who need to hear about Him. We have a part to play in taking the gospel to the world. And in many ways, God is bringing the world to us! Turn on the news at any given time and you'll hear stories of refugees seeking asylum in our country and of illegal aliens pouring across our borders- and I know that really bothers some of you. But here is a reminder: It is not our job to enforce legal boundaries; it is our job to love the alien and the foreigner. God is bringing the nations to us! Please hear me, I am all for legal pathways into our country. But again, it's not our job to enforce the law. It is our calling to love those who are coming in legally or not and show them the grace of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. We have been talking this month about ways to pray for the nations. Every time I see a story on TV about illegal aliens and border communities being flooded with immigrants, I stop and pray for the church to respond to the extreme needs of people with love and mercy and grace.

This week our Life Groups will reengage after being off during January for JTerm. When you gather there will be time to debrief the messages we have heard on Sundays and Wednesdays this month. I hope you will take advantage of that time to seek God about who he has for you next as a Life Group and as individuals.

As we dismiss today let's take a moment to stop and ask God to show us what our next step needs to be as we listen for His voice to instruct us to carry out our global mission.

- Pray