

# Answering God's Call: Lessons from Paul and Barnabas

When Paul and Barnabas set out on their missionary journey, they weren't just traveling—they were fulfilling a divine purpose. Their story in Acts 13 provides powerful insights into how we should approach our own calling and ministry.

## What is the true message of salvation?

As Paul and Barnabas arrived in Salamis, they "began to preach the word of God, proclaiming the message of eternal salvation through faith in Christ" (Acts 13:5). Their message wasn't complicated by cultural preferences or religious traditions. It was simple and powerful: salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:8-10 explains this message clearly: "If you acknowledge and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, recognizing his power, authority, and majesty as God, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

This confession involves two key elements:

1. Acknowledging Jesus as Lord - This means surrendering control of your life to Him. Lordship implies that He's in charge, not us.
2. Believing in your heart - This is genuine faith that Jesus died and rose again for our salvation.

When we are justified through faith, we are made "just as if we had never sinned." Sin has been paid for with the blood of Jesus Christ—a price we could never pay ourselves.

## How do we prepare for spiritual battles?

In Paphos, Paul and Barnabas encountered opposition from Elymas the sorcerer who tried to turn the proconsul away from faith. This reminds us that whenever we step out in faith, we will face opposition.

The enemy doesn't want to give up territory. He doesn't want to let go of people he feels he has a hold on. This is why we must be prepared daily for spiritual warfare.

Here are practical ways to prepare:

**Read the Word of God**

**Fast regularly**

**Pray consistently**

**Give generously**

**Stay connected**

## How should we confront spiritual opposition?

When Paul confronted Elymas, he didn't mince words: "You son of the devil, enemy of everything that is right and good, will you never stop perverting the straight paths of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10). This might seem harsh, but Paul recognized a spiritual force at work that was robbing both Elymas and the proconsul of God's purpose.

In our culture, we often try to share truth without offending. But if God's Word never confronts anything in your life, you need to question whether you're truly listening. The Word is meant to offend our sinful nature—to free us, break things off of us, and spur us forward.

When Paul confronted Elymas, God's power was displayed, and Elymas was temporarily blinded. Notice it was "for a time"—God's purpose is always to redeem and restore. No one is beyond His reach.

The result? "The proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being astonished at the teaching concerning the Lord" (Acts 13:12). The miracle caught his attention, but it was the teaching about Jesus that transformed him.

## **What happens when people leave prematurely?**

Verse 13 tells us that John Mark left Paul and Barnabas and returned to Jerusalem. This wasn't part of God's sending—John Mark simply left. Later in Acts, this caused a rift between Paul and Barnabas when they disagreed about giving John Mark another chance.

But notice what happened next: "Now they went on" (Acts 13:14). Other people's choices cannot stop God's plan for our lives. We must continue in what God has called us to do until He directs otherwise.

## **How does God open doors for ministry?**

When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Antioch in Pisidia, they went to the synagogue. After the reading of Scripture, the officials said, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it" (Acts 13:15).

God will open doors for your gifts. You don't have to force opportunities—He will bring you into places where you can use the gifts He's placed within you. The question is: what doors has God opened for you? What doors is He trying to open?

Whether you love your job or not, why has God placed you there? Who needs to hear about Jesus? Who needs your prayers? Open your eyes, heart, and courage to step beyond your comfort zone, trusting that God has given you a platform—whatever and wherever it is.

## **Life Application**

This week, I challenge you to prepare yourself daily for what God has called you to do:

1. Set aside time each day to read God's Word, even if it's just a few verses.
2. Commit to regular prayer, asking God to use you wherever you are.
3. Look for the doors God is opening around you—at work, in your neighborhood, or among friends.
4. Be ready to share the simple message of salvation through faith in Christ when opportunities arise.

Ask yourself:

- Am I acknowledging Jesus as Lord in every area of my life?
- How am I preparing myself daily for spiritual battles?
- What doors has God opened that I might be missing or avoiding?
- Am I willing to be sent where God wants me to go and stay where He wants me to stay?

Remember, our message is true, our message is simple, and our message remains the same: salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Let's be ready to share it wherever God sends us.