

“To The Work!”
Acts 12:25 - 13:13

Introduction:

1. Let's Turn Back In Our Bibles Tonight:
 - To The End Of Acts 12!
 - Where We Spent Some Time Last Sunday:
 - In Our ***Journey Through Acts***:
 - And We Saw How “Through The Power Of A Prayer Meeting” - God Was Able:
 - To Deliver Peter From Prison & From The Hands Of Herod & The Jews!
2. Well - After We Are Told:
 - In 12:24 - That - “The word of God grew and multiplied!”
 - We Are Informed That:
 - Barnabas & Saul Were Also In Jerusalem At That Time - Because:
 - In 12:25 - “And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark!”
 - It Is Very Likely:
 - That Barnabas & Saul:
 - Were In That Same Prayer Meeting:
 - Held For Peter On The Night Of His Deliverance!
3. At Any Rate:
 - They Were Familiar With:
 - The Woman, In Whose House The Church Met:
 - Because When They Returned To Their Home Church In Antioch:
 - They “Took With Them” – That Woman’s Son – “John, Whose Surname Was Mark!”
 - This Is The Same “John Mark” Who:
 - Would Later Write:
 - Our Gospel Of Mark - And Was Also A Relative Of Barnabas:
 - Either A Nephew Or A Cousin!
4. Well - Upon Their Return To Antioch:
 - After “Fulfilling Their Ministry” - Which Was:
 - Assigned To Them Back In Chapter 11:
 - We Find That God Had Other Plans For Them:
 - In Addition To Their Regular Service & Ministry In Their Local Church In Antioch!
 - And So - What We Will Read In 13:1-13 - Is The Beginning:
 - Of What Has Come To Be Known As:
 - Paul’s First Missionary Journey - Even Though Barnabas Was Also A Key Character In This Endeavor!
 - Read Passage!
5. Back In 13:2 - We Read How:
 - “The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul ***for the work*** whereunto I have called them!”
 - This Is One Of The Ways:
 - The Mission & Ministry Of The Church:
 - Is Described In The New Testament!
 - It Is ***“Work!”***
 - And When Done Right:
 - It ***Takes “Work”*** - To Serve The Lord!
 - It Is Not Something That Is Accomplished:
 - On “Auto-Pilot!”
 - Even Though The Lord ***Is*** Our Pilot:
 - He Still Calls Us:
 - ***“To The Work!”***
 - And ***“To Work”*** For Him!
6. And So - Tonight - We Are Going To See:
 - That “The Work” Of Barnabas & Saul:
 - Was Really Not All That Different:
 - Than “The Work” We Are To Do:
 - For The Lord!

- Because - Just Like We See In Acts:

* There Still Is:

1. Diversity In The Work!

- Great Diversity - Which We Can See:

- In 12:25 - 13:1 - "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark. / Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul!"

- With The Names Of All These Men Serving Together In The Church At Antioch - We Find:

- Diversity In Their Personalities!

- In 12:25 - We Read Of Three Men:

- Barnabas & Saul & John Mark - Each With A Very Distinct Personality!

- Barnabas Was Known To Be Quite Meek & Gentle!

- Saul Was Known To Be Fervent & Outspoken!

- John Mark Was Likely, At This Time, A Very Timid & Cautious Man!

- But God Brought These Three Men:

- With Their Three Different Personalities:

- Together - To Serve In The Same Work!

- We Also Find:

- Diversity In Their Gifts!

- In 13:1 - Some Of The Men Had The Special Gift Of Prophecy, While Others Had The Gift Of Teaching!

- There Was Also:

- Diversity In Their Back-Grounds!

- Through The Other Names Provided - We Can Tell That:

- There Were Religious Differences!

- Some Were Jews, Some Were Not!

- There Were Economic Differences!

- Manaen Was Raised As A "Foster-Brother" Of Herod The Tetrarch - The Herod Who Had John The Baptist Beheaded! But He Was Raised With Him, And Likely Had Much Provided For Him!

- There Were Racial Differences!

- "Simeon" Was Called "Niger" - Likely Because He Was A Black Man!

- But In Spite Of All That Diversity:

- In That Church In Antioch:

- They Were Knit Together As One Church:

- For One Work!

- And As A Church:

- We Still Have This Same Diversity!

- With Many Differences! Yet - God Has Brought Us Together In Christ:

- To **Be** One & To **Serve As** One!

- Are We Fostering The Kind Of Unity In Our Church:

- That We Read About In The Church Of Antioch?

* As We Continue - We Also Discover That There Still Is:

2. Direction For The Work!

- Great Direction - Which We Read About In:

- 13:2-4 - "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. / And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. / So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus!"

- The Direction For The Church In Antioch:

- Came From The Holy Spirit Of God!

- It Was Through Him:

- They Served!

- 13:2 - "As They Ministered To The Lord!"

- As Each Man Served, They Would Have Sought After The Direction Of The Holy Spirit:

- For Their Distinct Ministries!

- But - It Was Also Through Him:
- They Sought!
 - That Is - They Sought After The Lord:
 - Through Prayer! They Would Spend Time:
 - 13:2 - “Fasting” & “Praying!”
 - At Regular Times!
 - At Special Times!
 - But - During One Of Those Times:
 - When They Sought The Lord’s Direction:
 - It Came To Them Very Clearly!
 - Because Then - Through The Holy Spirit:
- They Sent!
 - 13:2 - “the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them!”
 - And In Obedience To The Lord:
 - 13:3 - “They Sent Them Away!”
 - As The Holy Spirit:
 - Sent – They Went – To The Work!
 - And They Did So Eagerly! Because They Knew That It Was The Will Of The Lord!
- And As A Church:
 - We Still Need This Same Direction!
 - **From** The Lord! **For The Work!**
 - For **How** We Are To Serve!
 - For **Who** We Are To Send!
 - And That Is Why We Must Seek His Direction The Same Way The Church In Antioch Did!
 - Through Prayer & Even Fasting!
 - Remember - There Still Is:
 - Power In A Prayer Meeting!

* We Also Find That There Is Still A:

3. **Design For The Work!**

- A Great Design! This Answers The Question:
 - What Is The Church For? What Is The Church To Do?
 - What Is Our Primary Work & Purpose?
 - For Barnabas & Saul - There Was A Design:
- In Where They Went!
 - 13:4 - “So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus!”
 - Not Exactly Sure Why They First Went To Cyprus On Their Mission Trip!
 - Barnabas Was From Cyprus - But Was That The Main Factor Of Going There?
 - Not Sure!
 - But - If You Look At A Map:
 - They Were Still Following The Design Given To The Church Back In 1:8 - “And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth!”
 - They Kept Spreading Out - Moving Further & Further Away From Jerusalem!
 - And This Pattern / Design Continues In The Other Missionary Journeys Of Paul!
 - But - Even More Clearly - There Was A Design:
 - In What They Did!
 - 13:5 - “And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews!”
 - What Did They Do When They Got To Cyprus?
 - “They Preached The Word Of God!”
 - This Was & Still Is The Design For Our Work As Christians & As A Church!
 - Now - As Members Of The Church:
 - We Each Have Different Roles & Responsibilities:
 - That Correspond To Our Gifts:
 - Just Like John There In 13:5! His Responsibility Was To Attend To The Special Needs

Of Barnabas & Saul!

- He Was There To Help “Hold Up Their Arms” - As Aaron & Hur Held Up Moses’ Arms Back In Exodus!

- But We Still Have This Same Design:

- As The Primary Purpose For The Work!

- To “Preach The Word Of God” & To “Proclaim The Wonderful Works Of God” Through The Gospel!

- And We Are To Do This Work:

- Wherever God Sends Us:

- And Gives Us The Opportunity!

- **IE:** Did This With Good News Clubs / Nursing Homes / Are There Others?

- There Are Other Good Works:

- That Can & Ought To Be Done:

- To Help People With Their Needs!

- But Their Greatest Need Is “The Word Of God!”

* However - Just Like We Often Face - There Is Often Still:

4. **Difficulty In The Work!**

- And Sometimes - Great Difficulty!

- This Is What Barnabas & Saul Faced In:

- 13:6-11 - When They Were Confronted By:

- 13:6b - “A certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus!”

- And They Soon Experienced:

- A Big Obstacle!

- In 13:8 - “Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith!”

- Now - We Are Not Told **How** This Man:

- “Withstood Them!”

- Perhaps With Debate & Deceptions & Accusations!

- But - In Spite Of This Opposition:

- That Made Their Work For The Lord:

- Quite Difficult - They Did Not Give Up!

- Because - There Was Still:

- A Big Opportunity!

- In 13:7 - When - “The deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man – called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God!”

- What An Opportunity!

- What An Open Door!

- This Important & Prudent Man Wanted To “Hear” What They Had To Say!

- Clearly - God Had Already Prepared:

- The Soil Of His Heart!

- Because - After Saul Called On The Power Of The Lord:

- To Blind That False Prophet:

- What Happens In The Life Of Sergius Paulus?

- 13:12 - “Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord!”

- Notice That:

- He Was Not Just Astonished At:

- The Wonder Paul Did:

- To His Sorcerer - By Blinding Him In Order To Shut Him Up!

- He Was Astonished At:

- The Words Paul Said!

- “The Doctrine Of The Lord!”

- That Man “Believed” & Was Saved:

- By The Grace Of God!

- So - Even Though We May Still Face:

- Difficulty In The Work:

- There Is Still Opportunity:

- Even In The Midst Of That Difficulty!
- And We Can Rest In The Power Of The Lord To Accomplish His Work Through His Word!

* But That Also Leads Us To See That There Is Still:

5. *Delight In The Work!*

- Even - Great Delight!
 - Because The Work Of The Lord:
- Brings Real Change!
 - Like It Did To Sergius Paulus:
 - On That Day!
 - It Certainly Brought Joy & Delight:
 - For Him!
 - But - It Also Brought Joy & Delight:
 - Into The Hearts Of:
 - Paul & Barnabas & John Mark!
 - And When The Church Back Home In Antioch:
 - Would Finally Hear - 14:27 - "All that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles!"
 - They Would Have Been Filled With Joy & Delight As Well!
 - But That Delight Is Not Just Contained Within The Church!
 - It Will Spread Outward & Even Upward:
 - Even To The Glories Of Heaven!
 - As Jesus Said - Luke 15:7, 10 - "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. / Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth!"
 - But This Delight In The Work Also:
- Brings More Commitment!
 - Like It Did For Paul & Barnabas!
 - As They Continued On In "The Work!"
 - 13:13 - "Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem!"
 - Instead Of Turning Back:
 - And Going Home - They Kept Going!
 - And Moved Forward In The Work!
- Sometimes - The Lord Blesses Us:
 - With Victories & Successes:
 - Like That Of The Conversion Of Sergius Paulus:
 - To Encourage Us In The Work!
 - But - That Encouragement Doesn't Have To Be In "Big" Things! It Can Also Be In What Might *Seem* To Be "Small" Things!
 - And So It Should Be For Our Church!
 - There Is Still Much Delight & Joy:
 - In The Work Of The Lord!
 - And This Is Why We Need To Keep At It! And Keep To It!
 - We Need To Look For:
 - Even The So-Called "Little" & "Personal" Blessings:
 - As God's Own Encouragement!
 - Remember - Even "Little Is Much When God Is In It!"

Conclusion:

1. Now - Even Though We End This Passage:
 - With A Sense Great Joy & Delight:
 - In The Conversion Of Sergius Paulus:
 - It Is Easy To Overlook The Last Phrase Of:
 - 13:13 - "And John departing from them returned to Jerusalem!"
 - So - Even Though There Was A Great Success:

- In Cyprus - John Mark Did Not Continue:
 - On The Journey!
 - Not Entirely Sure Why - But It Is Clear Later In Acts - That Paul Considered It:
 - An Act Of Desertion On Mark's Part! And It Will Even Cause A Rift Between He & Barnabas!
- 2. We Will Look At This More Closely:
 - In The Future - But Doesn't This Happen To Us As Well?
 - Even When There Is Some Success:
 - We Still Need To Be Wary!
 - Because That Is Often When:
 - The Devil Will Tempt Us Or Try Us:
 - In Order To Discourage Us:
 - From The Work!
- 3. But - As We Are About To Sing:
 - Let Us Stick:
 - "To The Work!"
 - As Fanny Crosby Once Wrote:
 - To the work! To the work!
 - We are servants of God,
 - Let us follow the path that our Master has trod;
 - With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew,
 - Let us do with our might what our hands find to do!

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