

Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the Spread of God's Word

"Gaining By Losing"

The Priority of a Sending Church

Acts 13:1-3

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I. The Great Commission isn't a calling for a few, but a mandate for all Christians to "live sent."

While still a brand new church, the church at Antioch "lived sent" long before they ever sent a soul anywhere.

- A. The term "Christian" was intended to be a derisive term, but those in the church of Antioch wore it as a badge of honor.

Acts 11:26 "...And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians."

- B. Although a largely Gentile church, they showed their love for their Jewish brothers and sisters in Judea by sending famine relief.

Acts 11:29-30 "So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul."

God doesn't have to give us another call other than the one He already has.

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

II. "Living sent" means our leadership development should lead to leadership deployment. God wants us to send the very best.

Acts 13:1 "Now there were in the church at Antioch **prophets and teachers...**"

Ephesians 4:11-12 "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..."

Part of building up the body of Christ is winning people to Christ —here, there, and way over there.

III. “Living sent” only happens if we’re “living sacrifices.” There’s never one without the other.

Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*”

Acts 13:2 “While they were worshipping the Lord...”

The Greek word translated as “worshipping” or “ministering” is the word *leitourgeo*. It means to “assume an office which must be administered at one's own expense” or “to discharge a public office at one's own cost.”

In other words, it was while they were ministering to others as unto the Lord that the Holy Spirit sent them elsewhere.

- A. Don't think just because you're faithfully and fruitfully serving here that means you're supposed to stay. Serving here might be used by God to prepare you to serve elsewhere.
- B. Serving here might be used by God to free up someone else to serve elsewhere.

IV. "Living sent" means we live with open hands. God is sovereign over the end *and* the means.

Acts 13:3 “Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”

Acts 20:36-38 “And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.”

- A. The Kingdom of God extends beyond your campus. Play nice in the sandbox, and share your shovel and bucket.
- B. The Kingdom of God extends beyond Grace Fellowship Church. If God is calling us to send someone to another part of His Kingdom, let's live with open hands and hearts, trusting our great God.

Questions for Community Group and/or Personal Application:

- 1) Pastor Peter said “Don’t wait for a voice if He already gave you a verse.” 2 Tim. 3:16 says “All Scripture is breathed out by God...” Why is it important for us to have that word-picture in mind as we read the Bible?

- 2) Do you think you “live sent”? Why or why not?
- 3) What if we raised up leaders, but sent them elsewhere? Does that strike you as a loss or a gain? Why?
- 4) Explain a time when sending or sharing within the Kingdom of God was difficult for you.
- 5) Do you view our church as a cruise ship, a battleship, or an aircraft carrier? Explain your answer.