

Paul's First Missionary Journey

Acts 12:25-13:52

MEMORY VERSE

ACTS 13:47

"For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you to be a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A salt dough made from 1 cup flour, 1 tablespoon salad oil, 1 cup water, 1/2 cup salt, 2 teaspoons cream of tartar, and food coloring.

Disposable plastic cups and string.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

It's My Call

Make the salt dough recipe. Give each child a lump of dough to form whatever he wants.

1 cup flour
1 tablespoon salad oil
1 cup water
1/2 cup salt
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
food coloring

Combine all the ingredients in a large saucepan. Use a wooden spoon to stir over medium heat. Stir constantly to prevent sticking. The mixture will be soupy for several minutes and then suddenly it will stick together and can be stirred into a ball. When it thickens, remove from the heat and continue stirring. Turn the ball out onto a floured surface and begin kneading it as it cools. This dough keeps soft in the refrigerator or may be air-dried until hard.

Explain to your class that it's God's call to form whatever He wants out of our lives, just like a lump of dough. Are we willing to let Him make us what He wants? **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

LESSON TIME!

Have you heard your parents or teachers talk about missionaries? Missionaries are people that God has chosen to take the good news about Jesus to other nations where they have not heard about Him. Missionaries can also be sent by God to people here in our own country who need to hear the good news of Jesus. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Paul and Barnabas were missionaries chosen by God to take the news of Jesus to the Gentile (non-Jewish) nations. Today's lesson is about Paul's first missionary journey. Paul was going to be used by God to take the news of Jesus to places it had never been heard of. God uses people today all over the world to spread His word. Maybe He would like to use you and me if we are willing. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

ACTS 12:25-13:5

And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.

The church at Antioch sent Saul (Paul) and Barnabas, accompanied by John Mark, as missionaries. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.** There are a lot of things we can learn about serving God in the verses that we are going to look at today. Let's look at a few things at the beginning of our story that will help us to learn about what it means to be a servant of God and how we can be used by God.

The first thing we notice is that Paul and Barnabas were being faithful in what God was having them to do in their home church. Sometimes we may think that we are going to do a great work for the Lord someday. Over and over again in the Bible you see that God uses those people who are busy serving Him right now, especially in the little things. We should be busy doing what He would have us to do here and then He will use us for greater things.

The next thing that we see is that Paul and Barnabas, along with the church, was seeking the Lord for direction. They were fasting and praying, seeking Him for what He would have them do next in reaching out to the world. We can come up with all kinds of different ideas about reaching people, but it is very important to know what God thinks. What are His plans about reaching others? Only after we have sought Him can we move forward in anything.

Then we see that everything that was done by Paul and Barnabas was a work of the Holy Spirit. We see the Holy Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas for this work of ministry. They were chosen and equipped by the Holy Spirit to be the first to go out into the "uttermost" parts of the world to share the gospel.

One more important thing we see is that Paul and Barnabas were ready to go when God did call them. So we can learn when seeking God's will for our lives that we should be busy doing what we know God wants us to do. Next we need to seek Him in prayer. Then we should allow Him to speak to our hearts about what He would like for us to do for Him. And finally, be willing to go when He says go.

We now see Paul and Barnabas going on their first missionary journey. At first the missionaries first taught in the Jewish synagogues. They gave the Jews in that location the first opportunity to respond and then they would go to the gentiles. As they traveled they met a Jewish sorcerer, a false prophet named Bar-Jesus, and his employer, proconsul Sergius Paulus. Let's find out what happens.

ACTS 13:6-12

Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus,

who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?"

"And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

The proconsul wanted to hear God's Word but the sorcerer attempted to keep him from God's Word. God made him temporarily blind because of this. When the proconsul saw what happened, he believed Paul's teachings about Jesus. Then Paul and Barnabas continued on their missionary journey. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

Sometimes the Lord may call us to be very honest with others about their condition. We should never be judgmental towards others, but the truth is that when people give their lives over to sin it will only lead to their destruction. Part of accepting the gospel is realizing we are sinners. Paul had to speak very plainly to this man. Everything that the Lord did through Paul led to the salvation of this city leader.

ACTS 13:13-14

Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.

As the three men continued to travel, John Mark left the group and returned to Jerusalem. This action would cause a rift between Paul and Barnabas later, but God would eventually make it work together for everyone's good (Romans 8:28). **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

Since Paul and Barnabas were visiting teachers, they were invited to teach in the synagogue; this was Jewish custom. Paul taught a sermon about Jewish history and how it related to Jesus, the Messiah.

ACTS 13:15-41

And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

"The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it.

"Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness.

"And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

"After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

"And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

"And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'

"From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior; Jesus;

"after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

"And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'

"Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent.

"For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him.

"And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death.

"Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.

"But God raised Him from the dead.

"He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.

"And we declare to you glad tidings; that promise which was made to the fathers.

"God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'

"And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'

"Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'

"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption;

"but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.

"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;

"and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

"Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

"Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.'"

Paul declared very plainly the gospel of Jesus to the Jewish people. After the sermon, Paul and Barnabas are invited back to tell more about Jesus, but the Jews rejected Paul's teaching about Jesus. Paul then turned to teach the anxious Gentiles. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

God wants us to share the good news with others. Maybe He would like us to share the gospel with a neighbor or a relative. Or maybe someday He will send you to a foreign country to tell them about Jesus. Wherever the Lord takes us we should always desire to share our faith.

What's a Calling?

Make plastic cup phones with six feet of string and two disposable plastic cups.

Stretch the string tight between the cups and they will really work provided that nothing touches them. Make several pairs and let your class talk to each other with them.

Explain to your class that God's "calling" on our lives is different than a telephone call. God has created each of us for a special purpose; that is our calling. When we live in obedience to Him, we realize the calling He has placed on our lives. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

ACTS 13:42-49

So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.

Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.

Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

"For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.

Because Jesus was of Jewish descent, Paul felt they should tell the Jews about Jesus first. When the Jewish nation rejected Jesus, they took the good news to the Gentile (non-Jewish) nations. The Gentiles were excited. They believed and accepted Jesus as their Savior. Before they were outsiders; now they were included in God's family. And the Jews persecuted Paul and Barnabas. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

ACTS 13:50-51

But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium.

Jesus had told the disciples that if they were not received in a city to leave and to shake the dust from their feet to show condemnation. So Paul and Barnabas did this and continued on their journey, and God honored their faithfulness. Many believed in that city and a church was born. Paul and Barnabas now move on to the next place that God is calling them to. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

ACTS 13:52

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

God saved many people through the preaching of Paul and Barnabas. Because the disciples were following God's will, they were filled with peace and joy in spite of the circumstances around them. Our church sends missionaries to other nations today. (Mention here something about missionaries supported by your congregation so that the children are aware of current mission work.)

Sometimes they, too, are rejected like Paul and Barnabas were, but there are many that joyously receive Jesus as Savior like the Gentile nations in our lesson. We who stay home do our part to reach others by praying and by raising support for the missionaries. We all work together so the people here and in other nations can learn about Jesus. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

Jesus loves us all. He died for the whole world and rose again that all who receive Him can have eternal life. He may want to use our lives in some way to share that wonderful news. Let's ask Him and then be ready to say yes to whatever He has for us. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.**

What's My Line?

Divide your class into two teams. Copy each part of the following two plays and give each team one of the plays. Let them practice for five or ten minutes. If you have props, great! Present the plays to the class.

PLAY #1

FARMER: I'm the farmer. I have fertilized my field, plowed it, and planted grain. I have prayed for rain and harvested the wheat and separated it from the chaff. Then I delivered it to the miller.

MILLER: I'm the miller. I have taken the wheat from the farmer and ground it in my mill to make fine bread flour.

BAKER: I'm the baker. I have taken the fine bread flour that the miller ground and have mixed it with water, oil, and yeast and made delicious bread.

GROCER: I'm the grocer. I have put the delicious bread into my store for people to buy.

MOTHER: I'm the mother. I have bought this beautiful bread at the grocery store to feed my family.

CHILD: I'm the child. Hey, Mom, I'm hungry; what's for breakfast?

PLAY #2

SHEPHERD: I stay out here in this field all day watching these sheep. Sometimes they fall down and can't get up, so I help them up. Sometimes a hungry wolf will try to steal one of them and I have to chase it away. I make sure they have water and plenty of grass to eat.

SHEARER: I come to the farm and cut the wool off of the sheep. It is scary for them so I must wrestle them to the ground and hold them as I cut. It is really just like a haircut and doesn't hurt them.

WEAVER: I take the wool and wash it, then I comb it out until it is all untangled. This is called carding. Then I spin the carded wool into yarn. Then the yarn will be threaded onto my loom. On the loom I weave the yarn into cloth.

TAILOR: I take the wool cloth and cut it and sew it into a sweater.

MERCHANT: I take the sweater and put it into my store.

FATHER: I buy the sweater for my son who is a missionary in Tibet; it is very cold there.

Explain to your class that each person represented in the skits had a part to play in the making of the real item. Who had the most important job? If anyone of them had not done their job, the final product would be in jeopardy. Every one of the players was necessary. Each person had a contribution. **God has a calling on the life of every one of His children.** Each one of His children needs to realize God's calling so that he can contribute to the whole work that God wants to do. Not everyone is called to go. Some are to stay here and support those who go. But everyone's contribution to God's work is important.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to seek the calling God has placed on their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.