

Acts 13:1-4 Being Led by the Spirit!

When we started our study in the book of Acts last September

A) One of the things we noted was that the book of Acts has served as a blue print for how our church functions.

B) The way we study the Bible verse by verse is derived from what we see of the early churches **COMMITMENT TO DOCTRINE.**

C) The Way we worship is derived from what we see of the early churches commitment to praising God

D) The way we give - the way we approach missions and outreach..... Book of Acts

Here in Acts 13 we see another picture that has shaped our churches - Leadership

A) As well as our churches order of services

B) The title of our message today is Being.... Spirit

Acts 13 is a **great picture** of how the Holy Spirit leads a Church.

A) What we see in our text today also serves as a great example of how to be led by the Spirit

B) In our lives as individuals - in our ministry environments- In our marriages

C) The Chapter begins by giving us Access to the leadership meeting of the church in Antioch

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. 2 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." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

This is the account of the first organized missions movement of the early Church.

A) We have Seen the **Church Scattered** – now we are going to see them **SENT!** -

B) **Three keys to being led by the Holy Spirit**

- United
- Yielded
- Obedient

Background on the Church in Antioch : **It Started in Acts 11** – Just some random no name believers went there sharing the gospel.

A) A host of pp got saved!

B) Apostles sent Barnabas -(son of encouragement to go and disciple and encourage these new believers -

C) **Well Things continued to grow** – Barney said I need help – he went and found Saul of Tarsus

D) Saul got off to a rough start in ministry - no one knew what to do with him - former persecutor
1) He had been living in obscurity.... Tarsus

Barnabas -remembered him - saw great potential - went and found him

A) Brought him to Antioch

B) The two of them together Teaching there for over a year – Discipling this group of believers

C) But now the Lord is going to do something new and fresh with Barnabas and Saul

What we see here in Acts 13 is the Leadership of the Church – gathering together

A) Elders – Prophets and teachers.

B) First thing to note is **They are United**

B) A Diverse group of guys and stories

1) It included Barnabas, a native of Cyprus, { Son of Encouragement

C) and a black man named Simeon from present day Nigeria ...and Lucius of Cyrene...

1) Manaen - who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, He was the foster brother of Herod Antipas

Herod Antipas—the Herod who cut off John the Baptist’s head.

A) Manaen grew up in Herod’s vile, and polluted family - and yet the Lord rescued him - saved him

B)...and Saul the former Pharisee/ former terrorist and main persecutor of the followers of Jesus

1) This was the church staff at Antioch—a racially Diverse group of guys! - **But they are UNITED**

C) The Thing that unites them is that their lives have all been impacted by the Love of Jesus

1) All undeserving sinners - Saved by Grace

When I look out at this church family - Also a Diverse group

A) All different backgrounds - some educated in higher education - Dr. - Lawyers

B) Some not educated past a High school diploma

C) Some raised in the church - others far from it

1) Former addicts - drug dealers - alcoholics

Some who are really into politics - some not much at all - besides voting.

A) Republicans - Democrats - Independents

B) You are a Diverse group - but there is a unity center around - SIMPLY JESUS

C) LIVES are in the process of transformed.....

That is what makes the unbeliever take notice - they come into a gathering like this -

A) Singing in Unison - affection for Jesus

B) Courtyard - community happening - people loving on each other - praying for each other

C) Where does that happen? Sporting event -

1) High Five - Hugs - few beers - everyone is your best friend - until the game is over - parking lot

D) Taylor Swift concert - Swifties all singing the songs - again - cheer gone - parking lot

1) The shirt you want to buy is sold out

But there is a deep connection amongst people who know they deserve Hell - getting heaven

A) Deep appreciation amongst people who realize - Jesus took the punishment we deserved

B) We are drawn together by a mutual love and affection for our savior

C) There is a level playing field - when we all realize - we are recipients of undeserved favor

D) So this group of men gathered together here in Acts 13 are Diverse - but they are unified

The Mark of their being united is seen in what they are doing - easy to miss

A) V.2 **As they ministered to the Lord**

B) **Ministered TO– not FOR!** – there is a difference.

C) Ministering **FOR** the Lord is the Acts of service we do - **OUR TRIP TO OREGON** - last week.

1) It was 9 days of pouring out - teaching sharing - Meeting with various pastors leaders - diff people

D) Ministering **FOR** the Lord is wonderful

1) But in order to be poured out - you have to be - being **POURED INTO**

That is what Ministering TO the Lord is about

A) Ministering **TO** the Lord speaks of our worship and devotion to the Lord

B) Important to know the difference:

1) We can spend a lot of time – doing ministry – serving / Ministering **FOR** the Lord -

C) Without ever ministering TO the Lord

D) Great example Luke 10 Mary and Martha

1) TEXT says of Martha – She was **distracted, with much serving**

E) Jesus said you are worried, and troubled about so many things.

Martha’s being distracted with much serving affects her view of others.

A) Agitated at Mary - Why isn’t she helping me - why am I doing this all by myself.

B) Her view of Jesus is also not right - She literally interrupts the Bible study - Accuses Jesus

1) Lord you don’t care about me - don’t you see Mary left mealone

C)When you find yourself serving the Lord and you are agitated at others - lacking Joy

1)Feeling like you are all alone - no one cares - no one is helping - Martyr complex - woe is me

Jesus says to Martha you are worried and troubled... many things –

A)One thing is needed – Mary has chosen...the better part

B)What was Mary doing? Sitting at the feet of Jesus ministering TO the Lord -SOAKING in his presence

C)We have to soak before we serve!

D)Soaking a serving go hand in hand. - the sponge.

Here is a sponge - never soaks - all dried up and crusty.

A)Here is a sponge that just SOAKS - never pours out - can't retain any more -water

B)Need a healthy balance of both - Soaking and serving

C.R. Kent Hughes

“Worship and service go together and should never be separated. If we try to work for the Lord without worshipping him, we will settle for legalistic, self-centered service. And if we worship and never work, we will end up with a form of godliness but no power.”

Notice Jesus said that Mary made a choice to sit at his feet.

A)It is interesting in that story of Mary and Martha - Jesus said Mary has chosen the better part

B)Developing intimacy WITH JESUS is a choice

1)It doesn't just happen. - Disciplined - scheduled

C)My wife and I been married 37 yrs - Usually once a week - we go on some sort of date

1)It gets scheduled -doesn't sound ROMANTIC Pastor Rob?

Listen we love each other deeply but if we don't schedule our date nights/ days

A)They would - easily get neglected - because life is so busy.

B)The Demands on our time are ENDLESS

1)We Schedule special time to be together

C)Now Sometimes those dates are amazing! - So fun great connection -

1)Other times they are very ordinary

D)But either way - they are essential for keeping us connected - and on the same page

1)Essential for allowing our love to grow & not get stale

Our church staff has a meeting almost every Tuesday

A)Starts with Worship - Ministering to the Lord

B)Part of it is spent in the Word - reminder of our mission and Vision

C)Essential for keeping us connected and on the same page - not all going in opposite directions

D)Question: If regular scheduled meetings and dates are essential for our earthly relationships

E)Why would we think it would be any different in our relationship with Jesus?

1)We must prioritize spending time with Jesus.

One more thing about Mary and Martha

A)One thing is needed - Mary has chosen it and it will not be taken away from her

B)Ministry can be taken away - MINISTRY FOR the Lord can change - end - it changes all the time

C)No one can take away the intimacy you develop in spending quality time at Jesus feet -

1)MINISTERING TO THE LORD

So the leadership team here is Antioch is United.

A)They are coming together - and I am sure the needs in the church are great.

B)So much to talk about - but they make it their first priority to MINISTER to the Lord.

C)There is no other AGENDA that is taking precedence. **PSALM 133:1 - BEHOLD.....**

This is the pattern we use in our Leadership meetings here at the church.

A) We always begin with Worship - time to minister to the Lord.

B) Making this our priority doesn't only unite us together - but it unites us to the heart of Jesus

C) Great pattern for our lives personally -
1) Our marriages and our ministries -

So the first key to being led by the Holy Spirit is seen in how they were United in heart and purpose.

A) The 2nd Key is seen in how they were YIELDED to the Lord.

B) V.2 again As they ministered to the Lord and **fasted**,

C) They weren't just ministering to the Lord - but they were also FASTING

FASTING is that spiritual discipline where we deprive the body of food - in order to seek the Lord

A) Fasting can heighten our Spiritual sensitivity

B) Times we would normally eat - we are using to seek the Lord.

C) Fasting is also a mark of being Spiritual dependent and yielded.

D) We are going to deprive our flesh of what it needs in order to be dependent upon the Lord for strength

1) Guidance -

Notice the Result of their being United and Yielded

V.2b - the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

A) The Holy Spirit Spoke -

B) This is why we begin our leadership meetings ministering TO... preparing our hearts to HEAR....

C) Pattern of our Services. WHY we start with Worship

D) We believe that time of worship can prepare our hearts to hear from the Lord as we open the Word.

E) Worship is not the warm up for the message - essential for heart preparation

Listen if you want to be LED by the Holy Spirit in your lives personally

A) You want LEADING for your family - your marriage - your ministry.

B) This is a great pattern to follow -

1) United in heart - Ministering TO THE LORD

C) Yielded and surrendered - through fasting

You are preparing your hearts to hear from the Holy Spirit

A) The Holy Spirit spoke to them in that gathering

B) Resulting in A Calling, A Confirmation, and A Commissioning

A CALLING the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

A) The Holy Spirit calls the church to set Barnabas a Saul apart for a special calling -

B) This is interesting - these were the two main teachers in the church -

1) God was moving in Antioch - but God wanted to do something new with Barney and Saul

C) How did the Holy Spirit speak?

1) audible ? Maybe - probably a Word of Knowledge

Unless you hear an Audible voice from the Lord

A) I never have. -

B) Usually it starts with a STRONG IMPRESSION on my heart - that doesn't go away.

C) When I think God is speaking to me - I seek confirmation -

1) That is what happens here

The Calling was followed by a Confirmation

A) Note v.3 says Then, having fasted and prayed, **After more fasting - Lets be sure**

B) The text seems to imply - they broke and said lets continue to fast and pray - come together again

C) That is exactly what our leadership team does.

1) Rarely make decisions first meeting

D) Break to fast and pray - come together 2 weeks later - what is God saying.

1) I am always the last one to speak - confirmation

This is always a wise thing to do when you sense the Lord is speaking to you about something

A) Especially something big - seek confirmation

B) I love what they do here - not going around and asking everyone's opinions -

1) Not bad - the Bible does say there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors

C) they responded to the Calling with more fasting and prayer.

1) Willing to wait - Don't be in a hurry.

D) Some of the most foolish decisions are made in haste.

Seeking confirmation is key - because when the battle comes - when opposition arises

A) It always does - you have to be able to fall back on that Calling and Confirmation you received

B) We will see next time - opposition happens immediately Island of Cyprus

1) Dealing with a Sorcerer

C) Lesson: When the Holy Spirit is leading - that doesn't mean - smooth sailing

D) There will be opposition - Satan hates to see people yielded to Jesus - serving Jesus

1) Oppose every way possible

So it is essential to have that calling and confirmation

A) When those times of difficulty arise - fall back on the reality - you know you are where God wants you

B) You know the Holy Spirit has been leading your life

C) I am here right now in this situation because the Holy Spirit called - and I received confirmation

D) If you don't have that it is so easy to quit and run

After the CALLING AND CONFIRMATION

A) There was a commissioning - v.3b they laid hands on them, they sent them away.

B) The laying on of hands signified an identification - we are bearing witness - God is in this

1) There is a calling on your lives

C) The laying on of hands also signified their unity

1) You are the ones going but we are going with you in prayer and in the spirit

Through the "laying on of hands," the leaders said, in effect, "We endorse you and authorize you to carry out this mission on our behalf; we go with you in spirit as we pray for you here at home." Chuck Swindoll

I love the imagery here: Sent = released -

A) Released them - we don't want to hold you back in anyway.

B) We have you covered here in Antioch

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

A) This brings us to the 3rd Key to being led by the Holy Spirit - BEING OBEDIENT

B) 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went

C) WHEN THE HS CALLS - AND CONFIRMS - we need to respond in obedience to his direction

The reason some people are not being used by the Lord is not because God is not speaking

A) He is speaking - but they are not responding. - He wants to use their lives - but they are not obeying

B) Here is something that I have learned - The Lord rarely calls us to big things out the gate

1) Calls us to something - simple and small

C) Before the Lord called me into Ministry -

1) He called me to set up chairs for our High School ministry

D) I overheard my pastor say one day - how he didn't get to come home and eat dinner see his family

Right then the HS spoke to my heart - start doing that for him -

A)Every Wednesday 200 plus chairs

B)No one asked me to do that - The HS did

1)For a long time no one knew I was doing that

C)That simple obedience in that one area led to more opportunities and more open doors

D)That is how the Lord works - Faithful in little things - leads to more opportunities

E)Is there something the Lord has been prompting you to do? - BE OBEDIENT

THEY WENT - they didn't protest - Barnabas and Saul were like - wait we are the main guys here

A)Send someone else!

B)They took this as God was doing something new - and they were ready to step out in faith

C)Listen if you want to be Led by the HS - you want to be used by God

1)When God calls - you MUST be obedient

D)If you are really going to be United with Jesus in his heart and mission - reach lost people he loves

1)When he calls - go and talk to neighbor - school mate - co-worker - your boss - OBEY

Notice ONE more thing here V.4

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

A)Now this is interesting - In V.3 we see the Church commissioned them - sent them out - released them

B)But in V.4 we see they were also commissioned by the Holy Spirit - **being sent out by the Holy Spirit**

C)Sent here is different that the word used in V.3 speaks of an empowering - Authority

D)This is such an important thing to remember - When God Calls - He also Equips

E)BUT YOU will not experience that equipping and empowering **UNTIL you step out in faith**

Listen Church - the Lord wants to lead us into new territories - as a church - new adventures

A)He wants to lead you individually -

He wants to lead you in your marriage

B)Question is are you United? - Together

1)United to the Lord in his mission and plan

C)Are you yielded ? Are you surrendered -

1)Put aside your AGENDA - not my will but your will be done?

D)Have you been obedient to what Jesus has said to you already - Small thing? – Resisting

Band to come up - As we close our time today- Spend some time ministering TO the Lord in Worship.

A)SOAK -in the Lord's presence

B)Some of you are like Martha - you are distracted - worried and stressed - so many things

C)You need to lay that down at the feet of Jesus

You need to come - and kneel before the Lord

A)Yielded

B)Husbands and wives who have been at odds - not on the same page - distracted - not united

C)You need to come as a couple - United and Yielded to the Lord

D)Want prayer - Prayer team -

I believe that as we take this time today - to end our service in Ministering to the Lord

A)The Holy Spirit is going to be speaking - moving

B)Maybe you are here today - not - far from God

C)Not a believer - Come - surrender - tell Jesus you need him

D)Prodigal - come home