

## SENT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

6 September, 2009

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture Reference – Acts 13:1-52

**Unit Theme:** The Expanding Church

**Central Truth:** God calls and empowers believers in Christ to proclaim the Gospel.

**Focus:** Investigate how the Holy Spirit sends and empowers people to do His work and cooperate with the Spirit.

**Key Verse:** Acts 13:2

### **Introduction:**

Have you considered your calling? Many struggle with this term simply because they may not understand the will of God. Sure there are many variances to “the calling” but rest assure there is only one purpose. In Luke 19:10 Jesus said that he has come to seek and to save the lost. Therefore, the purpose of ones calling is to do the will of the Father and that is still to seek and save the lost through the preaching of His word. I am very familiar with my inability to accomplish God’s will and see His purpose fulfilled in the lives of those around me. I need direction, words to speak and boldness (power). I cannot fulfill my divine potential on my own, I need the Holy Spirit to guide me, fill me and empower me. Jesus said many are called (Matthew 22:14); all who have confessed Jesus as their Lord and savior are indeed called, but how many of them actually answer their call? How many allow God to empower them for the purpose of taking this gospel message out to a lost and dying generation? Our text today occurs about twelve years after Saul’s conversion on the road to Damascus. It is clear that Saul had a genuine encounter with Jesus, an encounter that forever changed him. He had spent years passionately persecuting the Christ followers. Now he is a changed man and will spend the rest of his life pursuing the lost. He did not retire to tent making or find a “home” church where he could warm a pew. He obeyed the command of the Lord to go just as God called him to do. He did it by allowing the Holy Spirit to continually empower him to preach this wonderful gospel! So, where are the called today? Are they sitting in a church holding a pew down, or are they obeying and going into all the world – their coworkers, neighbors, friends and family? The world needs us now more than ever to carry the gospel message into their lives. The church in America today is barely hanging on and in fact according to many studies is declining – that is, it is dying. Why? Because they have not answered the call to go. **The church will not grow if the church does not go.** Many are not going because they have just a form of godliness but have denied His power! The Holy Spirit is the one who empowers us to go; He speaks and moves through us mightily confirming the word that we preach. The church does not have time to not go, Jesus is about to return for us and we had better be about His business, lest we are caught sleeping.

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## I. The Spirit Calls – Acts 13:1-4

Antioch can be considered a central hub for Christians in the first century. As they fled persecution in Jerusalem many found themselves in Antioch and in fact it was at Antioch that they were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). It is notable that the scripture records in verse 2 that they ministered to the Lord and fasted. Look at the results to such action – the Holy Spirit spoke...then again they fasted and prayed (verse 3).

➤ **Think about it:**

Do the people around you know you're a Christian, or do you have to tell them?

Have you developed a pattern of ministering to the Lord, fasting and praying?

Has the Holy Spirit spoke to you lately?


*"The power of God is given to enable us to do a spiritual thing in a spiritual way in an unspiritual world" – Malcolm Cronk*

## II. The Spirit Empowers – Acts 13:5-12

Romans 1:16 says that the gospel message is the power of God unto salvation first to the Jew then to the gentile.... They went to the synagogues first preaching the word of God. It is apparent that the news of their work preceded them as we see the governor calling for them an intelligent man that wanted to hear the gospel. One does not have to walk in their call for very long before they witness first hand opposition to the preaching of the word. The devil does not like the word to be preached because he knows that preaching sets the captive free (John 8:32, 36). Jesus stated in Luke 10:19 that he has given us authority over all the power of the enemy. Here we see a great example of how the Lord wants us to walk in that power! The Lord takes no pleasure in those who attempt to keep others from coming to faith in Him. Jesus said woe to him who causes one of these little ones to stumble (Mark 9:42).

➤ **Think about it:**

Can you relate to the opposition Paul and Barnabas experienced?

How did/would you respond?

Do you feel you have like power and authority – why or why not?


*"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil over good is that good men do nothing" – Edmund Burke*

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## III. Many Believe – Acts 13:13-16, 32-49

It is certain that God’s message will be received, what is not certain is who will receive it. Several times I have witnessed the gospel being rejected by so called “Christians”, but at the same time I have seen it received by the least likely. We cannot choose who will receive or reject the message, but must simply be faithful to preach it. We must war against discouragement and not place too much emphasis on the lack of results. Noah preached for 120 years and never witnessed any besides his own family heed the message. Jonah preached for three days and witnessed a whole city perhaps 600,000 plus turn to the Lord. We must simply determine to preach God’s word and leave the rest up to Him.

➤ **Think about it:**

Have you been faithful to preach God’s word?

Who has God given you a burden for?

Are you praying for the harvest?


*“When the Spirit of God comes into a man, He gives him a worldwide view” – Oswald Chambers*

### Conclusion:

Our key verse (Acts 13:2) states that the Holy Spirit said.... Many today have simply been deceived into thinking that the Holy Spirit does not speak like this today – how unfortunate for them! The Holy Spirit speaks to all who will listen. We need to make sure that we are ministering to the Lord – Romans 12:1, 2 gives us a good idea how to do this. We must present our bodies a living sacrifice unto the Lord and choose not to be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind.... 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, if any man is in Christ – he is new (transformed).... This is our choice God does not force us to change; He does not force us to minister unto Him, but wants us to of our own free will. We need to make sure that we are fasting and praying – Jesus said in Matthew 6:5 and 16 when you pray...when you fast. It is only when we find ourselves doing these things that the Holy Spirit will clearly speak and when we are obedient to His command there will be born into the kingdom fruit that will last for eternity (souls). Whether we see them or not is irrelevant, what matters is that we are faithful to the command of the Lord to go and preach the gospel to every creature – this my friends is God’s will, so that the lost will be saved.

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