

WEEKLY REFLECTION

We've seen the fulfillment of Jesus' proclamation to the disciples in Acts 1:8, starting with the church in Jerusalem who first received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2:1-11). Stephen's death scattered the believers throughout Judea and Samaria, (8:1) and Philip brought great joy to Samaria when he proclaimed the Messiah to its residents (v.5). He even had the chance to speak Jesus to an eunuch from Ethiopia! (v.35) But it doesn't stop there: we saw the first Gentile believers in Cornelius and his household (10:47), and the first Jew-and-Gentile church in Antioch. (11:19-21)

And yet, God still isn't done! As the Holy Spirit asks for Barnabas and Paul to be set aside (13:2), He sends them on the first missionary journey to the island of Cyprus (v.4) and the city of Pisidian Antioch (v.14) (a city different to the Antioch they departed from). Here we see vastly different responses to the gospel: we see resistance from Elymas the sorcerer (v.8) and the jealous Jews in Pisidian Antioch. (v.45) Sergius Paulus the proconsul shows amazement (v.12), and the other Jews and devout converts to Judaism are curious. (v.43) The Gentiles in Pisidian Antioch stand out, as they received the gospel with gladness (v.48)!

Although Paul and Barnabas were chosen to do this good work, we must remember that it's the Holy Spirit who chose and sent them out. (v.2, 4) The Spirit showed them how to react, and what to say. (v.9, 43) He enabled them to shake the dust off their feet, despite the abuse that was heaped on them (v.45) and their expulsion from Pisidian Antioch. (v.50) Paul and Barnabas are filled with joy because they are filled with Him. (v.52)

Do you know that the Holy Spirit has set you aside for the work He has called you to? Can you hear Him calling? Will you respond? And when you do, will you depend on Him, or yourself?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

What is your experience with missions? Have you been on a short-trip missions trip before? If yes, where did you go? How was your experience? What did you learn about God in the process? If not, what's stopping you?

QUESTION TWO:

How often are you able to share Jesus with others? What is the most common response you receive as you share Jesus with them? How have you responded to the people you have talked with, and how might you learn from Barnabas and Paul's responses in Acts 13 to the different individuals they came into contact with?

QUESTION THREE:

God has called each and every one of us to participate in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20): whether it is going, preparing, or sending, all of us are commanded to reach the unreached. Apart from sharing Jesus with those around us, what other practical things can we do to support overseas missions endeavors? How can you participate in God's mission to reach all nations with the gospel?