

10/19

HOME GROUP GUIDE

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

LISTEN

Listen to the sermon and read through the main passages(s)



REFLECT

Prayerfully answer the questions below



DISCUSS

Meet with your group to discuss



RESPOND

Apply the truth of God's word to your life

BACKGROUND:

In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit commissions Paul and Barnabas for their first missionary journey. Now that he is working in Gentile territory, the Hebrew "Saul" is referred to by his Roman name, "Paul" (v.9). It was appropriate for Luke to mention Saul's Roman name as he moves into increasingly non-Jewish contexts. He and Barnabas travel to Paphos on the island of Cyprus, where the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, is eager to hear the word of God. However, in his court, there is a magician named Elymas, who is paid to predict the future. Elymas opposes the apostles and tries to prevent the governor from embracing Christianity. The Spirit prompts his missionaries to be bold, not mincing words about the wickedness of this magician.

Their first missionary journey was at once inspiring and terrifying. When Paul and Barnabas returned, they excitedly reported to the church that had sent them out. Despite facing opposition from religious leaders, being expelled from cities, and being stoned—sometimes near death—they remained confident that they would not be stopped because the Holy Spirit had sent them and went before them.

OPEN:

1. Share a time when you embarked on a new endeavor for the first time. How confident were you about your potential for success, and what influenced that confidence?

REFLECT:

2. Read Acts 13:1-8. Where do Paul and Barnabas begin their preaching upon arriving in Cyprus? Why is this sequence significant (see v.46)? How does it represent a partial fulfillment of Jesus' words in Acts 1:8?

3. How would you characterize the church in Antioch? Luke mentions that Paul and Barnabas were “sent out by the Holy Spirit” and that the church “laid their hands on them and sent them off.” Why is it significant that the church confirms the Spirit’s call to mission?

4. Read Acts 13:9-12. Why do you think Paul was so severe in his reprimand of Elymas? What was the result of his rebuke?

APPLY:

5. Paul and Barnabas likely saw the opposition of Elymas as a significant setback. Can you think of setbacks in your life that turned out to be opportunities? What are some current situations that seem like setbacks but could be invitations to share the gospel, even when it feels difficult?

6. Although our experiences may differ from those of Paul and Barnabas, sharing the gospel often leads to opposition. What lessons can we learn from Paul’s reaction to hostility? How can we respond appropriately to the diverse beliefs and practices we encounter today?

7. Think about moments when you felt a little unsure or afraid to share your faith. What steps could you take to overcome that feeling and share your faith with confidence? How can we encourage each other to live as people sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit?

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