

# GOD USES THE CHURCH TO SEND OUT HIS AMBASSADORS

YEAR: KNEEL / FOCUS: LIVING ON MISSION / SERIES: ACTS

## BIG TRUTH: GOD USES THE CHURCH TO SEND OUT HIS AMBASSADORS

Acts 15:22; Matthew 9:38; 2 Corinthians 1:16; 3 John 1:6

## BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 13:3-4

*“Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”*

## BIG IDEAS

- We are called and sent by the Holy Spirit.
- Faithful worship leads the church to go and send.
- The Spirit is with us as we go.

## BIBLE PASSAGE: ACTS 13

## KNEEL: LIVING ON MISSION

The Kneel Year is an exploration of what it means to worship God with our all (Luke 10:26-28) and to use our influence to lead others to do the same. We know that as we pursue a life of worship, we will pursue a life of both wisdom and mission. Throughout this year we will study and pursue the wisdom of God through the book of Proverbs and the mission of God through the book of Acts, and we will learn how both of these things must inform and shape our influence as Jesus followers!

## SERIES AIMS



### Every student should know...

- The gospel has the power to turn the world upside down.
- They are empowered and chosen to be a gospel witness in the world.
- Our salvation has come by grace alone.



### Every student should feel...

- Comfort that the Lord is with them wherever they go.
- Hope in the God of salvation.
- Responsible to use their influence to live for Jesus alone.



### Every student should strive to...

- Read, study, and meditate on the entire book of Acts.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Pray consistently for boldness to make Jesus known.



### Every student should want...

- To pursue faithfulness in living on mission.
- To share the gospel with people in their lives who do not know Jesus.
- To sacrifice their personal freedoms for the sake of the gospel

## GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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## BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 13:3-4

*“Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”*

### The church fasts and prays for one another.

*“Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them...”*

- Fasting and praying is part of the Christian life. The church collectively fasts and prays for one another as a way of building one another up and caring for one another.
- The early church practiced fasting and praying for its members as a way of preparing to send them out on mission, to ask for their healing, and to aid in their spiritual growth. The church is involved in the spiritual lives of its individual members.

### The church equips fellow believers for God’s mission.

*“...they laid hands on them and sent them off...”*

- The act of laying hands on people before sending them out to do God’s mission is an act of equipping and preparing them to do His will. This is symbolic of the work that has been done in the teaching and preparing within the body of believers.
- The church body is a tool for preparing its members to do the work God calls them to do whether that is in their own neighborhoods or somewhere on the other side of the world.

### The church sends out workers to do God’s will.

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

- The church isn’t just a place for believers to come. It’s a place for believers to be equipped and for some to be sent out. The body is a place for building up and for spiritual growth. God chooses to take some people from a local body of believers and send them to other places in the world.
- The church understands this and participates in this willingly and joyfully. As Christ’s body, the church builds up and equips to send out when God commands it. This is the will of God and the church obeys that by sending out those God calls.

# GOD USES THE CHURCH TO SEND OUT HIS AMBASSADORS

## **BIG IDEA #1: WE ARE CALLED AND SENT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.<sup>1</sup>**

### **[ THIS ]**

It is God's plan and design to use His Spirit to draw His people and send His people. God draws people to Himself in salvation through His Spirit. Throughout Scripture, we see a picture of God's Spirit at work in the world, moving in hearts to illuminate God's truth to them. The same is true in believers. God uses His Spirit to call them to Him and to show them His will for their lives. We see this exemplified in Acts 13 when the Spirit calls Barnabas and Saul (Paul). It is the Holy Spirit who speaks through their prayers to reveal the will of God and that Barnabas and Paul have been chosen as God's servants to carry the gospel. In our own lives, the Spirit works in our hearts to guide us. God speaks to us through His Spirit as He illuminates the truth in His Word given to us in written form in the Bible. As we read and study the Bible, the Spirit helps us understand God's will for our lives and we understand God's calling on our lives.

### **[ THEREFORE ]**

**Read Acts 13:1-3. What part does the Holy Spirit play in God's calling of His people?**

The Holy Spirit draws people to God and illuminates God's truth to them. In our own lives, the Holy Spirit guides us and helps us understand God's truth. This in turn helps us know God's will for our daily lives and how He wants us to live for Him.

### **[ THIS ]**

Not only does the Holy Spirit draw us and guide us, He sends us. In Acts 13:4, after Barnabas and Paul have been called to do God's will, the Holy Spirit sends them out. It is through the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit that they know where to go and to whom to preach. Barnabas and Paul are continuously led by the Spirit and even directed by the Spirit. They were sent to specific areas and people as seen in Acts 13. The Holy Spirit does the same in His people today. Through the church, the Spirit works in the lives and hearts of His people to call and send them to tell others the good news of Jesus. He does this through the proclamation of His Word and the discipleship of His people as they live life together. The Holy Spirit works through the church to send people to carry the good news. As we live for Christ together, another believer's desire to tell others about Jesus will produce a desire in us to tell others. When we hear that someone else is willing to go, we may feel encouraged to go, too. God works in His body to send His people to the world.

### **[ THEREFORE ]**

**How has the Holy Spirit used the church to lead you to act on His behalf in some way?**

Hebrews 10:25 shows us the value of gathering together as it encourages us and helps us continue serving and living for Jesus. As we do this, we will be led to do God's will and to carry out His desire for us in our daily lives. When we gather as a body of believers, the obedience of other believers encourages us to be obedient also.

**How can you live with the body of believers in a way that encourages others to carry the gospel to the world?**

2 Timothy 2:15 tells us to present ourselves as an approved worker. This means that we are using the resources that God has given us to be prepared to do the work that He has given us. Galatians 5:13 and 1 Peter 4:10 remind us that we use our gifts and we obey that others might grow in their faith and see the necessity and importance of making Jesus' name famous in all the world.

1. Acts 13:2: It is through the Holy Spirit that God guides and directs His people to do His will.

# GOD USES THE CHURCH TO SEND OUT HIS AMBASSADORS

## **BIG IDEA #2: FAITHFUL WORSHIP LEADS THE CHURCH TO GO AND SEND.<sup>2</sup>**

### **[ THIS ]**

Worship involves the mind, heart, and body of a believer. A person can gather with a group of believers, but his or her heart and mind are not focused on praising Christ, and they will fail to worship the King. Conversely, even when a person is alone, his or her heart and mind are focused on praising the King and worship does happen. Worship can happen in our giving of our time and energy to further and expand the kingdom of God. When the body of Christ gathers to worship, it is at a minimum a service that occurs on Sundays with preaching and worship music and at maximum the joining of redeemed people to praise God and build one another up for the work of the Lord. The weekly gathering of God's people serves many purposes. When God's people gather weekly, it serves to encourage. It serves to teach and train as the Word of God is preached and taught. It serves to hold the body accountable to holiness and faithfulness to God's Word. This type of faithful worship of God leads to the church going and sending people out to carry the gospel to those who have not heard it.

### **[ THEREFORE ]**

**What are some ways that a lack of faithful weekly worship leads to the church failing to go and send the gospel out into the world?**

1 Peter 3:15 teaches us that each believer is to be prepared to tell others why he or she believes what they do. When we gather faithfully for worship, we will be prepared to tell others. John 15:1-4 reminds us of the importance and significance of abiding in Jesus and the fruit that we bear when we do this. Part of abiding in Jesus is gathering with the body. When we fail to do this, we will not carry the gospel to the world.

### **[ THIS ]**

In Acts 13, the faithful worship of believers encouraged them to go into the world with the gospel, and it encouraged them to send people into the world. In Acts 13:2-4, we see that it was during prayer and fasting that the believers understood the desire of the Holy Spirit was for Barnabas and Paul to go out with the gospel. The first understanding for the church was that the gospel needed to go out and the second was that they needed to commission people to take the gospel out from them. Often, we think of worship and the gathering of the body as a coming together and not as a going out. What is true in Scripture is that the body comes together to go out. The early church came together faithfully and because of this they were able to discern the will of the Holy Spirit. This resulted in the going out of Paul and Barnabas and the spread of the gospel to people to who had not heard it. For the church today, the same truth applies. Our faithful gathering should result in our going and sending the gospel out through people who have been equipped and commissioned.

### **[ THEREFORE ]**

**What are some specific ways that the church has been called to equip and commission believers to go?**

1 Corinthians 14:26 lists some ways that believers can build one another up when they gather. Doing these things helps to equip Christians to carry the gospel to those who have not heard it. Colossians 3:16 and Hebrews 10:24-25 also help us see ways to build one another up in a way that equips us to go to the world with the gospel.

2. Acts 13:2: *When we worship the Lord faithfully, His Spirit works in His people to lead them to fulfill the Great Commission.*

# GOD USES THE CHURCH TO SEND OUT HIS AMBASSADORS

## BIG IDEA #3: THE SPIRIT IS WITH US AS WE GO.<sup>3</sup>

### [ THIS ]

Throughout Acts 13, Paul, Barnabas, and the other believers were equipped to do the work of the Lord by the Holy Spirit. Wherever they went, the Holy Spirit was with them, guiding them to do the Lord's will. When they encountered challenges or obstacles, the Holy Spirit was with them. We see this in Acts 13:4-12, when Paul and Barnabas are on the island of Cyprus and they encounter a magician named Elymas. Elymas opposed Paul and Barnabas and sought to turn the proconsul against them. The Spirit was with Paul and giving Paul boldness and power, He helped Paul stand against Elymas. Through a miraculously supernatural event, Elymas was blinded, and many people believed the gospel despite his efforts to dissuade them. Though Paul and Barnabas faced opposition, the Holy Spirit was with them. They were not alone in their journey to carry the gospel because other believers were with them and praying for them.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**Consider the help Paul and Barnabas received from the Spirit during their encounter with Elymas. How does this story encourage you to share the gospel in challenging situations?**

Paul and Barnabas faced difficult situations when they shared the gospel, yet they used the power and help of the Holy Spirit to tell others about Jesus. We can be encouraged because we have the same Spirit at work inside of us. When we face challenges to the gospel, we can know that the Spirit is present to help us also.

### [ THIS ]

The united body of Christ is a powerful tool in the world for the spread of the gospel. Because every believer has One Spirit inside of them and this Spirit works to make the name of Jesus known in the world, when we are joined together with the purpose of telling others about Jesus, there is nothing that can stand in our way. Just as Paul and Barnabas found courage and boldness to stand against obstacles, we can find courage and boldness to do the same because the Spirit goes with us and before us. The Holy Spirit paves the way for us. When we trust in this truth and live it out, we can share the gospel no matter the obstacle. Even if someone stands in our way and threatens our life, we can face this challenge with boldness knowing that the Spirit is with us and has gone before us.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**Paul and the other disciples were led by the Holy Spirit. How does their example teach you how to be led by the Holy Spirit when sharing the gospel?**

In Acts 13, we see a picture of Paul and Barnabas following the lead of the Holy Spirit as they carried the gospel. They listened and obeyed the Spirit's leading and used the Spirit's power to tell others the good news of the gospel. We can learn from this and use the same Spirit as we are led to tell others about Jesus.

### **What are some challenges we face when we share the gospel?**

We face the challenge of opposition just like Paul and Barnabas faced. We face the challenge of knowing what to say and of lacking boldness. 2 Corinthians 12:9 and John 14:26 teach us that the Spirit is our helper and guide. We can trust that we are able to do what God calls us to do as we seek to do it as His body.

3. Acts 13:9: Paul was led by the Holy Spirit. All believers have the Holy Spirit and are led by Him to carry the gospel to the world.