



10.30.11/ Acts 13:1-4

Materials Needed

None

Read Acts 13:1-4

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod and tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 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.

Summarize the Passage

When Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch, they join the other Christians in a time of prayer and fasting. Fasting is when somebody removes something from their life for a time so they can focus more clearly on God and what He wants them to do (side note: DO NOT ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO FAST FROM FOOD OR DRINK – IF YOU ELABORATE ABOUT FASTING OR IF YOU TALK AT ALL ABOUT THIS KIND OF FASTING, PLEASE MAKE SURE TO EXPLAIN THAT THIS IS SOMETHING ONLY GROWN-UPS DO). At Antioch, the Christians were praying for that very reason – they wanted to know what God wanted them to do. Upon the Holy Spirit's leading, Saul and Barnabas went to the regions of Seleucia and Cyprus to preach about Jesus.

Opening Discussion

Let's look at what we learn about the Holy Spirit from this passage. "The Holy Spirit said . . ." What does this show you about the Holy Spirit? He speaks! Even though we can't see Him, the Holy Spirit speaks to the hearts of those who believe in Jesus. As we read God's Word, pray and worship with other believers, we learn to recognize the Holy Spirit's voice speaking to us. One way to recognize if we are hearing the Holy Spirit speaking to us is to think about what we believe the Holy Spirit is saying and to compare it with what the Bible says. The Holy Spirit is always going to keep us focused on God's Truth and living our lives to bring honor to Jesus, and if it's truly the Holy Spirit speaking, it will match up with the Bible. And remember, you can always ask for help in studying the Bible. The Lord loves it when we help each other study His Word!

Read Ephesians 2:10.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Just as God had a work for Barnabas and Saul to do, He has prepared a work for each believer to do. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, He prepares us and leads us to the work He created in advance for us to do.

Questions

1. What do you think Barnabas and Saul felt like as they set out on this missionary journey? *Allow children to respond. Barnabas and Saul had been sent by the Holy Spirit to do the work God had planned for them. It must have been a time of excitement knowing they were obeying God's plan for them!*
2. How would you react if someone asked you to sell all of your video games and give that money to a kid in school who didn't have enough to eat dinner most nights? Or what if you were asked to give up all the time you spend watching television and use it to do chores for your neighbor who doesn't go to church? *Most answers, if they're honest, would be that it would be really hard or that they wouldn't want to do it at all. Why do you think you feel that way? Because it's easier and more comfortable to think about what makes us happy. So often we love ourselves more than we love God, and we choose the*



temporary satisfaction of our earthly pleasures rather than the long lasting, eternal pleasure of serving Jesus and expanding His church.

3. Part of what is so important about our passage today is that the folks of the early church were willing to give their entire lives to Jesus and His calling. They went anywhere they were told, they spoke to anyone who needed to hear about God's salvation, and they gave up anything that stood in the way. Why do you think they were willing to take such big risks? *Because they understood how worthy Jesus was of their entire lives. It was not a burden or inconvenience to preach the Good News to people because they were excited to share it! And we know this must be true, because as we saw a couple weeks ago, they were being persecuted for doing these things and yet they STILL risked everything to continue Jesus' work!*

Reflection/Prayer

The people of the early church were seeking the face of God, the direction of the Holy Spirit and the heart of Christ for His church. 2000+ years later, we are still called to seek after God with that same excitement and intensity! We should always be seeking what our role in His kingdom should be. Because He is our King who loves us, we can trust Him completely to give us everything we truly need as we follow Him. He loves us so much!

Pray together that the Holy Spirit would guide your decisions this week. Consider why you spend your time the way you do and pray that God would help you let go of activities or things that are keeping you from spending time with God and loving others. Thank Him for the Good News of Jesus Christ. Talk with your parents this week if you have more questions about the Holy Spirit or what a personal relationship with Jesus looks like.