

Spirit Guided Witnesses

Acts 12:25-13:12

1) Seeking God's Will vs. 12:25-13:3

The church at Antioch set aside time to prayerfully seek God's will, received guidance from the Holy Spirit, and responded with obedience by sending off Saul and Barnabas as missionaries to the gentiles.

As a church, we need to set aside time to be together and prayerfully seek God's will so that we can receive God's guidance in fulfilling our purpose of making mature multiplying disciples.

2) Spirit Guided Strategy vs 4-5

Barnabas and Saul were led by the Holy Spirit to Salamis of Cyprus where they began proclaiming the gospel where God was already working; in Gentile hearts at the synagogue.

Through prayerful dependence, the church can strategically join God where he is already drawing and causing hearts to be hungry for more than the world has to offer.

3) Sharing with Seekers vs. 6-7

Barnabas and Saul continued the Spirit guided strategy throughout the island of Cyprus and experienced a positive response at Paphos when Sergius Paulus was genuinely interested in hearing the gospel.

When a church follows the strategy that is prayerfully discerned by sharing where God is already working, we can expect to see positive responses to the gospel.

4) Silencing the Opposition. 8-12

Spirit guided Paul to silence Bar Jesus opposition with a rebuke and divinely caused temporary blindness, which further deepens the impact of the Lord's teaching on Sergius.

Opposition that arises when people they know become interested in the gospel, is silenced through prayerfully depending on the Spirit's guidance in what we say and what we do.

Main Idea:

In order to receive God's guidance, the church needs to set aside time to prayerfully seek God's will, follow the Spirit Guided Strategy, and trust God as He leads them in sharing with the seekers, and silencing the opposition.

Deployment

- 1) In the Scriptures we see that they would fast or abstain from food (since the preparation and the time spent eating together took up a lot of time) when needing to set aside extra time to seek God's will through prayer. Today, food preparation and the time we take to eat a meal is much less than back then, but there are other things that take up a lot of our time in our lives.

a) What are the things in our own lives that can be seen as good, but can take up a lot of time?

b) What are the things that we need to set aside (fasting) at times so we can have more time to pray and seek God's will?

- 2) As we set aside time to pray and seek God's will, God reveals to us where He is already working so we can join him in sharing the good news of Jesus to those who are ready to hear. God revealed to Barnabas and Saul that the Jewish synagogues were the place to find the Gentiles who were ready to hear the gospel.

Where is God already working within our neighborhoods and our church community? Take some time this week and begin asking God through prayer where He is already working in your neighbourhood and within the church community.

- 3) God saw the salvation of Sergius Paulus as so valuable that any hindrance had to be silenced. We too may at times need to speak and act in such away that the opposition will be silenced so that someone can respond to the gospel.
- a) The thought of rebuking the opposition with the goal of silencing them can feel so overwhelming. However, Saul only was able to silence Bar Jesus because he was led by the Holy Spirit. What scriptures do you dwell on to help you put your trust in the Holy Spirit's leading?