

CALLED TO GO

Lesson 2 : Paul's First Missionary Journey

Session Goals

As a result of conversations and activities connected with this session, group members should:

- chart Paul's first missionary journey;
- examine the journey's successes and the opposition it encountered;
- be introduced to Paul's theology of sin;
- explore how Paul organized to nurture leadership in the early church;
- continue to make connections between the life and message of Paul and their own lives and faith.

Biblical Foundation

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. While they were worshiping 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. —Acts 13:1-4a

Paul and Barnabas left on the First Missionary Journey, traveling on sea and land over the Taurus Mountains to cities in Galatia, including Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, where he preached to Jews and Gentiles and started some of the first churches in Asia Minor.

- Paul was trained as a tentmaker. How do you think he felt leaving his profession and becoming a missionary?
- Paul traveled for weeks at a time to preach the gospel. Why did he do it? Is it something you would do?
- On arriving in a town, why did Paul usually go first to the synagogue? What are some of the experiences he had at synagogues in Galatia?
- Barnabas's name meant "son of encouragement." What role did he play in Paul's early ministry? Is there someone to whom you can be a Barnabas?

Read Acts 13:2-3

- The author observes that among the times when he is most likely to hear God speaking is when he is in congregational worship. Have you ever experienced times in worship when you felt the Spirit was speaking to you? If so, describe what happened.
- He contends that our role in worship is to prepare ourselves spiritually to hear the Spirit speak—sometimes in spite of, not because of, the music or the preaching. Do you agree? How do you prepare yourself to encounter God in worship?
- Have you ever fasted? If so, was it as a part of a commitment made by a worshiping community, or did you choose to fast as an individual? Describe the experience

- Hamilton observes that the bulletin at the church he serves does not include the order of worship. What is in the bulletin? Why?

The "First" Missionary Journey

- Why did the author place the word first in quotation marks?
- If what we call Paul's first missionary journey was in fact not the first, then what set this journey apart from those that came before?
- In addition to Barnabas, who began the journey with Paul? Did that person complete the journey? What happened?

Beginning with Acts 13:13, Luke shifts from speaking of "Barnabas and Saul" to "Paul and Barnabas."

- To what does the author attribute this shift? The author asks readers to consider their own responses to training a mentor who then is promoted to be their boss. Ask:
- If this has happened to you, tell about how you responded, and why.

Hamartia

- Paul uses the word hamartia in several different ways. What are they? How do you define sin?
- The author contends that nearly all the problems plaguing humankind have their roots in sin. Would you agree? Why or why not?
- How does the author summarize Paul's teachings?
- In what way does Paul's teaching about salvation have profound implications for Judaism?

Read Acts 13:8-20.

- How might jealousy have fed the opposition Paul encountered on his journey? Where have you encountered jealousy in your faith life, and how did you deal with it? When have you yourself been jealous?
- What does this account have to say about Paul's perseverance?

Read Titus 1:5-9.

- How do these positive and negative traits compare with what we look for when we consider persons for leadership roles in the church? What additional criteria does the church have for leaders?
- What vehicle did Paul use to encourage, mentor, and help the new elders?