

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MISSIONS

Acts 13:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

In this chapter we will study a very important part of the work of missions that is not often discussed. That is the Work of the Holy Spirit in Missions. It is so sad to say, but in all of our planning and programming of missions, the Holy Spirit is often left out.

I do not believe we can over emphasize the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in any aspect of God's work. In this chapter we will study the work of the Holy Spirit in Missions in four different areas.

1. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Candidate in the Calling of the Missionary
2. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church in the Commissioning of the Missionary
3. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Christians in the Caring for the Missionary
4. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Community in Church planting by the Missionary

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE CANDIDATE IN THE CALLING IN THE MISSIONARY

It is not the job of Bible Colleges, Mission Boards, or Denominational Committees to find, select or appoint missionaries. This very important lesson needs to be learned by our generation today. The text verses show us very plainly that the Holy Spirit calls men to be missionaries. Notice verse two again.

V.2- *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I HAVE CALLED THEM.* Just as no man should ever decide to enter the ministry without the call of God upon his life, no man should ever decide to enter into missions with God calling him.

Paul sums it up very clear in I Timothy 1:12. *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."*

Paul is saying the Lord Jesus Christ **enabled** me, He _____ me, and He **employed** me, He put me in the ministry. Every man in the ministry ought to be able to say these three things along with the Apostle Paul. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to *"put men into the ministry."* (I say men, because every student of the Word of God knows that God does not call women into the pastoral ministry.)

I. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The job of the Holy Ghost is to call missionaries. There are two truths taught in these verses about the calling of the Holy Spirit.

A. First, He calls them out of the church.

The Holy Spirit would never go outside the church to call a missionary. A man that is not involved in building a church here in America would not build a church in some foreign

country. “*Why send a lamp to Africa if it will not shine in America?*” God does not go to the world and its crowd to find someone to do His work.

B. *The second truth taught here is the Holy Ghost calls men into a specific calling.*

God calls some men to be pastors, some to be evangelists, and he calls some to be missionaries. While it is true that God does call some into prison ministries, church planting, and to build homes for orphaned or wayward children here in America, it is true that *God calls men to a country.*

Just as a pastor does not have the right to choose the church he pastors, the missionary does not have the right to choose of his field of service. This is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit. This truth is very plainly taught in Acts 16:6-10. Turn to Acts 16.

It is evident in verse 6 that Paul’s plans were to go back to Asia but the Holy Spirit forbade him to do so. After he could not go to Asia, he determined to go into Bithynia but the Holy Spirit would not permit him to go there either. In verse 10, Paul realized the Lord had called him to preach the gospel in Macedonia. Every missionary should know that he is called of God to be a missionary, and the God has called him to go to the country where he is planning to go.

There is a difference between a vision and a call. There is a difference between a burden and a call, and there is a difference between a need and a call.

If you do not know you are called then you need to pray, fast and pray, and bathe yourself in the Word of God until God clearly settles the matter in your heart. If you go to the mission field unsure of your calling, you will never be sure that you are in the will of God, and you will never build a work for God.

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CANDIDATE

It must also be noted that God also gives the candidate some responsibilities in this matter.

A. Men that are being dealt with by God in the matter of missions **must be open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.**

B. **Must be obedient to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.** Once we know the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the calling of God for our lives, we must yield ourselves completely to obeying the leadership of God in our lives. The Holy Spirit will never lead you where the grace of God will not protect and keep you. When and where the Holy Spirit guides you, He will provide for you.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE CHURCH IN COMMISSIONING THE MISSIONARY

There is a work of the Holy Spirit in the church in the commissioning the missionaries. Notice verse 2 again. *“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I HAVE CALLED THEM.*

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to direct the church and man of God concerning the commissioning of missionaries.

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

In this section we will look at three things in the church's job in the commissioning missionaries.

A. First, the church must *have the right atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit can do His work.* The Holy Spirit is not going to call missionaries out of a dead, dry, dull, dormant church.

Someone has said, *“You cannot hatch chickens in a refrigerator.”* Here in these verses we see the Church at Antioch was in the right spiritual atmosphere. They were ministering to the Lord and fasting. That always produces a good atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to work.

B. Second, the church must *take the right action through which the Holy Spirit will do His work.*

Notice verses 2-3 again. ***“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”***

The Holy Ghost can and will do His work easy where the church is fasting and praying.

C. The third job of the church is to *recognize it is the right agency through the Holy Ghost does His Work.*

I am not against the mission boards and other agencies which strive to serve the local church in getting the missionary to the field. However, I must be honest and say that mission boards are man's idea and have practically no Scriptural basis.

I also believe that a mission board should be under the authority of a local church.

Missionaries are to be sent out by their local church. They are to be supported by local churches, and they are to be submitted to the authority of their local church.

I would not want to have any part in any missionary or his work that is not sent out by his local church, supported by local churches, and in submission to the authority of his local church and Pastor.

The Scripture gives the local church a very important role in the work of missions. It is the only agency recognized in the Scripture through which the Holy Spirit has chosen to do His work.

V. HOLY SPIRIT MUST WORK IN THE CHRISTIAN IN CARING FOR THE MISSIONARY

After the Holy Spirit has called the missionary and the local church has commissioned him, then comes the thought of caring for the missionary. How does he get his support? In denominational mission programs, all the missionary has to do is go before the denominational mission board and get approved for funds by them. It is very different for missionaries in New Testament faith mission programs. For the missionary to be properly cared for the Holy Spirit must work in and through both the missionary candidate and the church members.

VI. THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST WORK IN THE LIFE OF THE CANDIDATE

First we look at how the Holy Spirit must work in the life of the Candidate. It is not enough for the missionary just to say the Lord has called him to be a missionary. The Holy Spirit must do a work in and through the life of the missionary if he is to gain financial and prayer support from other Christians.

A. First, *his burden must be revealed*.

The ability of the missionary to reveal his burden to other Christians will determine how long it takes him to raise his support. No missionary will ever be successful if he does not have a life-consuming burden for the work that the Lord has called him into.

B. The second thing the Holy Spirit must work in the life of the candidate is, *his behavior must be right*. I personally would not want to support any missionary candidate who does not behave himself in a godly manner. This behavior should be true in every Christian, but especially in the life of those that are called of God.

I believe the same qualifications that apply to the bishop in I Timothy 3:1-7 applies to the evangelist and missionary also. These qualifications are being ignored by many today, but I do not believe you help the cause of Christ by lowering the standards set forth in His Word. Open your Bible and let's look at these verses.

The man of God must be a proven man. He is to be successful as a person, a partner, a parent, and a preacher. Why send a lamp to the mission field if it will not shine here in our own field?

C. The third thing that the Holy Spirit must manifest in the life of the missionary candidate is *his blessings must be recognized*.

Poormouthing will not get the missionary much support. It is one thing to rightly present a need and another to be a poor mouth.

VII. THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST WORK IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Just as the Holy Spirit must work in the life of the candidate, He also must work in the life of the church.

A. First, we will see that *the pastor of the church has a pivotal role*. As the Overseer and under-shepherd over the flock of God, the Pastor must *recognize the leadership of Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit will lead the man of God in His will concerning supporting missionaries.

B. After the Pastor recognizes the leadership of the Holy Spirit, he must *respond to the leadership of the Holy Spirit*.

He must *reveal the leadership of the Holy Spirit* to his people. Missionary support should not be left up to the choosing of the Pastor and the people, but to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The *people of the church also have a pivotal role*. First, there is *the ministry of supplication*. I could never stress the importance of praying for our missionaries too much. Every member of the church should read the prayer letters from their missionaries and then pray for the needs that are mentioned in their prayer letters.

The second ministry of the people to the missionary is *the ministry of support*. This means that the church members contribute money into the mission treasury of the church for the support of missionaries.

Lastly, the church members have *the ministry of strengthening* the missionary. This can be done by words of encouragement, by being friendly and courteous, and just by showing an attitude of caring for and caring about the missionaries.

VIII. HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN COMMUNITY IN CHURCH PLANTING BY THE MISSIONARY

In this segment of our study we will again look at the work of the candidate and the work of the Holy Spirit. May I emphasize these two must work together. This is not to be looked at as the Holy Spirit co-operating with the missionary, but rather, the missionary co-operating with the Holy Spirit.

IX. THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST WORK THROUGH THE MISSIONARY

First we look at the missionary's job in church planting. I know of no verses in the Bible that describes the work of the missionary in church planting than Psalms 126:6.

Notice: ***“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”*** In this verse there are four simple thoughts that describe the work of the missionary in starting a church.

1. The Going of the Servant
2. The Flowing of the Tears
3. The Sowing of the Seed
4. The Mowing of the Sheaves

X. THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST WORK IN CHURCH-PLANTING

Then there is the work of the Holy Spirit in church planting. I do not particularly like the term *church planting* but for lack of a better term I will use it. After the missionary has done the things listed above, he **MUST NOW RELY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DO HIS WORK**. He must realize that there are some things that only the Holy Spirit can do. Only the Holy Spirit can *create a church*. The missionary must not try to do the work of the Holy Spirit. Here are five things that only the Holy Spirit can do.

1. Only the Holy Spirit can *create a church*.
1. Only the Holy Spirit can *convict of sin*.
2. Only the Holy Spirit can _____ *the sinners*.
3. Only the Holy Spirit can *conduct the services*.
4. Only the Holy Spirit can _____ *the saints*.
5. Only the Holy Spirit can conquer old Satan

The missionary does not have to worry about the Holy Spirit doing His work. The missionary must be concerned with doing what God has called him to do and then leave the results in the hands of God. God will accomplish His purpose through the working of the Holy Spirit.

PRACTICAL STUDIES ABOUT MISSIONS

TRAINING

One of the qualification of the man of God is He *must* ***“Not (be) a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil,”*** I Timothy 3:6.

This simply means a young, inexperienced and untrained man should not be put in a position of authority and responsibility in the ministry. This training should begin in his

local church under the direction of the pastor. The missions candidate should have served years as a Sunday school teacher, youth director, bus worker, or assistant to the pastor.

Most mission boards require the missionary to have training in a Bible Institute, Bible College, or Seminary.

If you feel the call of God to missions you should discuss this with your pastor. Seek your pastor's advice about what preparatory work that you can start doing in your local church. Also seek his advice and the advice of other missionary leaders as to what Bible College you should attend.

MISSION BOARDS

There are some pastors that do not want the missionaries they help support to be affiliated with any mission board. They want the missionary's local church to handle all the paper work and the finances of their missionaries. I favor the missionary going through a mission board.

Why a mission board? Here are several reasons.

1- Many pastors do not have the knowledge of the preparatory work that a missionary must go through in getting to the mission field.

Examples: Preparations in leaving, medical preparations, visa, Foreign government requirements, legal information, amount of finances to live

2- Another reason in favor using a mission board is most churches do not have the secretarial staff to properly handle the finances of their missionaries, especially if there are a number of missionaries out of the same church.

Taxes, IRS

3- Another reason for a missionary being with a mission board is accountability. Some say that the mission boards do not hold the missionary accountable. That is not true.

4- One final thought here, most mission boards have some type of financial means of getting one of their missionaries off the field quickly in case of an emergency. This could be a difficult task for some small churches.

CHOOSING A MISSION BOARD

As we have seen in so many other areas of missions, the first, foremost, and final thing to do about any decision is to PRAY.

DEPUTATION

One of the great fears of a new missionary is how to raise the needed support to get to the field and do what God has called him to do. **How you approach deputation will determine whether you enjoy or endure deputation.**

DEPUTATION SHOULD BE LOOKED AT AS A MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY, NOT SOME NECESSARY EVIL

One of the greatest mistakes new missionaries make is they approach deputation as some necessary evil that they must conquer to get to the field.

***You do not approach deputation with that “you gotta do it in order to get to the field” attitude.

1- See it as a ministry.. It is something God is allowing you to do. It is God’s will for you at this present time. When you start deputation you should realize that for the next three years or so, God is going to let you get into many churches that you would not otherwise get in.

Sometimes the waters of deputation will be bitter to the missionary. But when they are, if you will look to the Lord, He will show you a tree, the cross of Christ. The Lord can turn the bitter waters of deputation into sweet waters.

DEPUTATION SHOULD BE LOOKED AT AS A TIME OF TRAINING, NOT TIME WASTED.

1-3 years training

If a missionary cannot endure the trial of three years of deputation, it is doubtful that he will endure the trials of his first four-year term on the mission field.

DEPUTATION SHOULD BE LOOKED AT AS A TIME OF BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

God will give him some great prayer partners.