# The Model Of The Antioch Church - Part 3

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[0:00] really Acts 1 the whole time is that we're always pointing people to Jesus. The gospel is being preached at Pentecost, and Peter, through his sermon, is pointing people to Jesus as the Messiah and the Savior, and people are getting saved.

We're also seeing that as people come to know the Lord, and as they are believing in Jesus, and they're committing their life to him, their lives are being changed.
They are living a different life than what they lived prior to that. And one thing we've seen over the last few chapters in Acts is that the believers are always using their gifts to serve one another.
It's not about serving themselves. It's not about what they get out of gathering and being in church.
No, but it's about what others can get and what they can give to help build up the body of Christ.
And that's what we've really gotten out of Acts 11 here with the model of the Antioch church. What we've seen in verses 11, 19 through 21, we saw the establishment of that church.
[1:13] Men from Cyprus and Cyrene who had come to know Jesus were traveling. And this is the gospel leaving Jerusalem, going hundreds of miles to other places, and those people taking the gospel to other people here in Antioch.

And the gospel is being preached and people are being saved. And so the church is being established in Antioch. And then not only was there the establishment, last week we looked at the discipleship that took place in the church.
Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem 300 miles to Antioch to be an encouragement, an encourager of the church. An encourager of the people there to maintain their faith, to be steadfast in the faith and what they believe.
And then Barnabas after some time said, you know what, I need someone else to help out because people are getting saved just by Barnabas being there and encouraging and teaching people the gospel.
So he goes and gets Paul from Tarsus and brings him back. And they spent the whole year teaching the church. They spent the whole year instructing believers in the word of God.
[2:24] Like I said last week, what an awesome education to be able to sit at the feet of Paul and Barnabas and to learn and to take in what they have to share.

And their insights in the Old Testament scripture, which is what the Jews had. They had the Old Testament. And Paul and Barnabas here in Acts 11, they're living out that New Testament, right?
They're receiving the new revelation from God through prophets and through his revelation to them and eventually writing it down. And now we have it all written down for us. There's no new revelation being given today.
But what we have is, you know, it's what's really neat about reading in Acts is as Acts is unfolding, the writing of scripture is taking place.
You know, or what we have as written scripture is being lived out and eventually written for us to be able to read 2,000 years later. So it's really neat, really neat.
[3:23] I just look at things differently sometimes. You know, just to think about that. Like Paul and Barnabas are teaching. And a lot of what, I bet a lot of what Paul's teaching there in Antioch is what he's going to be writing to like Romans and the Corinthians and, you know, to Timothy and Titus and all them.

So anyway, so that's what we're seeing here with the model of the Antioch church. You've got the establishment of the church through the preaching of the gospel. You have the discipleship in the church with people encouraging and teaching, using their gifts that God has given them to build up and to fortify the church body.

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And now today, verses 27 through 30, we're going to see ministry from the church. So you've got the establishment of the church, discipleship in the church, in ministry from the church.
Let's go ahead and read Acts 11, verses 27 through 30. Now in these days, prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.
And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world. This took place in the days of Claudius.
[4:31] So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Lord, thank you for your word. I pray you give us clarity. Amen. So we see here ministry taking place from the church.
This is initial, this is not a deep, in-depth, exhaustive study of the church of Antioch. But I think there are some observations we can make here. And I think one observation that I make is that unlike today, in today's churches, and specifically in Western churches, we see a lot of inner church ministries.
And inner church ministry, that appears to be the norm, at least in the early New Testament church. And so what I mean by inner church and not intra-church, is that we're talking about, you know, other churches like supporting one another and ministering to one another.
Intra-church is a lot of what Western church is like, and it's kind of, in and of ourselves, we're doing church and building each other up and all that. So what we see, so for instance, in verses 27 and 28, we see inner church preaching.
[5:50] Inner church preaching. See, Jerusalem was the hub of the Christian church, right? That's where it started. That's where the gospel was first preached.

And that's where it went out during the persecution in Acts 8 and 9 of Saul, who's persecuting the church. The gospel goes out. I've made that abundantly clear over the last several weeks.
So the gospel's going out with people who are fleeing Jerusalem for their lives. But they're taking the gospel with them because they know Jesus. They believe he's the Messiah. And so as they take the gospel with them, the gospel is spreading.
But Jerusalem is still kind of the hub because that's where the apostles are. That's where they're attending church. That's where they are elders in their churches. That's where they're leading the church from, in Jerusalem.
And so they send prophets. It says that prophets came down from Jerusalem. So the apostles are sending prophets to Antioch. Now about this time, probably by this time, Peter, what we saw in Acts 10, Peter going back to Jerusalem to explain, hey, Cornelius and the Gentiles have received the gospel.
[7:01] They're being saved. They're trusting in Jesus. And he's probably saying, hey, we need to send people out to equip them, to give them knowledge, to help them understand and know what it is they believe and why these things are so.

And so we see that from Jerusalem. They send prophets. And prophets were part of the foundation of the church. In Ephesians chapter 2, verses 19 and 20, says that you are no, speaking of Paul writing to Gentiles, he says, you're no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.
Prophets had a very, very important ministry in the early church. They spoke forth the truth of the word of God, but they also were recipients of revelation from God.
And Paul and Barnabas, they'd been teaching the church doctrine for a year. I mean, they're no slouches. They're doing an excellent job. No, but they would, as far as we know, at least to the degree that they're in Antioch, they weren't receiving new revelation from God.
So these prophets go out from Jerusalem to Antioch to share. 1 Corinthians 14, you can read through 1 Corinthians 14 to get an idea of the prophet's role in the church.
[8:35] Verses 3 and 4 says, The one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

The one who prophesies builds up the church. So the whole purpose of the teaching that they've received from Paul and Barnabas, the whole purpose of what they're going to receive from the prophets is to build up the church, is to build up the body of Christ, to build up believers.

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And I can't stress that enough. Why do we gather together as a local assembly? Why do we gather together as a church here?
It's not to come here and feel good about our worship and to get something out of that necessarily. But it's to give our worship to God and to be built up in the truth of his word. And we take what God is using in his word to build us up, to go out.
And we know from Ephesians 4, verse 11 and 12, that we are built up to be sent out for the work of ministry. And that's why we gather.
[9:43] And that's why they were gathering in Antioch. Why I had Paul and Barnabas and these prophets to build up the church. But in another way, we see Agabus here, who encouraged the church through the warning of a famine.

He's a prophet. God has given him this revelation. Now, it's not like, wow, who cares, right? I mean, so what? A prophet who is told that a famine is coming.
I mean, how is that spiritually good? How could that be spiritually enriching and building up? I asked myself this question this week.
I was like, Agabus told him of a famine to come. How is that helpful? Other than it gives credential, like, if, you know, him as a prophet, if indeed it comes about.
Then I got to think, I realized, it's just like, you know, the Lord made the light go off. I figured it out. Why does this matter? Because it shows that God is in control.
[10:46] God's in control, right? Isaiah 46, verses 9 and 10. God says, I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning.

And from ancient times, things not yet done. Saying, my counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose. It is an encouragement to the Gentiles who don't know, who have not known and been exposed to the God of Israel and Yahweh.
Not been exposed to the scriptures very long. To be reminded that God is in control. God is in control. Even when things are going out of control. Even when there's famine and there's nothing to eat and it's getting hard and very difficult to buy.
God is in control. And so God sends a prophet in Agabus to tell them, hey, there's going to be a famine in the land.
It doesn't mean God has lost control or he's not blessing or what have you. He's still in control and he sent me to tell you about this and to warn you.
[11:51] And what does that do for the people? It gives them an opportunity to prepare. Maybe we're not sure exactly the time frame as to when Agabus shared about the coming famine and when it actually hit.

But it gave people time to prepare mentally. Maybe to grow a few extra crops or invest in some more. I don't know fully what they would have done.
I've never had to live in that type of culture. But it gave them assurance that God is in control and is letting them know what's happening. Especially when it's coming about.
And two, it gave them opportunity to prepare and to warn people about it to come. And we understand that the famine actually did come during the reign of Claudius.
We're told by Luke at the end of verse 28. But we also know from historical records that during the reign of Claudius, which is from 41 to 54 AD, that there were famines and crop problems.
[12:54] And ancient writers, they mentioned there's at least four famines that took place. Two in Rome, one in Greece, and one in Judea. And the famine in Judea was especially severe.

Jewish historian Josephus records that many people died for lack of money to buy what little food was available. So there was this warning that it was going to come about, and it did.
And we're going to see here in a second another ministry, an inter-church ministry that comes up because of this warning. But I just want to remind you that this is inter-church preaching from Jerusalem to Antioch.
It would be like a Baptist church that we're not affiliated in a denominational sense. It would be like a Baptist church sending another preacher from another part of the state or the town or whatever to preach here.
And they come in and we hear the word. And we do have that today in a sense. We have evangelists who travel to churches and share about evangelism and encourage churches to evangelize.

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[14:02] We have apologists who train up the church members in different apologetic issues, creation apologetics or general apologetics, academics, whatever. However, we have mission agencies and conferences where we have people from missions agencies or we have missionaries come in to train the church, teach the church about missions and the need for it in different parts of the world.

So in that respect, we have inter-church preaching, but it's not quite the same as the New Testament church because in Acts 11, it was one church directly to another. Those examples, evangelists, missions, apologists, whatever, they're typically sent by organizations.
They're typically sent para-church organizations send them. So we do have it. It's not quite the same, but it happens. But the bottom line issue, the bottom line to take away from this, you know, these people coming from Jerusalem to Antioch, they were using their gifts to build up the church.
Turn with me to Ephesians 4. I know I've referenced it a few times. I tend to get ahead of myself from time to time. I was doing that this morning. Ephesians 4, page 1670 in my Bible.
That won't help you, I'm sure. And I'd like to read verses 7 through 16. So verses 1 through 6, Paul has made a case for the unity of the church.
[15:39] Together, one God, one Lord, one baptism. We're all united together under the banner of Christ. Verse 7. So that's saying that when the Lord ascended, he was taking a host of captives with him.

That is a signal of victory in battle. Those host of captives are the prisoners of war. And he has them. And he gave gifts to men.
This common occurrence in ancient times, after a nation goes to war and wins in victory, and they're bringing the prisoners of war through the town, and people are celebrating that their guys won.
And the armies, the people would bring, they'd have the plunder, right? They'd have the gold and the silver, and they'd be passing it out and giving it out, gifts to their people from the victory that they had.
And so you get this picture of Jesus ascending on high with the prisoners of war, and he gave gifts to men. And I'm going to actually skip down to verse 11.
[17:00] Not that 9 and 10 are important, but for this point. And he gave, verse 11, the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.

These are gifts that Jesus gave to the church through his victory. He gave apostles and prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers to, verse 12, equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, but human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.
Rather, speaking the truth in love, we're to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
Man, we could spend weeks on that passage alone, but let me sum it up for you. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers were given to the church to build it up to maturity in Christ-likeness, to build up the body of Christ to be looking like Christ.
Not through deceitfulness, but through truth. And I love verse 16. From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped.
[18:52] Every joint in the body of Christ. That is everybody in the local assembly. That is everybody who is sitting here today. You are in Christ. You know Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

And you're committed and you're following him. You are part of the body of Christ. You are part of that every joint which it is equipped when each part is working properly.
Are you a part of the body of Christ that's working properly? And if you're working properly, then you're contributing to the growth of the body of Christ.
Because it makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. This is what we see happening with the prophets. God used the prophets to stir up the hearts of believers to do the will of God.
As a pastor or as elders, we cannot be jealous for the ministry of equipping and encouraging. I know people in the body here who attend Bible studies that are run by other churches.

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[20:01] They sit under teaching of other pastors and teachers and such. And it's easy as a pastor to become jealous and concerned and like, oh no, worried about that. But the reality is that there are many teachers and preachers that God has given to the church to do the job of equipping and building up.

And as a pastor and as elders, we need to, we can warn or we can encourage the sheep that are exposed to it. So if you're part of a Bible study, you go to a different church for Wednesday Bible study, Thursday Bible study, whatever, praise God.
If it's a Bible-believing church where you're hearing the gospel and you're hearing the truth of scripture, be encouraged by that. There are many teachers in the church universal that are good Bible-preaching, Bible-believing teachers.
And one way that we have it even more so at our fingertips is literally at our fingertips. Of all things, of all days, I've left my phone at home. I'm not missing it by any stretch. But for the sake of example, you know, with my phone that's at home, I can listen to podcasts.
I listen to podcasts all the time. And some people do as well. They listen to other Bible teachers. Some people like to listen to guys like John MacArthur or Joel Beakey or Alistair Begg or Charles Stanley or whoever.
[21:26] Like, we all have people that we like to listen to and are favorites of ours. And so we listen to them on the TV or on the radio or whatever. That's good. If they're good Bible-preaching, you know, coming from a Bible-believing church, good Bible-preachers who are pointing people to Jesus and His glory and building them up in the faith, excellent, go for it.

I encourage it. We are without excuse in our churches today, especially in the United States of America. There's so much biblical illiteracy in the pews.
It's appalling. You know, people make it their point to come to church once a week. People make it their point to sit under teaching once a week. Well, for crying out loud, all right, if you're going to come to worship service, fine, great, that's awesome.
You're being fed a little bit. Is that one meal going to last you the whole week? Not likely. Not likely. So I encourage you to get plugged in. Read scripture.
You know, do a Bible reading plan with somebody. I didn't print off more, but last week I had laid out the one-to-one Bible reading that I encourage you to take, and at least 30 of you took them.
[22:31] And so I'll print off more, and they'll be available to you next week. But read the Bible with somebody. Read the Bible with somebody in this church, with your spouse, with a friend, a co-worker.

Read scripture together, and be built up together. And, you know, maybe read scripture and listen to it. Like, I know a couple that was listening to a series in Corinthians, 1 Corinthians, and they were listening to a sermon series done, I think it was by John MacArthur, I can't remember now who it was, but they were listening to that, and they were reading through it together, and they were growing together.
Do that. We are without excuse for the biblical literacy that is existent in the pews today in America. We have more seminaries, more Bible programs, more opportunities to be in the Word, and less and less are people taking advantage of that.
In the name of busyness, in the name of doing this sport, or that activity, or being here or there. Okay, you can't be in the assembly on a Sunday. Well, get in the Word every other day.
How about that? So that's interchurch preaching. Sub point one. Verses 29 and 30. You've got interchurch giving.
[23:45] Interchurch giving. So, the famine's coming. Agabus warned. So the disciples determined everyone according to his ability to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

And they did so, sending it by the elders at the hands of Barnabas and Saul. There was a ministry of compassion. This ministry of compassion was birthed from a heart of compassion.
And that heart of compassion was grown through their knowledge of the gospel of compassion. As they grew in Scripture knowledge. Now, this is what biblical discipleship leads to.
You have greater knowledge as you're being discipled, as you're discipling others. Matthew 28, 20 tells them, teach them to observe all that I've commanded you. You go, make disciples, teach them. So there's a growth in knowledge for those who are following Christ and are being discipled or being in the Word and instructed. And with greater knowledge, there's a greater desire to follow God and to do as his Word has commanded and led and has shown out as he, through Jesus, has

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lived out for us.
[24:55] And to see, there's a greater desire. I think of Jeremiah 31, verse 33. God saying, For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, declares the Lord.

I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts. That is a direct reference to the new covenant which we have in Jesus Christ.
That the law will be in us and that it will be written on our hearts. And when something's written on your heart and it's there, you know, from out of the heart flow the issues of life. Out of the heart flow the desires in life.
And so if you're in the Word and you're growing in the Word and you're memorizing the Word and it's being written on your heart, your desire grows more for it. More for righteousness.
More for carrying it out in your life. Leo Tolstoy said, When I came to believe in Christ's teaching, I ceased desiring what I had wished for before.
[25:55] The direction of my life, my desires became different. What was good and bad had changed places. That is the work that God does in the life of a believer.

One who is committed to Jesus and is exposed to the teaching of His Word. God gives you new desires. He changes the desires you have. I mentioned earlier about the casting down our idols. There's, like, I could stand up here and preach like 20 weeks about heart idolatry. Or I could encourage you to read a book. Which one would you prefer?
Maybe it'll take you 20 weeks to read it. I don't know. But the book is called Gospel Treason by Brad Bigney. Gospel Treason by Brad Bigney. I have one copy. I'm happy to let anyone, I'll loan it to anybody who wants to read it.
Excellent book about heart idolatry and the fact that the trials that we go through, the hardships we go through, reveal the idols that we have in our hearts.
[26:57] You know, things that we may not have ever thought of as being idols in our heart that God brings to the surface. And we need to get rid of them. We need to kill them. We need to cast them down and destroy them.

So, excellent book that deals with this very topic, the desires of our heart and what they point to and indicate. So, you know, discipleship leads to greater knowledge, leads to greater desires, leads to greater obedience.
Ezekiel 36, 27, and I'll put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. That's God's desire for us is to live in obedience to him and his word because his word is in our heart.
Another quote for you from John Stott, excellent theologian, excellent theologian, John Stott. he says, Christian obedience is unlike every other kind of obedience. It is not the obedience of slaves or soldiers but essentially the obedience of lovers who know, love, and trust the person who issues the commands.
Christian obedience is unlike any other kind of obedience. It's not the obedience of slaves or soldiers. It's not compelled and demanded and like you have to give in. It's the obedience of lovers who know, love, and trust the person who issues the commands.
[28:19] Those who are in Christ, they know the person who is commanding it. They know it's a God of goodness and grace and mercy. They know it is a God who has saved their soul. And so when he gives commands, when we're in his word and he's giving commands and expectations, we follow them willingly because we know the one who is giving it to us and we love him.

And we love him because he first loved us. So in their knowledge of and their desire for and their obedience to Christ, Antioch believers practiced others' mindedness.
They practiced others' mindedness. We know from Romans 15 that this was an expression of gratitude for receiving the gospel. Romans 15 verse 27 says, For if the Gentiles have come to share in the spiritual blessings of Israel, their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.
We can thank God and be thankful to God because of the riches that have been extended to us through the promises and blessings given to Abraham and his descendants.
And because of that, the church at Antioch is giving materially because they've received abundantly in the spiritual sense.
[29:47] 1 Corinthians 16 verses 1 and 2 show us that there was an opportunity for the church at Antioch to participate. Now you're thinking like, wait, you're going to Romans, you're going to

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Corinthians, what does this have to do with the church at Antioch?

Remember, this guy who wrote Romans and Corinthians is the same guy who's teaching in Antioch for over a year. Paul. And so I believe wholeheartedly that what he wrote to Corinth and what he wrote to Rome, he probably also spoke in Antioch.
It says 1 Corinthians 16, 1 and 2. Now concerning the collection for the saints, okay, that's what we're talking about in Acts 11, 29 and 30.
Concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so it's not just Corinth. Now we're talking about Galatia, clearly in Antioch. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper so that there will be no collecting when I come.
Basically what he's saying is put it aside, be ready to hand it over or whatnot. We're not taking a collection. Be ready at the beginning of the week. But as he may prosper, as God has given you a blessing in abundance and an opportunity to bless others with that abundance, do it.
[31:13] And that's what they were doing in Antioch. It says in verse 29, everyone according to his ability. It didn't disable the individual to give.

And by the way, you can't out-give God. We're told in Philippians 4.17, 4.19, that as we give sacrificially, he will give abundantly through his riches which are in Christ.
And that giving may or may not be, you may, don't listen to those charlatans on the TV who tell you, oh, give us $100 and you'll get tenfold back or whatever.
That's a bunch of baloney and hogwash. Don't listen to it. They're totally taking scripture out of context, 100%. 100%. Because the blessing you may get from God may or may not be material in return.
You may give sacrificially and you may receive heavenly blessing. Right? And you won't get that until later. So, sorry, delayed gratification. Very hard in America today.
[32:15] But it needs to happen. So as you prosper and as you have opportunity and according to your ability, give. And that's what happened in Antioch.

And I believe, according to 2 Corinthians 9-7, that they gave with cheerfulness. 2 Corinthians 9-7, each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion.
For God loves a cheerful giver. I think of it, typically we think of it in terms of the church. I'm not standing up here saying, oh, give, give, give. You need to put more in the coffers, anything like that. I'm not compelling you to give more, telling you you need to give more or anything like that. As you feel led to give, give. As you feel led to give for the general fund, give to the general fund. As you feel led to give to the benevolence fund, do it.
As you feel led to give to the Christmas in Second Ani, Christmassy qua watoto, do it. You know, however you have determined in your heart to give, do so.
[33:12] And do so cheerfully. And that, I believe, is what Antioch was doing. They're doing it cheerfully. They're like, yes, Lord, this is an opportunity. Let's do it. And they sent it with Barnabas and Saul. It's the design of the church to be mindful of the needs of others, even those in other churches.

It's the design of the church to be mindful of others, even those in other churches. We're talking about the brothers in Judea. Antioch's 300 miles away. And they were concerned for them.
Now, I'm not saying it's perfect that way, that it's always, you know, it's always going to be that way. And you might be thinking like, oh man, there's like 300 churches around here. Now, how do we do that? You don't. You don't just say, okay, I'm going to go do this.
As opportunities come up, you feel led to give and to do so, do it. So let's not ignore the opportunities we have to support others.
And sometimes, we may have an opportunity to support another church. Have we thought of that? But can. Our finances are already tight enough as it is. Yeah? And we also serve a God who owns the cattle on a thousand hill.
[34:20] So, but, just thinking outside the box on some things here. Inner church preaching, inner church giving. And I don't want anyone to come up here and say, oh, you mean you want pastors from other churches to come here?

If God leads in that direction to do so, but, no, it's not like I'm out here saying we need to change the way we do things and all that. I'm just saying, let's be open and let's recognize the way God works in the church in his body.

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So, inner church giving, preaching, inner church giving, and then finally, oh, turn to Acts 13. Sermon should be over. Yes, it should be.
Yes, it should be. Oh, brother. Yeah, shoot, no. You don't have to deal with me if you shoot the clock. Someone bigger than me might have something to say.
So, Acts 13, verses 1 through 3, church planting. Church planting. So, this is the model, part 3, of the Antioch church. This is ministry from the church, inner church preaching, inner church giving, and church planting.
[35:22] And I think I will expound on this even more when we get to Acts 13 someday. It says, now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers. Yeah, we know that. Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene.

There's the Cyrenean there. Manaan, a lifelong friend of Herod the Tetrarch, 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. What takes place in the beginning of Acts 13 and following in the book of Acts are the missionary journeys of Paul.
We see that he was sent out from Antioch. Remember I said last week that we're seeing the focus going from Jerusalem now to Antioch as being the hub for the Gentile church and mission.
Right? And the gospel going out to the Gentiles. It goes from, it shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch where Paul's at. And Paul was chosen, one of the two, Barnabas and Paul, good team by the way.
[36:30] Now he was chosen to go. And this is a fulfillment of the reason why, of his chosen purpose. Remember Acts 9 verse 15, God said, he's a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

So he was chosen to go to the Gentiles with the gospel. And it starts here in Antioch where he's been teaching for over a year. And the church participated in that ministry.
It said that they fasted and prayed. That showed a need and dependence on God. This is something completely new to the church. They're going on mission to Gentiles.
Oh my word. A lot of these guys are former Jews. Jews hated Gentiles and we need God to give direction and give discernment and show us where to go and how to do it. So they had to fast and pray and give clear direction from God.
And then we see that the church sent them off. They sent them off. They prayed over them and said, all right, go. It's likely, possible, you know, that maybe they sent them off with some supplies as well.
[37:35] Maybe they gave them a sandwich and said, here's the start of it for you. I don't know. We don't know what that all looked like, right? But we see that the church participated in the ministry of Paul as he went on his missionary journey to plant churches.

And I want to just tell you this, church planting is more than a ministry for missionaries. It's more than a ministry for missionaries. Church planting is a ministry that the church must participate in. They must participate in. See, a great commission church ought to seek to plant churches because planting churches means you're making disciples. That's what making disciples is all about.
It's about planting churches. Now, I want to tell you something. Planting churches does not mean you're building buildings. Planting churches may lead to a building but ultimately planting churches is about making disciples.
And that's what we should all be about, right, as believers. That's why we should be doing one-to-one Bible reading. That's why we should be sharing the gospel to make disciples. And as you're making disciples in different areas, guess what you're doing?
[38:44] You may actually be planting a church. Some people are called to it. Some people are called to plant churches and praise God for that, who recognize that God is leading them in a direction to go to an area that maybe doesn't have a gospel witness, to share the gospel and plant churches.

The Antioch church was chosen by God to be the hub of church planting in the Gentile world. And the Jerusalem church was used by God to be the hub of church planting in the Jewish societies. And that's what we see taking place.
From Jerusalem they went to the Jews. From Antioch they're going to the Gentiles. Both churches were used by God to plant churches in other towns and countries. And those churches in those towns and countries were in turn used by God to plant churches in other towns and countries.

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How do you think churches spread? How do you think they grew up? It's not because somebody had like oh hey let's go build a church over here. No no. You had people who said hey there's a group of people over here that don't know Jesus let's go share the gospel.
And there's a group of people over here. And hey my cousin Ned said there's a group of people up there that don't know the gospel. Let's go preach the gospel and see people get saved. And guess what? That is what church planting is.
[39:57] Matthew 28 19 go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Go from place to place. Lau and Deb they were here living in Acton. Guess what they did? They were making disciples. They were planting a church in Acton in their house every Sunday.

That's what they did for years, several years. You know what they're doing in Second Nine Kenya? Making disciples. Preaching the gospel alongside someone else who's been there preaching the gospel for 20 years.
But they're doing it. They are in a sense planting churches. That just so happens there happens to be a church there on the mission, a building. And so now what they're doing is they're making disciples and those disciples are being discipled through teaching and fellowship through that building there.
AIC Second Ani. Second Timothy 2 2, I love this. What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
That's Paul's command to Timothy. Teach faithful men who will teach faithful men who will also teach faithful men. You get the idea? That's what discipleship is.
[41:06] That's what church planting is all about. I promise I'm coming to an end. The Antioch church is a model from which all other local churches can learn from.

I want to say that we can learn from this. I'm not saying we need to become this. I'm not saying that overnight we're going to change and become something different than what we have been.
What I'm saying is as we go through scriptures, we go through the book of Acts and we see what's happening and what's going on. We see God working and we see how God leads and directs and commands his church. If we are not doing it, if we are not doing what God expects us to do, we need to change.
We need to make those changes. We need to implement what God has commanded and directing us to do and start doing it, if we're not already. And here what we see here in Antioch, there was the establishment of the church, right?
Oh, there was a church being planted in Antioch because guys from Cyprus and Cyrene went and preached the gospel and people got saved. That's how the church got started there. And then there was discipleship because another church said, hey, there's a group of believers but they don't know anything.
[42:13] Let's send Barnabas. He'll encourage them. He'll teach them. And Barney said, you know what? This is too much for me. Let me go get a guy who's a little smarter than I am or who's able to help me with this. And so he went and got Saul.

And so from a different church, by the way, he's in Tarsus. Barnabas was in Jerusalem. This is in Antioch. I mean, you see how this, it's a web, it's a mess if you're trying to think of it logistically. Like, oh, how's this all going to work? But God thought of it and he knew what he was doing. Barnabas goes, he gets Saul, they're discipling there in the church and then there's ministry taking place from the church because as they grow, there's compassion, there's knowledge, there's love, they want to be Christ to other people and so they're sending money, they're sending people out to plant churches.
They are growing together in loving God and loving people. And it's how God uses his people to reach the world with the gospel message. And let me tell you something, that's how God will use First Baptist Shapley to reach Shapley with the gospel message.
is when we're growing up in Christlikeness, when we're growing up in our knowledge of him and we're not just letting knowledge be there for knowledge's sake. We're not getting spiritually flabby, we're not getting out of shape that way, but we're working out our salvation, we're working out the good works that God has prepared beforehand for us to walk in.
[43:31] We are taking the knowledge of his word and his goodness and his character and who he is and who we are in light of who he is and we're taking it to a world that is sitting in darkness that has yet to see a great light or in the case of Shapley community has seen a great light at one time and has now turned away, turned off the light and wants nothing to do with it.

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And guess what? God has called us here to reach these people. It's going to be hard. It's going to be heartbreaking. It's going to give you, you're going to be left with a heartache because you're going to preach the gospel, you're going to share the good news of Jesus and people are going to laugh at you and say, oh no, that's just for you.
That's what you believe. It's not for me. It's in whatever or that's your truth, not my truth as if there can be more than one. And as we are faithful to God and his word, our hearts are going to be broken and we're going to get worn out.
But do not grow weary from doing good. Continue to follow in obedience. This church has been established for over 200 years.
I pray that discipleship has been taking place in this church. I pray that it continues to take place in this church. And then we go out, ministry from the church in different areas.
[44:50] And I'll be honest with you. People ask, one of the questions that comes up in churches, what's your vision for the church? Right? Well, let me be honest with you. I would love to see this church, like, body, planting another church.

It may be long term. It may not happen in the next 12 months. It may not happen in the next 12 years. But it took 200 years for us to send our own missionaries to the mission field.
Hopefully it doesn't take 200 years for us to plant a church from here. But I would love to see us involved in a church plant in an area of Maine or New England where there is no gospel message, where there is no gospel light.
But God's called us as believers to be part of that. I've spoken long enough. I've gone over by 15 minutes. Let's pray.
Gracious Father, Lord, I thank you for your word. Thank you for the truth that lies in there. Lord, I thank you for the direction that you give, the mercy, your grace.
[45:57] Lord, I pray that you would use your word. I pray that you'd use what was said today. That was not said in vain, but Lord, it was said for your glory, for you to be honored and glorified in our midst, that you would equip us to do the work of service.

I love you, Lord, and I thank you for calling me to this church, to these people, for this purpose. And Lord, it's only getting started. I look forward to the years ahead of how you're going to work, how you're going to build us up, and how you're going to use us for your glory.
Help it to start with me, Lord. Help me to lead the way through example, not just through word only, but through action as well. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.
Come on up, Tony.

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