

# The Master's Model for Missions

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. It's a blessing to be here in this very beautiful place. Our first time out here and we've been very wowed.

We really came, the main reason was just to say thank you to you all. This church in particular has helped us with a few projects.

We supplied about a thousand copies of the book One Perfect Life. We've used that, you have supplied that. We've used that in at least two conferences and then we've given them out to many individual pastors as well.

So we're very grateful for that. You may not realize it, but you're also helping us. We have one of our graduates from Pakistan. I've been mentoring him and we have him studying at the Master's Seminary online.

And it became difficult for him to study in Pakistan online with the seminary. And I'd meet him each week between his Internet going out every single call.

[ 1 : 04 ] Usually he would have a, the power would go out in the house and then he would switch to his phone, which costs a lot more money. One time we were talking through his classes and his ministry and personal life.

And he says, can I call you back later? Tear gas is coming through my windows right now. There was some kind of unrest outside. And then at other times he was struggling getting books for his studies.

Amazon's not allowed there. Kindle, we can't get that. Some of the things that we take for granted and get easily, he could not get. So we said, you know what, would you consider and talk to your church, your wife, and pray about coming to the Philippines, studying there so that we can mentor you in person.

And instead of just me, we have a whole team and we have the resources. And then we have a healthy church that you can be a part of and learn from even just watching how the church does ministry so that when he goes back, he'll be a better prepared pastor.

So you've helped with supporting that pastor as well. And so we just wanted to thank you so much. So I am the president of our school in the Philippines, just about our ministry.

[ 2 : 15 ] It's called the Expositors Academy. I think you met Pastor John Zing recently. They are a satellite of our school until they are up and running and have a full school themselves.

But I'm over the region, so there's our school. And then for TMAI, I'm what's called the regional director, regional leader for TMAI.

So we have several schools, including in India, Myanmar. Where else are we at? We're working on Indonesia. We're praying. We've got a lot of guys in South Korea, so we're hoping we'll have a school there as well.

We want to start, I would call it a restart, in Japan, New Zealand. We've got about seven or eight TMS grads in Indonesia that we're trying to get together, work together to have a multi-site training center there as well.

And we're trying to develop stuff throughout the region. Our newest emerging school there is in Thailand. We're praying about opportunities in Vietnam. So the Lord is allowing us to base in the Philippines where, as it was said, we've been there for 22 years.

[ 3 : 22 ] I think we have about 606 students. Some are online. Some are from other countries, as I mentioned, Pakistan. Most of them in Pakistan, we go there in person, but some also study with us online.

We've had a few students from Canada joining us online, funny. Filipinos, I believe, who moved out here and were either students already or some of our churches out there, told them, oh, you should

join our class.

So we've allowed them. We've got students in more than a half dozen countries besides the Philippines, and we're trying to develop other schools in the region. One last hat that I wear is for Grace Church.

I'm what's called the regional shepherd, as our missionaries from the church have grown. It used to be where one pastor from the church could go visit each missionary throughout the year.

That became more than one person can do. So they divided us up into regions. I know that Asia has two regional leaders. Europe does.

[ 4 : 26 ] I'm for Asia. We have a regional leader for Africa, South America, a libero that includes Spain and Mexico and Honduras and South.

So I'm the regional shepherd to encourage our missionaries. So not school, not academics, just their families, their spiritual life. And my wife joins me in that as we give counsel and encourage newer and younger missionaries to keep them on the field.

And today's message will brush on that as well. But before I expound Acts chapter 13, verses 1 through 3, let me say a quick word of prayer and we'll get into our text.

Lord, thank you for using me as your vessel. Thank you for this privilege to explain what you have given us through your spirit.

I pray that you would use me to be your instrument, to encourage, to inspire this church, your people. Help us to be faithful to your word, Lord, not to just hear it, but to be changed by it, to obey it, to proclaim it.

[ 5 : 35 ] And we thank you for that privilege and that opportunity. And I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, while I was here, I should say in the U.S., we're on furlough right now.

We've been here since mid-January. We head back to the Philippines in July 26, I believe. I feel very welcome here. So many Filipinos.

I'm hearing them all over from the airport to Whistler to here in Squamish. And I see there's good Filipino foods, which we miss a little bit. And so it's very nice to be here.

While in California, I was speaking to a pastor friend of mine, and he felt personally responsible for the disappointment of his congregation because they had experienced the failure of, I think it was about three of their missionaries that he had affirmed, him and the elders of the church.

They made a case, really, to the congregation. Hey, one at a time, here is a family or here is a man. We think this person is fit for the ministry. We believe in their vision.

[ 6 : 42 ] We want to send them. And they ended up being brokenhearted because three missionaries that they sent out failed in their ministry. Now, situations like that happen.

It's going to happen even in the best churches and the best people because we're human. We're sinners. But it breaks our heart when that happens, when we trust people, when we pray for them, when we support them, when we pour our lives into them, when we care about what they're doing, and then they don't finish well.

It breaks our hearts. So we have to ask, how can we do a better job of either going out as a missionary? Maybe that's what God's calling you to do, is going.

Or how can we do a better job at sending and supporting missionaries? How can we be faithful stewards of God's resources in reaching the nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Well, we're not the only ones to face that dilemma, those questions and wondering, what do we do? How do we do this? Because the early church faced the exact same situation.

[ 7 : 52 ] They were working on obeying Jesus' command to preach the gospel. He said, first do it in your hometown in Jerusalem, and then go out to the province of Judea, and even to the regions of your enemies.

And even beyond that, beyond Samaria, go to the ends of the earth. But how are they going to do that? How are they going to preach to the nations?

At least what's around them is a little bit familiar. At least you know you can go to your favorite food places, speak your same language, understand maybe the different religious practices, the government, all that.

But what do you do? Well, it's all foreign. It's new. So they had many unknowns. And in addition to those questions and unknowns, we could also ask, well, what are the requirements to be a missionary?

What kind of preparation and training is needed? And how should this church be involved? Well, fortunately, we can see in Acts chapter 13, verses 1 through 3, that we don't have to wonder, because God has provided a model for us to follow.

[ 9 : 10 ] And it saddens me that I've seen so many churches not follow God's pattern. I mean, you could just simply read one book of the Bible.

It's the book of Acts. And you're going to see the history of how the Holy Spirit worked through the church and his people to plant and grow other churches and disciple and make believers.

For some reason, so many want to do it their own way. In the Philippines, over the last few decades, I've seen the kind of damage that can happen when people do missions their own way, when they think they know better than God.

I've observed many, I have to say in air quotes, missionaries who were poorly trained and focused on making programs rather than disciples.

I've seen so many come through. I met this one couple I remember. Their whole teaching ministry, the guy was not really trained. It was interesting because he was sharing how he met his Mormon wife and married her.

[ 10 : 14 ] God told him to marry his Mormon wife. And eventually, apparently, she got saved. I'm glad for that. But he would play DVDs for people. He would gather people together and they'd watch DVDs.

And it would be unrelated material, not basic discipleship and growing people up in maturity. I've seen others use similar methods, how to handle trauma, staying pure, all good things, but just hit and miss rather than taking them and presenting every man and woman complete and mature in Christ, teaching the whole counsel of God and discipling.

I've seen other missionaries who, it's funny, is in their churches where they came from, they didn't teach, they didn't lead, but then they get on the mission field and all of a sudden, oh, speak at our church.

They become put on a pedestal, you know, an expert, just simply because they came from Europe or the Americas or wherever.

You know, you must be an expert is the assumption a lot. And so it baffles me to see people, I'll hear them teach and going, oh my gosh, this person should not be standing in front of God's people and teaching.

[ 11 : 33 ] They weren't teaching back home. They were discipled and often, I think, for a reason, probably back home where they came from, this person's not ready yet. But then they get out to the field and boom, they are up front.

I've seen others, I think this is equally bad, if not worse, that have gone out as, quote, missionaries, but they weren't a part of a local church. They weren't sent by a church.

Someone was just sharing with me recently about some missionaries, they were baffled that, wow, these guys are in this country as missionaries, but they don't even go to a church. Or they feel it's fine that I can float from church to church and not be committed to a local body.

There are those who, many think this, and I can understand this, they think that doing humanitarian work automatically makes you a missionary.

And as important as things like fighting human trafficking, feeding the hungry, helping the poor and orphans, as important as those things are, they're not missions if they are not a ministry of a local church.

[ 12 : 46 ] So many people don't get that. They go, oh, this person is fighting sex trafficking and they're a Christian, so that's missions. But then they don't point them to a church. They make, sometimes they don't focus on the gospel.

They're just so, when I first moved to the Philippines with my family, we worked with a family that, a group of 25 families that lived under a bridge. And that grabbed our heart.

We saw they had no running water, no electricity. Every time if there were floodwaters rising, either some of the homes that get washed away or destroyed, they had to move to higher ground.

I loved doing that ministry. That was important, but it can consume you helping people. Because if you've transformed by the gospel, you want to help people.

You can't help it. That should happen naturally. But we have to stay focused. Missions is a ministry of the local church. Doing good deeds.

[13:45] You know, there are a lot of groups that do that well. The Red Cross does that well. UNICEF. Doctors Without Borders. Those are wonderful things they do, but they're not missions or missionaries if they are not a part of the local church, sent by the church doing gospel ministry.

In the Nine Marks book on missions, it's a little brown book if you've seen it, written by Andy Johnson. Excellent little book on missions. I'm really impressed by how much wisdom in such a small space.

He wrote in that book, Andy Johnson, missions is the deliberate making of disciples of all nations by taking the gospel across ethnic, linguistic, and geographic boundaries.

Through the gathering of or planting of churches and teaching them to obey everything that Jesus commanded. I think that is a very precise, clear statement of what missions is.

I think you could probably add to it a nuance that's more modern, but now the nations come to you. So we could even do missions without crossing geographical boundaries.

[15:04] But typically when we look in Acts, as we're going to do in a few minutes, we're going to see what the early church did. They went to the ends of the earth. They went to the nations. So with that definition in mind, let me repeat it one more time.

Missions is the deliberate making of disciples of all the nations. We do get kind of comfortable staying in our own little spaces, in our own little towns, but of all the nations, by taking the gospel across ethnic, linguistic, and geographical lines, gathering people together to worship, or planting churches where there's none, and then teaching them to obey everything that Jesus commanded. So with that model in mind, let's proceed to see God's model for making disciples globally. The book of Acts, as I mentioned, shows us this pattern to reach the ends of the earth through churches raising up and sending qualified missionaries.

The book of Acts, it opens with the risen Christ, promising to empower the believers, his followers to be his witnesses, and Jesus fulfilled that promise as we read earlier as they began to speak.

This is miraculous. As people are waiting hundreds of years for the Messiah, and they see, how are these people from, I forget, I counted it, as he mentioned, the Medes, the Persians, Arabs, all these people around.

[16:41] It's something like almost 20 different people groups from all over the world, from Africa to the Arab countries. They're all in Jerusalem to worship God.

Fifty days after Jesus is crucified, resurrected, they hear these people from small towns and other places speaking their languages, their local dialects, and they're blown away.

And they're speaking about the wonderful works of God. They couldn't deny it. They're like, how is this happening? This is, we can't deny this miraculous thing happening in front of us.

And so Jesus did exactly what he promised him. I'm going to empower you to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth. And he kicks it off with a miracle, grabbing everyone's attention, proving that these are God's messengers, his men.

And so they did this. Peter preached. Thousands were added, we see from his first sermon.

However, as they began to work in their Jerusalem, I think it was about seven or so years, they didn't get past Judea and Samaria.

[17:55] So maybe here, they were in Squamish, but they never got past Vancouver. You know, they need to get out. So we see that the time came for them to reach the nations so the nations could hear the gospel too.

And it is his church that God uses for that mission. So in Acts 13, one through three, we can see the master's model for missions through the church in Antioch, a city called Antioch.

And from these verses, I will show you four characteristics of a missions-minded church so that you can follow God's pattern for making disciples globally.

The text shows us that first, missions-minded churches are well-taught by qualified ministers. That's where the soil begins for that work to happen.

It's a church that is well-taught by qualified ministers. We see that in verse one. And then we see that God's plan for, or pattern for making disciples globally is that missions-minded churches prayerfully depend on the Holy Spirit.

[19:10] That's in the second verse, first part of the second verse. And thirdly, missions-minded churches set apart ministers who have a calling from God.

And then fourthly, missions-minded churches affirm and release their people to the field. So listen now as I read Acts 13, one through three.

Now, there were at Antioch, the city of Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Simeon, who was also called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Menaeon, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul.

And while they were ministering to 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 when they had fasted and prayed, this is the church, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

[ 20 : 18 ] So in verse one, we see this first characteristic of a missions-minded church is that they are well taught by qualified ministers.

Or you could say it this way, missions-sending churches have godly teachers feeding them God's word. So after the Jews had tried to kill Saul in Jerusalem, because we're talking about Saul and Barnabas who were set apart for this ministry, there was a time where the Jews were trying to kill Saul.

So he left Jerusalem and he based his ministry in Antioch at the church there. That church was north of Israel in Syria.

That's near the eastern border of Turkey. And they are the first recorded church to send missionaries globally. Verse one mentions that they were a church that was committed to the teaching of God's word.

And that verse also gives us insight into the kind of men ministering in their church. What was the soil of that mission-sending church?

[ 21 : 35 ] What kind of teachers did they have? What kind of men were they? Well, Acts 13.1 tells us that they had both prophets and teachers. And the first one mentioned is Barnabas.

He was a Levite. And his name was actually Joseph. And the apostles nicknamed him Barnabas. That means son of encouragement.

Acts 9.27 says that it was Barnabas who recognized that Paul was a genuine believer and not a Jewish spy.

So there's a time where Saul, Jesus changes his name to Paul, I think for good reason, because he had quite the reputation.

He was a destroyer of the church. And the apostles were afraid. They heard about this guy. So he's coming to us now and he wants to work with us.

[ 22 : 35 ] It was Barnabas was the one. Guys, he's the real deal. You can trust this man. I've been in the trenches with him. That was the kind of man.

That's why he had that nickname, son of encouragement. He was an encourager. He was willing to take a chance on this guy. This is just a side note. And you could pray for the church in Pakistan. This is a, I'm just reminded of some of the men that we ministered to there. They told me that we call new converts bombs. He says it's really hard for our churches to take new believers in.

When they start following Christ, if their family doesn't kill them or if they're not persecuted and have to flee, sometimes they've fled to their city, but they come in, we don't know this person.

Can we trust this person? And it has happened in the past where people have come in the church pretending to be a Christian with bombs strapped and have killed believers.

[ 23 : 41 ] And so they have to really pray perfectly, Lord, do we take this person in? Are they the real deal? Sometimes they'll have a Barnabas who says, I got to know this guy.

This guy is real. This is a brother. This is a sister in Christ. We need to take them in. So that was the kind of man that Barnabas was.

He took a chance on Saul or Paul. Acts 11 adds that Barnabas was a good man full of the Holy Spirit and of faith and that he led many to the Lord and he served with Paul as a missionary to the Gentiles.

So just summing up, Barnabas, the kind of man that he was, he was an encouraging, faithful teacher and evangelist. These are the kind of men who prepare the soil in churches that are faithful to send missionaries.

Now, not much is said about the other men here, Simeon, Lucius, and Menaeon. From the text, all we know about them is that they served the Lord. They communed with him in prayer and in fasting and they were teachers of the church of Antioch.

[ 24 : 53 ] Much is said about Saul, however. As I mentioned, he was renamed Paul by Jesus. He was a Jew born in the coastal town of Tarsus in southern Turkey and initially Paul was a persecutor

of the church, but Jesus saved him and transformed him and he went on to become a champion of the church and he spent, you know, I found this interesting as I was studying about Paul, I asked the question of the text, okay, I've seen he's been in prison how many times?

We don't know for sure, but it looks like estimates are anywhere from, I think it's three years up to seven years in prison. So he believed what he preached.

He was willing to give his life for it. He spent years in prison for it and as you know, he had many beatings and other hardships for it. He was totally transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So Barnabas brought Paul to Antioch where they taught the church for a year and that church sent them out as missionaries in Asia Minor. They were missionaries in Greece.

I would add church planters, also in Italy and that focus earned Paul the title of the apostle to the Gentiles. So just summing up the kind of man he was, the kind of teacher he was, servant in his church, Paul was a faithful teacher.

[ 26 : 23 ] He was a missionary, church planter and a servant of the church. Paul proved his character in that church.

He developed as a minister in that church and was accountable to that church. Every time he went out on his missionary journeys, he did a circuit, he would always come back and report to his church.

Now you're not my church, but I wanted to report to you what your faithfulness is doing in the nations. Paul did that to his church where he was accountable there, but sadly there are many missionaries that have little accountability to the local church.

I've seen the damage that can be done. I've seen, even for these missionaries, I felt sad for them being on their own and I've seen some, I know one that fell into immorality, there was no one to pull him back.

He's still there. He's went to the field with his wife, divorced her and married the secretary, I believe, of the church he was at and is still ministering there.

[ 27 : 37 ] He didn't have a local church to say, you need to come home. And, you know, there's strings. Oh, no, I don't want to come home. Okay, well, you can stay there, but your funding's done. Okay, okay, I'm coming back.

There needs to be accountability for your doctrine, your life, your practice. Paul was accountable, Saul, Saul, and Barnabas to the church in Antioch.

And the leadership helped them, you know, in where they would go and prayed with them and for them and sent them and supported them. Rather than being properly prepared and sent out under the authority of a healthy local church, many go out unprepared, unproven, untethered.

I hope that you can hear my passion, that you are only a part of missions where you're working with people that you know are accountable.

You know they're trained. You know they're faithful. This is why it's critical for churches and their missionaries to be committed to the word of God.

[ 28 : 44 ] However, trained workers can't reach the nations on their own. Even if they come from a church that has a good soil with good teachers that are committed to the word of God, feeding their people, we can't do it on our own.

And that brings us to a second characteristic of a missions-minded church. In verse 2, we see that missions-minded churches are prayerfully dependent on the Holy Spirit.

Churches that are focused on reaching the world for Christ are spirit-directed churches. Dr. Luke tells us in verse 2, he said that while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart.

You must set apart from me Barnabas and Saul. This is a command. This church was committed to faithfully serving and worshiping.

It tells us they were ministering here. You can't see it in the English so much, but this is an ongoing practice and lifestyle for this church. It wasn't that they just got excited one weekend, you know, yeah, yeah, we've got to meet the nations and send some people out.

[ 29 : 59 ] No, these people were committed to serving God and they took it seriously. They recognized the grave task that, wow, the Messiah's finally come. Salvation for the earth is here, but people don't know about it.

We know it here. We've been fed the word. We've got it, but others don't know. We've got to send people and warn them and call them to Christ.

And so they took it seriously. They were serving and then they were fasting because they wanted to discover God's will. So it mentions they were fasting, but what is the discipline of fasting and how does that help?

Well, the Lexham Bible Dictionary says, at least for the Old Testament, it mentions general and individual fasts that were undertaken for a variety of purposes.

Sometimes people would fast when mourning, especially over sin. That could be individual. That could be as a nation, like Nineveh fasted and repented when they were called out on their sin.

[ 31 : 13 ] People in the Old Testament fasted to seek divine deliverance. Israel was in that situation many times when they were fighting enemies. They would fast either, Lord, do we go out?

Do we fight these people? Or, you know, Lord, help us, we're losing. We're losing. Fasting was a means of asking God to have pity and to relent from inflicting punishment on the person or people praying.

So sometimes people would fast when they knew they sinned and they were broken and Lord, please, like David cried out many times, you know, have mercy on me, Lord.

He knew there were times, I know I'm guilty, I know I deserve this, but I pray that you'll have mercy on me even in my punishment. So those were some reasons for fasting in the Old Testament.

Additionally, fasting was a way to seek God's direction, His guidance, and will. It does this through an increased dedication to prayer, repentance, and focused attention on discerning and understanding what God's leading is.

[ 32 : 25 ] Practically speaking, fasting from food and drink, this is my theory here, okay, so you can, take it or leave it, this is my theory, but I, because I wrestled this, why, so what's the magic, so to speak, about fasting?

Why fast from food and water? What I think happens, it's just a natural way, a natural timer. You know, we've got, I woke up this morning with my phone alarm, you know, I'm traveling with my family and my phone reminds me, but you know, you can be at work, let's say you've dedicated to, you know what, I really need to know God's will or direction here.

This is an important, this is a major decision, or, you know, I really blew it. I am so sorry for what I did. I'm so angry at myself, and I just want to, you know, cry out to the Lord in repentance and ask for His forgiveness, whatever the reason might be.

Say you're at work time, you're at work, and you recognize, okay, I'm fasting, you drive to work, you know, maybe 10 o'clock gets around, maybe it's time for a first snack or something, if you're Filipino, what do we have, five, about five snacks a day, I think, or five meals a day, but, okay, you get that first snack, okay, oh, yeah, yeah, I'm fasting, so I'll skip that one, and then you use that time, okay, instead of eating for 10 minutes, having a snack, I'm just gonna go to the Lord, Lord, forgive me for what I did, what I said, what I thought, or Lord, help guide me in this decision, this is major, I'm gonna affect the rest of my life, whatever, okay, you're good, now noon comes, oh, you feel, you start feeling the hunger pains, you might start hearing it, oh, yeah, yeah, I can't eat, I didn't bring food today, because I am really focusing on special time with the Lord, to seek out his will, or to mourn over my personal sin, or you could even mourn over a national sin, of a nation, well, imagine by dinner time, those pains are gonna grow even stronger, so that's my theory, is fasting is a practical way, where you're using your own body as a tool, to remind you of your commitment, to have special focus time, to praying, to repenting, to mourning, to seeking the Lord's will, and because of the church in Antioch, and their sincere desire, to know God's will, they saw how important it was,

Jesus himself commanded, to be witnesses to the ends of the earth, like, okay, well, we're not hitting the ends of the earth, Lord, help us, they wanted to know his will, so, they were in the position, to be used by him, and I think that's a key thing, when you have that soil, of good teaching, and when you have the heart, that is depending upon the spirit, even as radical as prayer, as fasting over it, you are in the position, the Holy Spirit is gonna direct you, make it clear, so the Holy Spirit did just that, and he sent, directed them on sending, some of their people out, as missionaries, so we've seen so far, that churches, that are committed, to missions, are churches that are well taught, they have a deep soil, God's word growing the people, they're committed to serving him, they're committed to knowing, and doing his will, and God responds, by directing, that kind of a church, and that kind of a church, will know, who to send, to make disciples globally, verse two, now shows us, a third characteristic, of a missions, minded church, missions, minded churches, set apart, ministers, who have a calling, from God,

[ 36 : 22 ] God, you can say it this way, churches committed, to reaching the lost, recognize, I think that's a key word, they recognize, and get behind, God's workers, we're not just, looking for the willing, some, you know, some people go into ministry, whether it's a pastor, or a missionary, and say, well, you know, I tried this career, I didn't like it, they laid me off here, I did this odds and ends, and none of that's panning out, I know, let me go into ministry, sad to say, there are some people, in ministry like that, what we want, to see, and I think what scripture, advocates, is someone, who has a burden, I like the word burden, than calling, because I also know, others who have been paralyzed, and not gone out, into ministry, or missions, because they're waiting, for the clouds to part, the sun to come down, with the dove floating, and then hearing a voice, you know,

I want you to go, to the Philippines, that's not the way, it usually works, so I like the word, a burden, you just have this burden, for either a, a people group, or you have a burden, I had a burden, for seeing healthy churches, because I came out of a, 25 years ago, a really unhealthy, abusive church, and the Lord blessed me, to be a part of that, three years of depression, and seeing the fighting, and the damage, because that was, every bit as valuable, to me as seminary, and the Lord gave me, a burden, to make sure, that I help churches, in the Philippines, and throughout Asia, not have to go through, that kind of pain, and to have strong, leadership, founded on the word, so he gave me a burden, for healthy strength, churches, strengthening them, he gave me a burden, for the Philippines, so that it was, it really wasn't difficult, for me to walk away, from my job, and my home, and all the things, that we left, so churches, that are committed, to reaching the lost, they're going to recognize, people like that, that have been, set apart from God, and there's going to be, several things, that you'll see, we'll talk about here,

Acts 13, to the Holy Spirit, said, to the prayerful church, in Antioch, set apart, Barnabas, and Saul, for the work, that command, has the idea, of appointing, or selecting those, that God, has called, to selecting those, that God, has given a burden, for the task, and in the case, of this text, their burden, was to be missionaries, to reach the ends, of the earth, and if you pay attention, you will see, that God, highlights, or he puts, a spotlight, on those people, look, among you, over the years, look at your, your children, look at your, young people, look at, even there's a big trend, of retirees, going out, and doing missions, work now, but God's, going to put, a spotlight, them, a hide, like them, so that it's clear, for the church, whoa, you've been, so faithful here, we've seen you, serving, since you were a kid, we've seen you, go through hard times, and you, you stayed faithful, to Christ, you handled that well, you grew up, you served, you didn't complain, you set up chairs, you cleaned bathrooms, you were faithful, leading a Bible study, we saw you evangelize, we saw you disciple others, it's obvious, that God, has given you a burden, and set you apart, we want to get behind you, you don't want to have, this kind of thing, where someone says, hey,

I'm thinking to be, about being a missionary, and the people are going, really, you, really, you're going to leave this town, you know, it should be like, of course, that doesn't surprise me, I was, maybe, I was thinking that, maybe you would, go out and serve the Lord, like that someday, so, the Holy Spirit highlights, and sets people apart, so that the church, together can affirm, together, we know, that this person, has been set apart, from God, I mentioned in the beginning, of the message, a friend of mine, who was, sad that three, of their missionaries, failed, and he felt, at least partially, responsible, because, as one of the elders, in the church, they affirm, these people, you're going to have, a higher, rate of success, when your missionaries, are people, that you've seen, faithful, in your church, people that you've seen, set apart, by God, where he's highlighted them, once you recognize them, you've got to come, alongside them, help prepare them, for the work, that God has called them to, hopefully, if you see it early enough, you know, you can be a part of, okay, well, they're saying, they want to make disciples, who are you discipling, oh, nobody, all right, well, let me teach you, how to do that, let me model that, and then I want to see you, do that to others, because I'm not going to, invest thousands of dollars, and send you, thousands of kilometers away, to do something, you're not even doing here, let's see that you can do it, and let's help you do it, better, so God made us, and saved us, so that we would take great joy, in working for him,

Paul wrote in Ephesians 2 10, after talking about, our great salvation, how it's by grace, through faith, in Christ alone, it's not anything, that we can work for, or earn, no one's going to boast, or brag about it, and then in verse 10, he says, because we're his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we would walk in them, I hope you can agree with me, it's such a joy, to serve the Lord, I feel so privileged, to do it, I love doing it, I could not see myself, doing anything else, that's what I was created for, and if you're a follower of Christ, that's

what you were created for, we weren't created to be, pew warmers, we were created to be a family, to help, to worship God together, and help each other, be more like Christ, and call a lost and dying world, to come and worship him, and know him as well, and we practice that here, because we're going to do that together, at least worshiping God together, in heaven for eternity, so he prepared us for work, but what work did God prepare, the church, what did he prepare for the church, and what did he prepare, for its missionaries to do, in case you didn't realize this, the work of the church, and the work of the missionary, is exactly the same, there should be no doubt, about what our work is, because Jesus himself, gave us our job description, in Matthew 28, 18 through 20, the great commission, he says, all authority has been given to me, in heaven and earth, go therefore, as you are going, make disciples, of all nations, the Philippines,

[ 43 : 46 ] I think it's still considered, at least a lot of parts of it, is third world, there's a lot of poverty, we do ministry in India, in Pakistan, poor countries, and yet, especially the Philippines, and India, are sending a lot of missionaries, how can these poor countries, send missionaries, and plant churches, maybe a better set is, because they can, we definitely, have a lot more resources, to reach all nations, if they're doing it, we certainly can do it, and improve, and do more, and help them, so make disciples, followers of Jesus, learners of Christ, of all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them, to observe, all, that I commanded you, so, this work, of evangelizing, teaching people, God's word, baptizing them, making them, a part of the church family, identifying with it, that's what your work is here, that's the same work, of the missionary, they do what you do, just globally, so the work is clear, but the question remains, well then who should do it, who should go globally, well the Holy Spirit, showed who, when he said in verse two, to set apart,

Barnabas, and Saul, for the work, which I, have called them, just as God, prepares the work, he also, chose, he's the one, that chooses the workers, however, your responsibility, is to discern, who among you, has God chosen to send, in the Philippines, for about, I think three, or four years, I was at one church, where I served, as the elder of missions, and so as they assigned, me that task, my fellow elders said, okay here's our missionaries, and I noticed that, wow, pretty much, I think all but one, these guys, none of them, came from our church, who are these guys, they didn't really know, and then they said, hey here's a guy, who's asking us, to send him out, and some guy came, and he made his presentation, he had good vision, but I'm like, does anybody know, who this guy is, he's got good vision, he's got a good plan, maybe the Holy Spirit, wants us to get behind that, that's great, but it would sure be better, if we knew, who this guy is, can anybody attest, to his character, is he married, does he have children, are they respectful, is his home in order, does he know, how to make disciples, he has this vision, of helping people, generate power, he had some kind of, livelihood, where it creates, energy for people, does he know, how to make disciples, so, we need to recognize, who, those whom,

God has called, it's kind of hard, to do that, if you don't have, some kind of connection, like are they a part of, our denomination perhaps, or our seminary, do we have members, or our churches, that can vouch for them, and best, is if they're right, from here, so we need to recognize, those that God, has called, he says, you know, set apart the ones, I have called, how do we recognize, that if they're not even here, it's limited, if they're not from us, so the word called, has the idea, that the church, should clearly see, the spirit's choice, of the missionary, they will see, a transformed life, as well as God's direction, of them, and his provision, for the work, I remember when, my wife Jessica and I, first began, to have the burden, to go to the Philippines, my wife, her family brought her, to the U.S., when she was seven, and so it was surprising, for her and her family, that I wanted to take them back, but as we, prayed about it, we recognized, okay well,

I still need to go, to seminary, at the time, we can't afford seminary, and our house payment, there were a lot of changes, that we made, so we sold our cars, we had our kids, in private Christian school, we told the schools, we're pulling our kids out, and we'll just, homeschool or something, maybe we'll move, into a small apartment, finish off seminary, and then we saw, God affirming, so first our elders, and our church affirmed, we see your faithfulness, in our church, we see you serving here, we see you teaching here, we were deacons, at one point, and then they, they called me, to be an associate pastor there, and so when we sold our cars, someone missionary, we didn't even know, the guy says, hey could you guys, use a van, we're going back to the field, we got this van, we're like wow, we just really, grew our sense of, we obeyed the Lord, faithful in small steps, and he's just affirming, you're on the right path, we pulled our kids, out of school, the school calls

and said, we'll let you know, and we said, no no no, there's a misunderstanding, we're letting you know, that we're pulling our kids, out of school, because going to seminary, we're going to the mission field, we can't afford the tuition anymore, they called us back, says we're going to scholarship, your kids, and if you need help, if you're studying, or school is for me, is a little longer, we're going to watch your kids, they get after school care, we're just blown away, God showed, he kept providing, and affirming, our calling, between the church, and the circumstances, in our life, he just lined it all up, and as you see people, called to, whether it's local ministry, in this community, or to the ends of the earth, those are the things, you need to be looking for, do our leaders affirm this, do we see them, in this congregation, doing this, do we see God's, hand on their ministry, is he opening doors, or closing doors, if they're opening, and they got the affirmation, to the leadership, and they got a burden, then you got to set them apart, you got to, champion them, and get behind them, for ministry, so the established pattern, for sending out missionaries, was that they came from, well taught churches, a deep soil, for the word of God, they're grown up in that, through qualified teachers, they come from prayerful churches, who depend on the Holy Spirit, who makes it clear, who he's called to go, and then verse three, shows us a fourth characteristic, of missions minded churches, this last one, missions minded churches, affirm, and release, their people, to the field, churches that are passionate, about seeing, [ 50 : 27 ] God worship globally, unleash their members, and I think that word, unleashes, from the text, has more the idea, of what it's communicating, not just sending, but you're unleashing them, to do the work, that God has called them to, they don't just send, the willing, they send their, Timothys, and their Timotheas, listen to Luke's words, here in verse three, he wrote, then, when they, plural, when they, all of them, had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands, on them, they, sent them, away, the response, the Holy Spirit's command, to set apart, Barnabas, and Saul, was that the whole, church, confidently, laid their hands on, and prayed, and sent them out, they focused on, following God's leading, by fasting, and prayer, and then, it says here again, they laid their hands on, what does that mean, what's the significance, of that, well, in the Bible, laying out of hands, upon someone, is a symbolic gesture, to show affirmation, connection, approval, and shared, responsibility, or identity, with someone, or something, we can see, this idea expressed, in the Old Testament, when they laid their hands, on an animal sacrifice, to symbolically, connect with them, to transfer, their sins to them, when they offered, their lambs, for their sins, they placed their hands, on his head, symbolically transferring, their sins to it, they showed,

I'm connected, with this animal, and it's going to die, because of what I did, so they, laying hands, sometimes showed, the connection, another example, in the New Testament, the elders, of the church of Ephesus, laid hands, on Timothy, to affirm, the granting, of his spiritual gifts, in 1 Timothy 4, 14, the church, should see it, wow, we see this person, as a teacher, we affirm that, we've seen that, or this person, in Timothy's case, he was a teacher, and he was a leader, Paul and Barnabas, laid hands, on men, in the churches, of Asia Minor, as they appointed, affirmed, and identified them, as elders, in Acts 14, 23, and then Paul, warned the Ephesian, elders, not to be quick, to affirm, new elders, by laying, hands on them, quickly, or too quickly, because in doing so, they would be affirming them, and therefore, responsible, for any damages, qualified by, or any damages, done by, unqualified, teachers, elders, so laying of hands, showed,

I approve this person, you're saying, hey, this is an elder, we're laying hands, on this person, to be a new elder, and that elder, does damage in the church, people can write, what happened, you affirm them, didn't you, investigate well, to make sure, they had the character, of an elder, and could handle the word, like an elder, is required to do, and here in Acts 13, three, the church in Antioch, laid hands on the missionaries, to affirm, that they were called, and that they believed in, and were a part of, and supported, their ministry, then the church, sent them out, they sent their own, and this can be hard, we have, a gal that came out, to visit us, with a short term trip, short term team, to the Philippines, I think three, four times, and she, her heart was burdened, for missions, she was, she was,

I want to say, she was a school principal, but she was actually, higher than that, and she coached, and taught principles, and she said, wow, I could really be used, in Asia for these, young schools, that are trying to, have good curriculum, and need to hear, the gospel, I'd love to come out here, and the problem was, she was the director, of the children's, ministry program, at our local church, and she was really good at it, and they really loved her, and the pastor, just could not let her go, she retired, says I'm ready to go, and they, they keep saying, yeah, yeah, we're going to send her, it's

probably been a decade now, it's not easy to send, sometimes when, it's someone just, you love them, you might, you know, be sending them, with tears, and it might create, a hole, like who's going to, do that ministry, but look at the church, in Antioch, they sent, the apostle Paul, and Barnabas, they didn't just, send the willing, they sent their best, we need to send, quality people out, so today, we've seen, four characteristics, of missions minded churches, so that you can, follow the master's, model, for making disciples, globally, we've seen, that missions minded churches, are well, taught, by qualified ministers, we've seen, that missions minded churches, are prayerfully dependent, on the Holy Spirit, they take us, very seriously, missions minded churches, thirdly, set apart ministers, who have a clear, calling from God, it's not just them saying, I've got it, or a burden, you all see it, and you'll affirm that, and lastly, missions minded churches, release their people, to the field, they get behind them, they send them, they pray for them, they support them, they encourage them, they can visit them, on the field, but they don't hold them back, when the Holy Spirit, commands, set them apart, for the work, I've called them, and Lord, I pray, that this church, would have the privilege, of sending many, of its own, not only, through this, community, not only through, the provinces around here, but throughout, Canada, and even, to the ends of the earth, to other nations, I thank you Lord, that I've met, many faithful, Canadian, missionaries in Asia, but Lord, we need so many more, the needs are so great, there's so many, billions, that have not heard, the gospel, that do not have, good Christian resources, or churches, and I pray, that you would use, this church, as one, of your many, faithful churches, to send, many missionaries, for your glory,

[ 57 : 15 ] I ask this in Jesus name, amen. Amen.