

Crossway Life Group, Week of May 19

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

Community

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

Scripture: Acts 12:25-13:12 "The Power of the Church"

Reading & Discussing Scripture

- "The more things change, the more they stay the same."
 - What does that statement mean?
 - For what really matters in life, where do you tend to put your hope for meaningful progress (rather than a change that doesn't really make things better)?
 - Where do you tend to put your hope for meaningful progress in the church?
- **Read Acts 12:25-13:3.** What does it say about the actions of the church when the Spirit spoke about sending out Barnabas and Saul? In what way should those actions of the church be a model for other churches, and for our church?
- **Read Acts 13:4-12.** How does Paul describe Bar-Jesus (also known as Elymas) in verse 10? In what sense might this be true of people today? How might it be true of people (and us) even when we don't realize it (perhaps like Peter opposing Jesus in Matthew 16:33)? How would we find out if we are actually working in opposition to God?
- Paul declared God's powerful yet gracious judgment of Bar-Jesus in verse 11. What does "gracious judgment" mean? How was this a gracious judgment for Bar-Jesus? What might happen in our lives today that could also be a gracious judgment?
- How would you state the Good News of Jesus Christ in your own words?
- Until Acts 13, the church "preached the word wherever they went." (Acts 8:4) Starting with Acts 13, people in the church went **in order to make known** the Good News about Jesus Christ. What are examples today for each of these approaches? When should someone make a journey specifically for the purpose of making known the Good News?
- Do you have any other questions about the sermon or the passage?

The Big Idea

**The progress of the Good News of Jesus Christ
comes through Spirit-filled messengers
who proclaim (and live)
the Gospel
with great faith and boldness**

Application & Reflection Questions

1. What does faith-filled prayer look like? Some words from the sermon that describe faith-filled prayer are intentional, expectant, persistent, and listening. What actions express these values? What will it look like for you this week?
2. What does faith-filled action look like? In what sense might action be lacking in faith? And in what sense might our faith sometimes lack action? What faith-filled action will you take this week?
3. What does it mean to have "high expectations" for the progress of the Gospel in a good way? That is, we don't know if the progress of the Gospel will seem "fast" or "big" to us, yet we are to believe that

God is at work and that He is doing a good work. What good expectations can and should we have for God's work in the world?

4. What does it mean today for us to be "Spirit-filled messengers"? What is our part in this work?

Growing in Cross Cultural Understandings

How does Acts 13:1-3 describe the leadership of the church in Antioch? What kinds of diversity are evident through this list of names? What kinds of diversity are not evident? What might be significant about this team for the ministries of the church in Antioch, including sending Barnabas and Saul to other nations?

Serving beyond ourselves

What are ways that your group can be for the benefit of people beyond yourselves? In particular, in what way can you be Spirit-filled messengers of the Good News about Jesus Christ?

Acts 12:25-13:12 New International Version (NIV)

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off

²⁵ When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

¹ Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² 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." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

On Cyprus

⁴ The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. ⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

⁶ They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, ⁷ who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. ⁹ Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, ¹⁰ "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?" ¹¹ Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun."

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹² When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.