

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**ACTS 13****Acts 13**

Acts 4 introduces us to one of the greatest men in all of the Bible. His name is Joseph, better known by the name the apostles gave to him, Barnabas, the "son of encouragement." He was a wealthy Jew from the Island of Cyprus. He sold land and gave it to the early church to aid in the ministry to those who were in need. He is always helping, encouraging, and being a friend to those who might have been rejected by some. It was Barnabas who was sent by the apostles to investigate and encourage those who were becoming followers of Jesus in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and even to Antioch in Syria, on the Orontes River. We have a divine description of Barnabas in Acts 11:22-26.

"Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

Barnabas is described in this way, ***"For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."*** (Acts 11:24) He is also the one who made a special trip to Tarsus, in the Roman province of Cilicia, to bring Saul to the church at Antioch where they ministered together and became a team as they served the Lord and the mega-church in Antioch. They served together for an entire year. When the great church at Antioch heard of the poverty the famine had caused the mother church in Jerusalem, they sent relief by the trusted hands of Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus, the former persecutor of the faithful. The fruit did not fall far from the tree. The Herod family continued to persecute the church, which seemed to be a threat to the Herodian rulers, according to Acts 12. Even beloved James, brother of John and son of Zebedee, was killed.

When the team arrived back in Antioch, they continued to teach and preach Jesus to the people. They became the prophets (forth-tellers of the Word of God) to the church in Antioch and were recognized as prophets. (see Acts 13:1) It was after faithfully serving the church that the Holy Spirit initiated a time of fasting and prayer while serving. As the church engaged in this effort, the Holy Spirit called out Barnabas and Saul to be sent out to other people who needed to hear the life-changing message of Jesus the Messiah.

Prayer and Action Steps

The call of God to Barnabas and Saul to serve in another place, as one sent with a message (apostle), only came after faithfully serving where they were. Bloom where you are planted. Be faithful wherever you are. Don't constantly be wishing for life as you desire it to be, but rather take life as God gives it and prove to be faithful where you are! "He that is faithful in little, will be faithful in much." Lord, please help me to serve faithfully where I am, so You can teach me to trust You in little and for the days of expansion that will come. Amen