

The Spirit Appoints And Sends Forth



Foundations (Day 264)
by Derek Prince

God's own summary of the process by which Paul and Barnabas were appointed and sent forth from the church at Antioch is given in the next verse.

> "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia." (Acts 13:4)

Notice that phrase "being sent out by the Holy Spirit..." The church at Antioch and its leaders were the human instruments by which God revealed and worked out His will for the sending forth of these two apostles. But behind and through these human instruments there operated the wisdom, foreknowledge and direction of the Holy Spirit.

In the final analysis it was He, the Holy Spirit, the executive agent of the Godhead now present on earth, who was responsible for the commissioning and sending forth of these two apostles.

In the whole procedure followed at Antioch we find a perfect example of divine and human co-operation – God and His church working as partners together.

Let us now consider briefly what was the outcome of this first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas into which they had entered by the direction of the Holy Spirit, with prayer and fasting, and with the ordinance of laying on of hands.

> "From there they sailed [back] to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. And when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." (Acts 14:26-27)

There are three points of interest to notice here.

1. We are here given an authoritative, scriptural account of the purpose for which the church leaders had laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas. We are told that, by this ordinance, Paul and Barnabas had been commended to the grace of God for the work. Thus, the laying on of hands constitutes a means by

which God's servants may be commended to the grace of God for a special work to which God has called them.

2. We must observe the outcome of the labour of Paul and Barnabas. The Scripture states that they completed their God-given work. This means that they successfully accomplished their work, without omissions or failures. Someone has said, "God's callings are God's enablings." In other words, when God calls a man to a special task, He also makes available to that man all the means and the spiritual grace required for the complete and successful accomplishment of that task.
3. We should notice the impact of their ministry upon the Gentiles. The Scriptures state: "God ...had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27). Paul and Barnabas did not beat against a closed door. Wherever they went they found that God had gone before them to open the doors and prepare the hearts. Such is the power of united prayer and fasting: to open doors that otherwise would remain closed. The power thus generated by prayer and fasting was made available to Paul and Barnabas according to the needs that lay before them, through the ordinance of laying on of hands.

In this connection I would add my own conclusion, based on varied experiences in many different lands: New Testament results can be achieved only by New Testament methods.

Devotional

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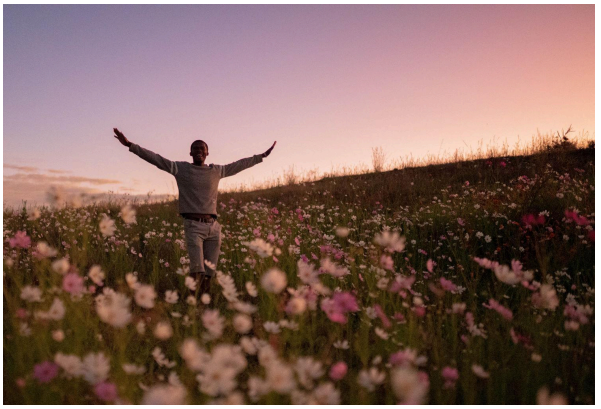

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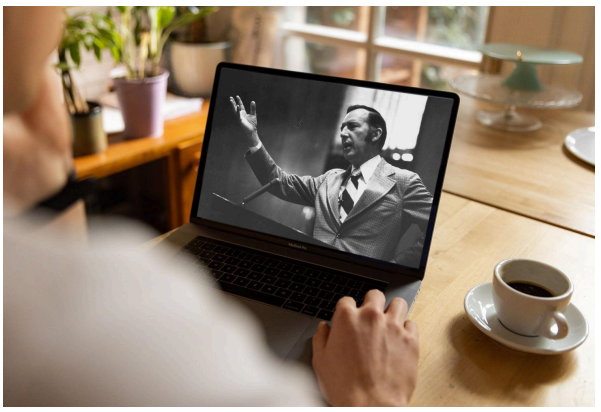

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