

Date: 19 July 2026
Theme: The Holy Spirit in Building the Kingdom of God
Topic: Participating with the Holy Spirit in God's mission
Passage: Acts 13–14
Key Verse: Acts 13:2 – "While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

Introduction

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the early church had been carrying out the Great Commission in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and Antioch. Now, as instructed by the Holy Spirit, the Church in Antioch commissioned Barnabas and Paul to embark on their first missionary journey beyond Antioch to Asia.

Acts 13 begins with a church that sends, while Acts 14 records the results of churches being planted and strengthened. This progression reveals God's heartbeat—to make disciple-makers of all nations. The Holy Spirit is the One who calls, sends, empowers, sustains, and builds His Kingdom. Barnabas and Paul simply chose to participate with God in His great work, showing us how the Holy Spirit builds His Kingdom through His people.

So, the question for us today is: How can we become a mission-minded church? As we journey through Acts 13-14, we will discover four principles that teach us how we can participate in God's mission today.

The word "mission" comes from the Latin word *missio*, meaning "to send." God sent His Son into the world, Jesus sent His disciples, and the Holy Spirit sent the church. We participate in God's work when we send people out to proclaim the gospel, make disciples, and establish His Kingdom among all nations.

1. A Church on mission sends people out to share the gospel (Acts 13:1–3)

- The church was worshipping, praying, and fasting when the Holy Spirit spoke: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (v2)
- Every believer begins as a faithful witness in his family, workplace, school, and neighbourhood – this is our sphere of influence. From here, to have a vision beyond our Jerusalem, a vision to be witnesses to the uttermost parts of the world. We call this a world vision.

☐ **Principle: God calls every believer to be His witness— from where we are to wherever He sends us.**

2. A Church on mission shares the Gospel faithfully (Acts 13:13-43)

- Proclaim the message that God is faithful to His promises to send His Son, Jesus, the fulfilment of that promise, and the offer of forgiveness and justification.
- Expect different responses. Some believed and followed Paul and Barnabas, while others rejected the message. Yet God's Word will continue to accomplish His purpose.

☐ **Principle: God is drawing people to Himself, our responsibility is to faithfully proclaim the gospel.**

3. A Church on mission shakes off opposition with spiritual power

a. Spiritual opposition confronted with Holy Spirit power (In Cyrus) (Acts 13:4-12)

- Whenever God's Kingdom advances, the enemy opposes.
- Paul rebuked the deception of the false prophet and struck the sorcerer with temporary blindness.
- The proconsul believed the gospel when he saw the divine sign. (v12)

b. Internal disappointment (In Perga) (Acts 13:13-14)

- Along the journey, John Mark left and returned to Jerusalem.
- Yet Paul and Barnabas did not allow disappointment to stop the work, "They went on to Pisidian Antioch..." (v14)

c. Opposition from Jewish leaders countered with speaking God's word boldly (In Pisidia and Iconium) (Acts 13:44-52, Acts 14:1-7)

- When the Jewish leaders became jealous of the attention that Paul received, they stirred up persecution and expelled him and Barnabas who turned to the Gentiles. The result: "the word of the Lord spread through the whole region" (v49) and many Gentiles heard and believed (v48), "the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (v52).
- When the Jews in Iconium stirred the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas, they remained there and spoke boldly, performing signs and wonders (Acts 14:3).

d. Healing and rejected worship (In Lystra) (Acts 14:8-20)

- When Paul healed a man lame from birth, the crowd mistook Paul and Barnabas as Greek gods, but they explained the true living God.
- Later, the same crowd, influenced by the Jews, stoned Paul and left him for dead. But he got up and walked back to the city.

- ☐ **Principle: God will accomplish His redemptive plan; our calling is to faithfully advance His purpose.**

4. A Church on mission strengthens disciples (Acts 14:21-28)

- Paul and Barnabas returned to the very cities where they had suffered to strengthen and encourage new believers.
- They looked for faithful disciples and appointed leaders.
- Accountable to the sending church, they reported the progress and gave God the glory.
- Paul persevered because he kept his eyes on God's Kingdom, knowing that opposition could not stop God's mission. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22)
- He did not focus on the rejection or persecution but said that "God had opened a door of faith." (Acts 14:27). He had a Kingdom perspective of the opposition and opportunity.

- ☐ **Principle: Evangelism begins the mission; disciple-makers establish the mission.**

Application

Fulfilling the Great Commission and making disciples of all nations is God's mission for us today. Today, people from many nations are in our midst. Can we start with them? God is still in the business of sending forth labourers. Ask yourself:

- What assignment has God already given me in my sphere of influence?
- Who has God placed in my life to reach and to disciple?
- Am I praying to participate in God's vision for the nations, or are the nations only a playground for my travel pleasure?