

The Point: God calls His church to send and support missionaries to those who have never heard the gospel.

HIS STORY

Paul and Barnabas Were Commissioned as Missionaries

As the leaders were worshiping and fasting, they heard from the Holy Spirit. These leaders, and the church, were in the right posture to hear from God and respond accordingly when the time came.

The Holy Spirit instructed them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work God had called them to do. God separated these two men from the normal rhythms of being part of the church at Antioch for something else. Barnabas and Saul would leave their church and life as they knew it in Antioch to advance the gospel to unreached regions as missionaries.

▶ **When have you experienced a church praying over or sending off people to do short- or long-term mission work? How does that experience compare to what happened to Barnabas and Saul?**

God Sustained Paul and Barnabas through Opposition and Suffering

Some Jews came from where Paul and Barnabas had previously journeyed, with the sole purpose of causing them harm. They won over the crowd and turned them against Paul and Barnabas. They even stoned Paul and left him for dead.

Paul was stubbornly courageous though. After the disciples gathered around him, he got up and went right back into town. He was willing to lose everything, even his life, for the sake of the gospel. This is the call of the missionary—to trust God completely for every need, even in the midst of opposition and suffering.

▶ **Why do you think Paul returned to Lystra?**

God Strengthens His Church

Notice the method Paul and Barnabas used to encourage the churches about facing hardships. Paul and Barnabas did not encourage the churches to pray for God to spare them from hardship. They did not minimize hardship. Instead, they encouraged the churches by helping them embrace the reality and certainty of difficulties. Hardship will come because God uses it for His kingdom purposes, so prepare for it.

Essential Doctrines

Church and Kingdom: *The church and the kingdom of God are closely related, though not identical. When the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God, it is referring to the reign of God in the world. The church is the people of God who live under His loving rule now, anticipating the full manifestation of God's kingdom in the future. The church's mission is to witness to God's kingdom, proclaiming God's message of salvation through Christ and demonstrating the power of the gospel through good works so that others may be brought to live under God's reign.*

YOUR STORY

- ▶ **Would you be willing to be sent somewhere else as a missionary? Why or why not?**
- ▶ **What would be difficult about surrendering as a missionary? What would be most difficult for you if God called you to be a missionary?**
- ▶ **What ways can you sacrifice to live on mission more or support missionary efforts to deliver the gospel where it is needed most around the world?**
- ▶ **How has this story challenged you when it comes to your own efforts to share the good news with others?**

Leader Note: Because some content from the Personal Study Guide will not be available on the One Sheet, make sure to adapt the session based on how you use the material with your group.