

Mission Possible

"The Great Adventure Continues"

Acts 13:13-52 NLT

We get to do this! When we woke up this morning, we hit the *lottery*, because when we woke up our heart was beating and we got another day to get on-mission with God! His Word is filled with *treasures* - with gems and jewels that we sometimes have to work to discover. But God never hides anything *from* us, he hides things *for* us. *"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings."* (Proverbs 25:2 NIV)

Psalms 33:12 NIV

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance."

Good things that are happening in the News

- Texas Senate passes bipartisan bills to put prayer and the Ten Commandments back in schools
- Lawmakers across the United States push for the Ten Commandments in public schools
- Faith leaders from across the United States prayed over President Trump in the Oval Office
- Pastor Jimmy will open the Texas Senate session in Austin with prayer on Thursday. (we need to keep praying that God will continue to bring his presence into our government proceedings!)
- Christian revival is overtaking the entire world - Christianity is experiencing an immense global surge. In the United States, Bible sales are booming among Gen Z. In China, despite intense government persecution, growth of the underground Church is exploding.

Mission Possible - The great adventure continues

Acts 13:4 NLT - Paul's first missionary journey

"So Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went down to the seaport of Seleucia and then sailed for the island of Cyprus."

God's plan to spread Christianity all over the world is to use us to be carriers of the "virus" of the Gospel of Jesus Christ - to be *super-spreaders*. He wants us to *infect* everybody around us, because when we walk in, the fragrance and the aroma of Christ is on our life that is so different, because it's the very aroma of Christ himself.

Acts 13:12 NLT

“When the governor saw what had happened, he became a believer, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.”

Acts 13:13-15 NLT

“Paul and his companions then left Paphos by ship for Pamphylia, landing at the port town of Perga. There John Mark left them [quit] and returned to Jerusalem. But Paul and Barnabas traveled inland to Antioch of Pisidia. On the Sabbath they went to the synagogue for the services. After the usual readings from the books of Moses and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them this message: ‘Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, come and give it.’ ”

The leaders of the synagogue gave an “open microphone” to Paul and Barnabas who were excited and on fire after being commissioned by the Holy Spirit to go out and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 13:44,45 NLT

“The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear them preach the word of the Lord. But when some of the Jews saw the crowds, they were jealous; so they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said.”

We are being invited to get on-mission with God on this great adventure. If our Christian life is boring, then we *don't* have a Christian life, we only have a form or semblance of it - *“having a form of godliness but denying its power.”* (2 Timothy 3:5). Many people come to church but they're not on-mission with God. The question is, are we listening, hearing, and receiving? Some of us have a war going on in our head, as voices are speaking to us, saying, *“Oh don't listen to that! Oh, we're still stuck in the Book of Acts!”* And then the wind blows this way from Backwoods Bar-B-Que and we're thinking, *“Oh, I've got to go to lunch!”*

When we step out to get on-mission with God, there's an initial surge of energy. The Holy Spirit comes on us and we get excited, but then we're met with resistance - things don't go right and it feels like everything's suddenly *against* us. That doesn't mean it's not the will of God, but we need to ask ourselves, *“Why is there resistance? Is it from a very real enemy, the devil, who opposes the Word and the will of God doing something in our life?”*

In fact, if things are *really* quiet and peaceful with no resistance at *all*, we might wonder if we've not missed a turn somewhere. But, when there *is* resistance, we need to be excited because that means we're *hitting* something, and we shouldn't step back thinking God's telling us to turn around, when probably what he's saying is *"Stay the course! Keep going! Keep pressing in!"*

When we come up against the storm of resistance, there's only two things we can do - we can *stop*, like a deer in the headlights, or we can stay the course and go *through*. Some of us are in a storm right now, and we're getting *hammered*. Everything in us is saying *"Stop!"* when really we're stirring things up and creating resistance because we're moving *forward*, and maybe God *led* us to move that way.

If so, and resistance is coming, God would say, *"Stay. The. Course. Don't stop in the middle of the storm! Keep going!"* When deer stop on the highway out of fear instead of going on, there's dire consequences for them. If we're meeting resistance, we also need to *keep going*.

Acts 13:45,46 NLT

"But when some of the Jews saw the crowds, they were jealous; so they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said. Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, 'It was necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles.'"

Paul and Barnabas were meeting resistance and they pushed on through. There's a point we get to when we feel like we're over the target and we confront resistance, but, if we'll continue and stay the course, and we're in God's will - doing what God has called us to do, and we're on-mission - on the *Great Adventure* - then, we're not only *over* the target, we've *become* the target, and that's a whole other level of celebration.

There are times we have to laugh because the enemy *always* overplays his hand - he always overshoots the runway, and he always exposes himself. We can't shoot a target we can't see, but when we can see the target, the enemy exposes himself every time - he can't help it - he's really proud of his work. When he does that, we *know* what to hit. When we share a prayer request, we're exposing the enemy - we're giving the circle of people around us the opportunity to stand with us and *fight*.

Acts 13:47 NLT

"For the Lord gave us this command when he said, 'I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.'"

We need to understand that he's talking to *us* - that is our victory - that was for our good. That's why we're here together *now*, getting encouraged, getting inspired and motivated - getting taught and disciplined. We're here because this happened. The interconnectivity of life, and the time-line of life in the world - if this had not happened, we wouldn't be sitting here today. This happened for *us* - today. As students of God's Word, this is important to know our history. Otherwise, we're doomed to repeat some ugly things.

Acts 13:48 NLT

"When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked the Lord for his message; and all who were chosen for eternal life became believers."

The Gentiles "stepped over the line." They were no longer just God-*fearers*, but they were actually now God-*lovers*. They received him - they received the Message which transformed them from the inside-out. Many people want to fix the *outside* first. They want to get their "act together" before they come to church to avoid being labeled a hypocrite. But we can be in the church for ten years doing the best we can and *still* be a hypocrite.

That will *never* go away - we'll always be living in the tension between where we are now and where we ought to be and want to be. We're not quite "there" yet! God is *working* on us - we're living out sanctification - we're walking the walk and talking the talk - we're learning and growing. We're not there yet, but we *will be* someday. We have *hope* that we're further along now than we were a week ago. We shouldn't come to church thinking we've got it all cleaned up, or think that we'll *wait* to come to church until we've got our *act* cleaned up, because that will *never* happen.

Acts 13:49,50 NLT

"So the Lord's message spread throughout that region. Then the Jews stirred up the influential religious women and the leaders of the city, and they incited a mob against Paul and Barnabas and ran them out of town."

If we think following Jesus is going to be easy, we're mistaken. It's *simple*, but it's not easy. There will be days when we wonder what we got ourselves *into* - what did we say "yes" to? There will be days when we hear a clear word and a sense of vision for what we're supposed to do, and we step out and it all seems really good at first, but then we hit a snag - a choke-point - an F2 West Texas tornado - and suddenly everything looks like mud while the wind howls and people are quitting - like John Mark - but we have a responsibility to stay the course.

Then, whenever something comes at us, we need to remind ourselves, *“Stay the course! Don’t quit!”* And we continue to punch through the storm. We’ll get to the clearing eventually - and there is a clearing coming.

Acts 13:51,52 NLT

“So they shook the dust from their feet as a sign of rejection and went to the town of Iconium. And the believers were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

This was a symbolic expression, literally saying *“I don’t receive what you just said about me or identify me as. I know who I am, and I know Who I’m doing this for. I now shake the dust off my feet for a testimony against you!”* But God is good. He can even make our enemies to be our friends. He can turn the hearts of the people we think we can’t get along with. He can turn their hearts. Scripture says, *“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.”* (Proverbs 21:1 13:51,52 NKJV)

That’s our God. That’s our *Jesus*. He is good, forgiving, merciful, and gracious - and *that’s* what we need so much of now!

Prayer

Father, in Jesus’ name, we’re asking for massive grace and massive mercy to be poured out upon us.

Thank You for the power to save and the power to heal and the power to deliver. We pray for an amazing movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we pray for one another and share our needs with one another so the enemy won’t be able to separate and isolate us from the strength and unity with our family the Church or from Your Holy Spirit. We love You and honor You!

In Jesus’ name. Amen