

MISSIONS IS CHURCH PLANTING

The Heart of God and Church Planting

Acts 13:1-3

Week 1 - July 14



Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about the Heart of God?
2. What does this passage teach us about abiding?
3. What does this passage say to us about being a sending church?
4. What does this passage teach us about praying Matthew 9:37-38, "Then he said to the disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"



Commentary

Acts 1:6 is the outline of the book of Acts, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." It started with the explosive growth to the church in Jerusalem. Then God used persecution to move the church outward to Judea and Samaria. In Acts 12 the gospel had spread to Antioch. And it was from the church in Antioch that God launched the church in the ends of the earth.

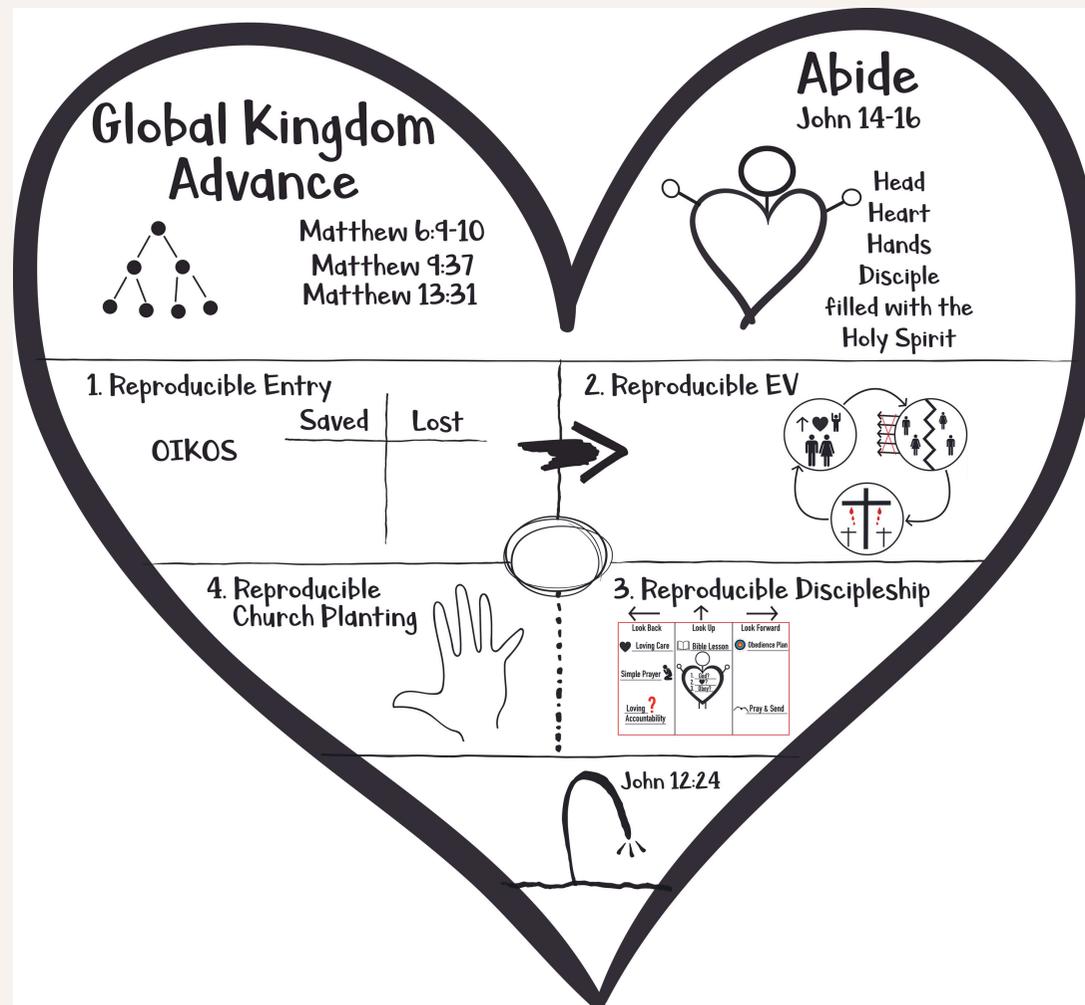
The church at Antioch was a global church in its very make up. This can be seen in the five elders named in verse 1. Barnabas was from Cyprus before moving to Jerusalem, Niger was from Ethiopia, Lucius of Cyrene was from what is today Libya, Manaen was from Jerusalem, and Saul (Paul) was from Tarsus.

It was from the church in Antioch that Paul went on his missionary journeys and a church planting movement began. What made this church so important in Jesus' Great Commission purpose?

The church at Antioch reflected the Heart of God.



Commentary



The church at Antioch was an abiding church. The elders were “worshipping.” They were Jesus focused and Jesus exalting. They were “fasting” earnestly seeking the Lord. And they were sensitive to leading of the Holy Spirit.

In John 14:12 Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” The greater works are sharing the gospel and making disciples in our Jerusalem, our Judea, our Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. But we cannot do that in our own energy or abilities. It requires abiding in Christ.

No church can be greatly used by God unless it is abiding in Christ. It is not programs or plans or promotions that cause a church to have global impact or to see people called out to go to the nations.



Commentary

Jesus summed it up in John 15:4-5. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

The church at Antioch was a dying church. In John 12:24 Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

When the Holy Spirit spoke to the elders to set apart Barnabas and Saul to the work, He was calling them to, the elders did not argue that they could not afford to lose these two great leaders. They were not fearful of change. They were not hesitant thinking this would hurt the church. Because they were abiders, they knew the church was not about them but about Jesus and His purpose and His glory. They died to comfort, institutionalism, and selfish ambition.

They immediately obeyed the Lord, laid hands on Barnabas and Saul, and sent them out. They had no idea how fruitful this faith filled obedience would be in the global expansion of the Kingdom.

The church at Antioch was a multiplying church. In sending Barnaba and Saul out, the church was involved in Global Kingdom Advance through multiplication.

In Matthew 6:9-10 Jesus taught the priority of pray is the advance of the Kingdom, "Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"

In Matthew 9:37 gives us a command for the expansion of the Kingdom, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

In Matthew 13:31-32 Jesus told a parable about the growth of the Kingdom, "He put another parable before them, saying, the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of seeds, but when it is grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."



Commentary

As we follow the missionary journeys of Paul in Acts 13:40—Acts 20, we are going to see those verses in action as he goes through the Roman world planting churches. Paul's Holy Spirit driven strategy was to go to the cities and plant churches and train leaders. Those churches in turn would plant churches in the surrounding cities and rural area. It was an ongoing multiplication. For example, Paul planted the church in Ephesus. In turn the church at Ephesus planted the other six churches Jesus wrote to in Revelation 2 and 3; Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Out of the church at Ephesus a church was planted in Colossae.

Another example of a multiplying church is the church in Thessalonica. Paul wrote to them, "For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere. . . (1 Thessalonians 1:5)." The Thessalonian church was reaching people with the gospel and planting churches in their own province of Macedonia and the neighboring province of Achaia. But more than that, with its location on one of the major Roman trade roads, businessmen and traders from all over the Roman world come to Thessalonica. The Thessalonian church would share the gospel with these visitors. Those who believed would return to their home cities, share the gospel, and plant churches. So, the Thessalonian church was multiplying locally and globally.

It is the heart and will of God that churches be involved in Kingdom advance through multiplication. What do you think that should look like for Wynne Baptist Church?

Prayer Time

End with a time of prayer and have several people pray for:

1. Jeff Brawner. Jeff was called out of WBC and one of our Acts 1:8 partners. Pray for his ministry of multiplication through training church planters, pastors, and leaders in South America, Africa, and South Asia.
2. Sarah Morgan Willett who was called out of WBC who along with her husband Mason are our Acts 1:8 partners. Pray for them as they mobilize university students for missions.
3. Us as a church to catch a greater vision of missions as church planting.
4. For the Lord of the Harvest to call out people from Wynne Baptist to go to the nations.