

## Arrows Out

Message 01 of the series, "Sent"

### I. Paul and Barnabas were sent to spread the Good News of Jesus by the early church in Antioch.

"Among the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch of Syria were Barnabas, Simeon (called 'the black man'), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (the childhood companion of King Herod Antipas), and Saul. One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.' So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way." Acts 13:1-3 (NLT)

a. Centerpoint seeks to be an "arrows out" church like the church in Antioch.

- The church in Antioch was a welcoming church.
- The church in Antioch was a worshiping/fasting/praying church.
- The church in Antioch was a sending church.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved. But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, 'How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!'" Romans 10:13-15 (NLT) (See also Isaiah 52:7)

b. God loves to send unlikely people to accomplish his work.

"I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus... I caused many believers there to be sent to prison... Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities. One day I was on such a mission to Damascus... as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me... and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will.' 'Who are you, lord?' I asked. And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness... I am sending you to the Gentiles to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.'" Acts 26:9-17 (NLT)

"God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong... so that no one may boast before him." 1 Corinthians 1:27,29 (NIV)

c. God sends us to accomplish our mission together.

"...a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord. When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw this evidence of God's blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.)" Acts 11:21-26 (NLT)

### II. Paul and Barnabas began their missionary journey on the island of Cyprus.

'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. There, in the town of Salamis, they went to the Jewish synagogues and preached the word of God... Afterward they traveled from town to town across the entire island until finally they reached Paphos, where they met a Jewish sorcerer, a false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He had attached himself to the governor, Sergius Paulus, who was an intelligent man. The governor invited Barnabas and Saul to visit him, for he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas, the sorcerer (as his name means in Greek), interfered and urged the governor to pay no attention to what Barnabas and Saul said. He was trying to keep the governor from believing. Saul, also known as Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he looked the sorcerer in the eye. Then he said, 'You son of the devil, full of every sort of deceit and fraud, and enemy of all that is good! Will you never stop perverting the true ways of the Lord? Watch now, for the Lord has laid his hand of punishment upon you, and you will be struck blind. You will not see the sunlight for some time.' Instantly mist and darkness came over the man's eyes, and he began groping around begging for someone to take his hand and lead him. When the governor saw what had happened, he became a believer, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.'" (Acts 13:4-12 NLT)

- a. The Holy Spirit empowers us to be witnesses for Jesus to our friends, relatives, acquaintances and neighbors starting where we are.
- Saul and Barnabas were sent on their mission by the Holy Spirit.
  - Saul and Barnabas began their mission where Barnabas grew up. (Acts 4:36)
  - Saul and Barnabas began their mission by reaching out to friends, relatives, acquaintances and neighbors in local synagogues and surrounding towns.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (NLT)

- b. To be successful in our mission we must establish common ground whenever we can.

*Note:* Saul used his Greek name “Paul” to establish common ground with Greek-speaking gentiles.

“When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ...When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ... I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.” 1 Corinthians 9:20-22 (NLT)

- c. We must beware of false prophets.

“Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.” 1 John 4:1 (NLT)

- d. The Good News about Jesus is powerful and saves everyone who believes.

“For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.” Romans 1:16 (NLT)

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### **Connect Group Discussion Questions:**

1. What does the biblical term ‘ambassador’ mean? (see 2 Corinthians 5:20)
2. Why do many believers feel that they are not good enough to share the Good News of Jesus Christ?
3. Have you ever been on a mission trip? If so, what did it feel like to be intentional as an ambassador of God in a different area?
4. Read Philippians 2:12-13. If the desire and power to share the Gospel with others comes from God, why do you think some believers do not want to share the Good News? How would you help them with this?
5. Read Philippians 2:14-15. How we live our lives and respond to life impacts the Gospel message. Explain why this is true.
6. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Name some areas in your life that you have never considered using as ‘common ground’ to spread the Good News.
7. How can you be more intentional in living an ‘arrows out’ (missional) lifestyle?

### **Five reasons we should keep our arrows pointing out:**

1. Every major religion in North America is growing except Christianity.
2. We’re losing 3,000 people from Christianity every day.
3. Almost three times as many churches are closing in the U.S every year as are being started.
4. Half of all churches in the U.S. did not add a new person through conversion growth last year.
5. Our culture is becoming more secular.