

A Missionary Church

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon delves into the missionary church in Antioch, focusing on the apostolic ministry of Paul and Barnabas. It highlights the process of being an incubator for apostolic ministry, providing support for missions, and serving as a home base for apostolic work. The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and nurturing God's call on individuals within the church.

Scripture: Acts 13:1, Acts 14:27, Acts 18:22, Acts 15:35, Acts 18:23

Topics: "Missionary Church", "Nurturing Apostolic Call"

Description

This sermon delves into the missionary church in Antioch, focusing on the apostolic ministry of Paul and Barnabas. It highlights the process of being an incubator for apostolic ministry, providing support for missions, and serving as a home base for apostolic work. The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and nurturing God's call on individuals within the church.

Transcript

I want you to turn here with me to Acts chapter 13. We're going to read from verse 1 to verse 12 here tonight. We're continuing directly on from where we left off last week in part 5. Now we're coming to part 6. Now as we read from Acts chapter 13, my message, a missionary church.

We have dealt with all the aspects of what the Antioch church is. And I'm not trying to preach everything and every doctrine and all that's important. All I'm doing is teaching you what the Holy Spirit has left for us written, inspired infallibly and perfectly.

The information he's given us about Antioch is what I'm preaching to you. So I'm not giving a singular message on prayer in this entire series, though that comes within the whole sphere of it. All I'm doing is step by step teaching you what the Holy Spirit says to us about Antioch.

So I'm not inventing messages. I don't need to search for messages. I don't need to search for my information.

I don't need to strain the verses. All I'm doing is giving you explicit statements, information that are very notable here. Reading from Acts chapter 13 verse 1. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers as Barnabas and Simeon that was called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene and Mannion, which have been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work we're on to, I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed on to Seleucia.

And from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogue of the Jews. And they had also John to their minister.

And when they had gone through the aisle onto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man who called for Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear the word of God. But Elimus, the sorcerer, for so is his name by interpretation, withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him and said, O fool of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right way of the Lord? And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing some for a season.

And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness. And he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Now when Paul and his company loosed from Pappos, I'm going to finish there. Let's pray here tonight. Father, we thank you again for the word of God.

Father, we realize that these stories, these testimonies, the written scriptures inspired by the Holy Spirit, that he is here right in the midst of this church, that this church is a temple of the Holy Spirit, that each one of our bodies is a temple of the Holy Ghost and that he indwells us. He actually lives within us, the same Holy Spirit that's given us the written scriptures. And Father, we thank you.

We put a great value, a great worth on the written scriptures. These aren't mere stories. This isn't mere information, nor, God, this is inspired to instruct us.

You said that all scripture, including the book of Acts, nor, God, is given and is profitable for doctrine, for teaching, for instruction. Nor, God, we pray, O God, that these messages from the book of Acts, from the written scriptures given by the Holy Spirit, that here tonight that he would bear witness, lead us, that he would guide us, that he would help us. And, Lord, God, that you would enlarge this church, that you would prepare it for the days ahead.

In Jesus' mighty name. Amen. Amen.

My message here tonight, part six, as we look at the Antioch church is it is a missionary church. I call this a missionary church, but I want to define the word missionary. I do not think of missionary as all think of missionary.

I believe missionary is a term we need to interpret, we need to define, we need to explain. The word missionary, and we all know what missionary looks like, someone heading off with their bag. If you live in America, more so than in Ireland, if you live in the Western world, usually that involves a team of young people with some older ones thrown in, young in their faith, zealous in their experience, immature in their understanding of the Bible, going as a team, spending lots of money to go to some foreign country for two weeks.

They take one day off each week to sightsee. They take lots of pictures, enjoy the local food, come back with stories. They all minister to much older Christians.

Then they come back in, they're missionaries. They're at least an element caught up in missionary work. They are a local church that is a missionary church because they've gone on a mission trip.

Oh, they wouldn't call themselves a missionary, but they are at least caught up in the work. Now that in part is what today we think of missionary. So let me define it.

The word missionary is actually a Latin word. Our English word comes from the Latin word *metto*, meaning to send. So missionary is a Latin word.

Why use a Latin word when, why not use a Greek word or why not use our biblical words? So a missionary means to be a sent one. Now let's come over to the New Testament and what most people think about as a missionary, they will apply it to Acts chapter 13. They'll say Paul was a missionary.

Barnabas was a missionary. Others were missionaries. And just like they go and do the work of missionaries, so we go and do the work of missionaries.

William Carey was a missionary. David Livingston was a missionary. Judson was a missionary.

Many other men were missionaries. And so we get our concept of missionary. But what is a missionary in biblical terms? You see, I believe because so many say there aren't apostles today, and no one can claim to be an apostle.

And we can't point to anyone who's an apostle. We now say there are missionaries. So we're not claiming to be apostles.

We just say we're a missionaries who go out and evangelize in foreign nations. But listen, in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11, it gives five ministries that are given by Jesus Christ into the church for the church to be members of the church. They are gifted ministries.

One of them is an apostle. It's the first of all the five ministries is an apostle. And we're going to deal with this tonight because when I talk about a missionary church, I mean an apostolic church.

The church at Antioch didn't send out missionaries. It sent out apostles. It was apostles that went out, not missionaries.

You don't have missionaries like we talk about missionaries in the New Testament. You have apostles gifted, called, and separated onto it. Now, when we go to the word apostle in the New Testament, it's the word *apostolos*.

Now, I'm not talking about the 12 apostles of the Lamb. There was only 12 apostles of the Lamb, not 13. There can't be 15.

There were only 12 unique apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were utterly confined to 12 in number. Their names will be written on the New Jerusalem.

Only those 12 names are written there. So, I'm not talking about those apostles. Those apostles were before Christ's crucifixion and resurrection and ascension.

I'm talking about apostles given to the church after the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. This is Him giving ministries to the church. And so, we're not looking at the 12 apostles, but we are looking at apostles given to the church, which today are confused, are called missionaries because it eases our conscience.

So, we can call someone a missionary and say, oh no, they can't be an apostle. They can't be that. So, we just call them missionaries and the evangelical church doesn't argue about it or discuss it.

Now, listen to what the word apostolos, the Greek word means. Apostolos. This is what it means in Greek culture in the first century.

It meant a commissioner. It was the name given, apostolos, to an admiral of a fleet of ships. Not one ship, but a fleet of ship.

He overseen them all. Or a pioneer of a new colony where you sent an apostolos from your nation to another country to begin establishing your culture within that new country. And so, you begin to understand what is an apostolos.

It's here in the name. When you go to the New Testament, there are at least 24 apostles outside of the 12 that are named in the New Testament. 24 and maybe as many as 28, depending on how you count it.

In our Bible, Paul, of course, is called the apostle, but so is young Timothy, timorous Timothy, fearful, trembling Timothy. Timothy, who's a younger man. He's not an apostle Paul, but he's still, the Bible calls him an apostle.

And Silvanus. All three men are different. They all operate differently.

And yet, Timothy is an apostle. So is Titus. All of these men were uniquely called apostles.

I'm just laying the foundation for where we're about to go here. Now, I'm not NAR. I reject the NAR heresies.

And that's an ill-defined term. It's a badly defined term. Most who talk about NAR, NAR, don't have a clue what they're talking about.

They can't even define it. Before the term was created, I stood against all of those so-called apostolic ministries. So I want to tell you, most of those that call themselves apostles, I reject their ministries.

I consider them heretical, false teachers. And in fact, it's very unusual to meet a genuine apostle. I believe the ministry's still alive today.

I believe it's biblical. I believe it was never removed from the church. Let me just give you two examples of two men who I'm fully persuaded were apostles in the body of Christ.

Both of them, many online will not have ever heard of them. At least one of them, all of you ought to know. The other one, you ought to know, but none of you will possibly know it.

The first one is WFP Burton or Willie Burton as we knew him. He arrived in South Africa in 1914. He had no financial support, no backing of the churches, no missionary society sent him out there.

And his co-worker who arrived a year later didn't even have a passport. He got on the boat in England, left for South Africa, didn't have a passport to be accepted, but somehow managed to still get into the country.

They ended up having a four-man team traveling north into Congo.

One of them died. Two of the other of the four-man team almost died. And once they reached their destination, one of the men took all the money.

He was an American, but nothing against Americans online. And he actually deserted them at their greatest hour. He took all the resources, everything.

Listen to what Willie Burton's co-worker who helped him in those first few years said. They poisoned our water and our food. They tried shooting poisoned arrows at us and then bullets.

We were among people whose language we had not learned one word of. In those first months, I'd tramp from place to place preaching the gospel until my body was soaked with malaria. They labored month after month without seeing one convert.

It was hard work, discouraging work, dangerous work. But listen, in 1960, it was 1914 when they arrived. And by 1960, when Willie Burton left Congo, there were 75 missionaries, 14 mission stations, over 1,000 very good functioning assemblies, all with their own eldership established.

And there were 43,000 born-again Christians. Then when he got to end of his life, he spent his last two years living out of a suitcase, traveling and preaching the gospel. He was called a Trump preacher.

He went through Wales. He went through England. I've got some of his audio cassettes from those days.

By 1971, when he died, there were more than 2,000 assemblies there in Congo. Remember just a few years ago when the revolution happened? That's why he had to leave. He had to leave them.

He left them as fully functioning Congolese churches. And within 10 years, they doubled. Once he removed his influence, they doubled from 1,000 to 2,000 churches.

Now, what is this ministry? This is apostolic ministry. I believe this man, he never called himself an apostle, but he was a true missionary. He was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he died in 1971. But even during the last 10 days of his life, he personally won 13 people to the Lord. That's a true apostle.

Well, let me mention another one who's a hero of my faith. James McCune. My mom remembers him.

He was a big man walking into their church in Northern Ireland or more Northern Ireland. She remembers him preaching in their church all those years ago. In 1937, he left for Africa with the vision of planting a branch of the denomination that he belonged to.

And he was going to establish it in what was called then the Gold Coast that later become Ghana. But through various problems, he had to start all over again, establish his own church, go independent, no finance, deserted on every side. He lost his work and his churches a few times over.

It was very discouraging. He used to tramp out into the forest for three days at a time and just preach the gospel on foot out into the wilds of Africa, preaching the gospel, reaching souls for Jesus Christ. But he created a whole new church called the Church of Pentecost in Ghana.

But once it was finally established across the nation, once he'd grown in years, some 30, 40 years later, do you know what he'd done? I slowly have to ease my way out and leave it as a fully functioning national church. And that's what he did. 1974, they raised some money, bought a little tiny two bedroom bungalow outside of Ballymena in Northern Ireland.

I spoke to people who knew them at that time and knew him very well. He slowly withdrew himself. And listen to this.

In 1985, at their convention, 125,000 people gathered in Accra, bringing the city's traffic of an entire city to a standstill. The Church of Pentecost was the fastest, and still is, fastest growing evangelical church in the entire western region of Africa. He left behind him 3,000 functioning churches with a total membership of 270,000 people.

It was represented in almost every town, every village in the land, and it spread into over 40 different countries of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, including Ireland. All the result of one humble. I believe James McCune is one of the most humble men of church history that I've ever read about.

He was a simple, humble, broken man. He had no desire for money, fame, reputation, control, manipulation, or anything else. He left a vast worldwide movement all out of a humble man.

And then he separated himself, drew back, and eventually he stopped answering. They'd say, come live here when his wife died. Come live here.

No, I'm not coming. Come and die amongst us. No.

He stayed in that little apartment in Balamina, went into a local church, sat in the back row for one year. Nobody talked to him. It's Elam Church in Balamina.

Nobody talked to him. No one invited him for dinner. No one asked him to testify.

He left this movement behind him. He just sat there humbly, nodding his head, amen, and praying for each service. Just sitting there.

Then this revival team came through all of the British Isles from Ghana. And as they stood in the pulpit, they pointed him out and said, that's the man. It's because of him that we have revival in our nations.

Do you know what he said to a friend of mine? He said, do you know what? I was so surprised they asked me to preach after that in the church. The same friend, he actually, Derek Prince, that notable preacher, I know he was wrong on his teaching on demonology, but a very well-known man. He asked my friend, he said, I want to go and meet James McCune.

There's no man I want to meet more than him. Took him to that little apartment, that little bed set in Balamina, to sit humbly in the room. And he says, don't you tell him who I am.

And afterwards, when he found out, he says, what? You had Derek Prince here in my house and you didn't tell me who it was. He was a humble man. Let me bring you to my sermon.

I'm not wasting words here. It's just, I want you to understand what we're dealing with. I'm dealing with Antioch as a missionary church, a missionary church.

But I want you to understand what I mean by that. I'm not talking about what many talk about as missionaries. I'm talking about powerful, dynamic ministry and it's functioning today.

There are apostles today, but most of them don't even call themselves an apostle. Most of them won't even allow you to talk about them, but yet they leave the fruit of ministry behind them. They are humble men.

That's one of the marks of them. Let me give you three points here about Antioch being a missionary church. Point number one, and I'm talking about not so much the apostles, but what the church was to the apostles.

And point two, I'll really cover about the apostles, but I want you to see more. What was the church to this ministry of the apostle? Point number one, an incubator for apostolic ministry. Antioch served as an incubator for apostolic ministry to be birthed forth.

Do you know what an incubator is used for? And you don't hear it much today, but in my younger days, you heard about all the time, an incubator would be used for chicken eggs for them to hatch. And what an incubator done, you put all the eggs in there and it kept it at a certain stable atmosphere. That incubator could be freezing outside.

It could fluctuate outside, but inside that incubator, you had a steady temperature. And that temperature is what the eggs needed to bring forth the little chicks. So that incubator birthed forth the chicks healthy at the right time, kept them in a stable atmosphere.

You know, when I say Antioch was an incubator, I mean an atmosphere was created in that church of prayer, of worship, of ministry, of preaching, of lifestyle, of fellowship. All of those things were in that local church. And I believe in the midst of that environment, they created such a vital, real environment in the local church that gifted ministries could arise.

Unique ministries could be birthed forth. It was safe. You know, often in churches, ministry or people in the church can be threatened by new ministries.

They will subdue it. They will kill it. They will hinder it.

Remember Jerusalem, they sent Saul of Tarsus far away. They didn't even know where he was. Here's a man that's going to have one of the greatest apostolic ministries, and yet 12 apostles don't even create an atmosphere where Saul can come up in it.

But here's Antioch. They have no apostles. They only have prophets, teachers, and an entire church.

And yet an atmosphere is created where Barnabas and Saul can actually grow into ministry. Can I ask you, is this church and is this leadership such that this church can birth forth ministries? Is this a place where you can grow into ministry? You can begin to function. You could even make mistakes.

And yet it's safe here to say that a ministry will arise. Many years ago, from I was about 22 to 29, I functioned in a local church in Scotland. It was called Hoyick Outreach Church.

We never grew more than 30, but I used to feel sorry for them every time I preached. And I told them it was burning. I knew everything God was going to do with me.

God had shown me even things still to come. He showed me where I would go, what I would do, things that would happen. And I would stand to them that back could be on in this secluded place in Scotland, small community, small church.

And I'd speak to those people and say, you don't realize wherever I go, whatever I do, I'll always be able to say, it was because of you in this church. Mostly older believers than me. There was Pat, Ivor, and all of many others.

These become my family. What you are to me, they were to me. But I used to tell them, I'm just learning to preach.

I felt embarrassed that anyone had to listen to me. Almost felt like apologizing every sermon. But you know what? There was an atmosphere there where I could grow, get established, learn the word of God, begin to preach.

And it was the same with Barnabas and with Saul here. Look what it says in Acts chapter 13, verse two. And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and they sent them away. Remember what we dealt with last week about ministry and ministering church. As they ministered to the Lord, the Holy Spirit spoke.

And this is what I want you to see in this point, an incubator for apostolic ministry. And there's three things I want you to see here under this. I want you to see the call of God, separation to ministry, and then sending.

This happens within a local church, in unity with the local church. In other words, they're not going to get separated onto this ministry. It's not going to come to an hour where the calling gets discovered or they get sent without the help of a local church.

Apostles aren't operating apart from the church. They operate out of the church. And so here, what you have is, as they ministered and fasted, the Holy Ghost said.

The Holy Ghost said, He spoke. Do you know what this proves? The sovereignty of the Holy Ghost in the church. When it says, He said, and He gives the command.

Do you know what that means? The Holy Spirit speaks to the church. He thinks. He actually acts.

He names individual. He reveals callings on individual people within that church. It shows the personality of the Holy Spirit.

Here He is commanding the church what to do. Separate these men onto the ministry I have called them to. Do you see that ministry is the work of the Holy Spirit? It can't operate in this church unless the Holy Spirit is operating.

Ministry, preaching, life's being called of God. It will not happen unless the Holy Spirit is allowed to speak. You could not know this unless the Holy Spirit speaks.

I actually believe the Holy Spirit still speaks today. It actually says here, it says in Acts chapter 20, 28, there's Paul later speaking to the elders at Ephesus. Listen to what he says.

You, the elders at Ephesus, take heed therefore unto yourselves and all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers. Who made them overseers? The Holy Ghost. In other words, an elder in the church, the Holy Ghost made them that.

It's the work of the Holy Spirit to feed the church which He has purchased with His own blood. So we see the Holy Spirit in the church raises up leaders to minister locally as elders. He also raises up others who are going to be sent forth as apostles.

It is the Holy Ghost. He alone knows the timing. He alone knows the calling.

I want you to see this. Until now, Barnabas is a gifted prophet. He's a prophet in this church.

He's an elder in this church. What is Saul? Saul is a Bible teacher. He's also an elder.

Until this point, you've got these two men in the church. That is their calling. What is the Holy Spirit doing? The Holy Spirit gives a clear command.

It's not the decision of the church. There's no planning committee. There's no discussion.

They don't know the timing. You know the Holy Spirit initiates ministry. The Holy Spirit knows when the right time is for an individual and for the body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit knows when you as a church can do without Barnabas, you can do without Saul. He knows when is the right time that Saul is now ready. Only the Holy Spirit knows all those things.

He is intelligent. He has articulation and communication. You can't make him simply bless.

Do you know what? You need to be in a place of ministering unto God. You're not looking for anything. You're not trying to make it happen.

You're not asking him to bless it. What you're doing is ministering unto God. And he says, oh, by the way, you are now in the right place.

Can you imagine us as a church coming into a right place and God is able to speak? But how did the Holy Spirit speak? It wasn't merely some audible voice. It wasn't that. How did the Spirit speak in the church? We'll look at Acts 13 verse 1. It says, there were there prophets and teachers, men like Agabus.

Personally, I believe it was one of the prophets amongst the five who gave a word from the Lord. He is a prophet. Remember, the gift of prophecy doesn't predict.

It doesn't command. It doesn't give information. It doesn't tell you what to do or what's going to happen.

The gift of prophecy does not do that. But the gifted ministry of a prophet can. The Holy Spirit can speak through a prophet.

So, I believe it was either one of the gifted prophets who prophesied. The Holy Spirit says to the church, separate these two men out. It's through a man.

You know, we were in a church once many years ago and my mom used to say, this brother was really gifted in prophecy. She says, I always know it's the gift of ministry of God because he's so negative all the time. Anytime you speak to him, he's so negative.

But when he begins to prophesy and the Spirit of God comes on him, he is so clear, so positive, so definite, so biblical. It's like you're dealing with two people. It was always a contrast.

The ministry was a contrast to his own personality. And so you have here, it could have been one of the prophets or it may have been one of the members of the body of Christ operating in one of the nine gifts. It would either be the word of knowledge or the word of wisdom.

Not the prophecy, not the gift of prophecy, but a word of knowledge, given information or wisdom showing you when and how and where and what. That's a word of wisdom. So, it was one of the other.

But look at this for a moment. It actually says here concerning the call of God. The church does not know the ministry they are called to.

But the Holy Spirit says, separate Barnabas and Saul to the ministry that I called them to. You know what that means? Years ago, these men knew their ministry. I've already told them.

I've told Barnabas, I've told Saul, but I didn't tell you the church. You thought that Saul's here as a Bible teacher until kingdom come. You thought that Barnabas is going to stay here as a prophet in the church encouraging you all, exhorting you all, winning souls.

You thought he was going to be here to kingdom come. But the Holy Spirit said, I already told those two men, now I need to inform you the church through one of your members concerning separating these two men out to a call that you don't even know about. It's a call different than being a prophet in the church.

It's different than being a teacher in one local church. Oh, I've got far more for them. All you see them as is gifted ministry in the church.

Week in, week out, week in, in Antioch. I want to tell you, there's a whole bigger dimension of this ministry. They have known about it for years.

You're only being told that now actually in the church. Do you see how you can have men with ministries in the church and those ministries are going to change? Do you realize God can change ministries? You can go from being a teacher to an apostle. You could be a prophet and then be made an apostle.

They are different ministries. They don't operate in the same way. They function radically different.

And so you see Saul and Barnabas now revealed to and through the church. It's in the church. You know what? This is a lot easier.

It's not Paul and Barnabas saying, we're called, we're going, we're leaving. Isn't God very wise? He actually uses the body to say, separate me. Then the church knows it's not about Saul wanting to be an apostle or go somewhere else.

This is the Holy Spirit of God. The entire church comes to an understanding saying, God is speaking. God is revealing.

These men are called. You know, they have been preaching for several years, both of them. And yet here's a calling they've never operated in.

They've never functioned in. No one ever talks about. They are not this yet.

But it's a call from God that they've known about. You know, when Saul knew this calling, the day he got saved, Ananias who prayed for him, Ananias knew it three days after his conversion, says he's going to go on to the Gentiles. On the day he was saved, he actually knew in his heart, I've got to call him to the Gentiles.

Here's a radical Jew, a radical Jew on his way to Damascus. To persecute Christians. And on the first day, Christ not only saves him, but saying, you know, I'm going to raise you up as a preacher.

Oh, he's not a preacher yet. And I'm going to send you far to Gentile nations. He'd known it all through the years.

So they're operating in the call, but not that call. They're operating in preaching, but not that sort of preaching. They're operating in the church, but now they're going to raise up churches.

It is a brand new call. It is a unique calling. Look at Barnabas.

He served for years. Saul has served for years, but now here comes a real ministry. See, the Holy Spirit in the church reveals to all this calling.

He uses the church. He uses local leaders. He uses local ministries to begin separating these men out.

It's beyond this local church and beyond the gifting. They functioned in Antioch to change the ministry of these men. So I want you to notice that first.

The calling on these two men. Do you know the calling of God? You know, preachers in the old days had the call of God come to them. They'd walk into a meeting and through the preacher, the call of God came personally to them.

The old preachers in Scotland amongst the Covenanters, they would go off into the highways and byways to fast and pray, to settle a call of God. Am I called to preach the word of God? Now across the church, we don't have a call anymore. Men are sending themselves.

Men are appointing themselves. The church is appointing people. But do you know what? We need the call of God again.

It's not the church that called you. The Holy Spirit called you. Antioch didn't call Barnabas.

Antioch didn't choose Saul. The Holy Ghost raised them up, appointed them, called them. You preachers here, do you know the call of God? It's one thing to preach.

You could preach and you're not called. Oh, brilliant. Praise God.

Go preach. But the call of God is to a definite ministry. Do you know what you're called to? Have you heard the spirit of God? There's the second thing here.

Separation to ministry. What did the Holy Ghost say? Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. Separate.

That's an instruction to the church. It comes to a unique time. It's time for something to happen.

What does the Holy Spirit say? Separate me. Me. Separate unto me.

Separate for I called them. Years ago, I talked to them. Years ago, I called them to this.

They haven't embarked on it yet. Do you think the little teaching ministry at Antioch was all that was about it? Do you think that Keith Malcolmson and I pour myself out here? Do you think you're unique or special or God has me preaching here? Don't you know God has things which you don't even know about my life, my calling, my future? Do you know God has revealed things that you can't even perceive by what you see me standing in this pulpit? And I know it definitely. It was earlier this year as I'd lost Candace.

My life has totally changed. I'm struggling. I am almost on the point of cancelling out on Slovakia.

It was January. I'm thinking about other things and going, I can't do it, Lord. I can't go to other nations.

It's too much for me. Here's a friend in prayer sends a message saying, when we are praying about you, we remembered an old testimony you said about a vision you had years ago. I went, ah, I know where the picture is because I drew a picture of it.

And I went over, pulled it out, and I found the picture. I drew it when I was 21 years old, exactly 30 years before. It was in January this year.

30 years before, I had a vision about going to the nations. And for 30 years, it didn't mean much to me. But I tell you, in January this year, I went, I know God is speaking to me, reminding me, reminding me of this vision.

I had an army camp. I was on an army camp, 21 years old. And God gives me this clear, explicit vision.

And it comes with power to me this January. You know, the call of God is a remarkable thing. But the Holy Spirit says, separate me.

I always get worried at this point in the message. I go, God, help me to finish this. Is separate me.

The word separate means to set boundaries around, to limit, restrict, cordon off. From local burdens and responsibilities. So you take this person with the call of God, they're in ministry in that local church.

They've proved themselves in the local church. You don't need to check their character. They've proved themselves for years.

They've been faithful. They have shown the ministry they have, the type of person they have. You don't need to check character.

They've been called for years. But do you know what it says? Separate me out. They're not going to be elders in this local church alone.

They're not called to just teach in this local church alone. The Holy Spirit is telling the whole church, you need to separate them off. You need to cut them off.

They're not going to be there as elders any longer. They're not going to be there week in, week out, listening to your problems anymore. They're actually separated to a new call.

And you, the church, need to understand that. They're being separated to a work. You know what they start doing then? They start to pray and fast for them.

So this separation time, it gives a short period of time for them to be prepared, make themselves ready. The church needs to adjust. So do those individual men.

It's not week in, week out, walking down the road to gather with the body of Christ. They're actually going to be sent out into unreached nations where there's no Christians, no churches, no preachers. It's hostile.

They're going to get stoned. They'll get attacked. Riots are going to break out.

It's a real radical change, and yet it's the Holy Spirit. You, the church, need to separate this man, these two men, to me, to the call of God. But we didn't know about this.

You do now. You do now. I'm telling you, you are ministering unto God.

It's the right time. You, as a church, are in the right place. You see, God won't leave a church weak.

He provides for it. The third thing is sending. Sending.

Thirteen, verse three, and when they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them, and notice this, sent them away. They, the church. But notice verse four, and they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia.

In verse three, we have the church and the leaders sending them away. In verse four, we have the Holy Ghost sending them away. Two English words, both the same, sent.

Sent by the church, sent by the Holy Ghost. But they're two different Greek words. Although in English, it's the word sent, they are two different Greek words.

Listen to what the word sent means in verse three. The Greek word sent, in verse three, the church sent them away. Now that actual word that's used there, listen, I said it last week.

It means, it's a polio, meaning to free them fully, release them, or to let them go. You need to let them go. You need to release them.

You need to separate them. Then you release them. You're sending.

So when the church sends someone, what they're doing is releasing them into that work. You're releasing them from local responsibilities. But listen to what it says in verse four concerning the Holy Ghost sending them.

This is a different Greek word. It's absolutely different. And its meaning is commission, or to send forth, or to command.

So they have to send them forth. They have to release them. We're letting you go do the work of God.

But what does the Holy Ghost? He sends them. He commissions them. He leads them.

He guides them. A church cannot do that. A committee can't do that.

A denomination can't do that. A mission society can't do that. Only the Holy Ghost.

So it's the Holy Ghost who called them. It's the Holy Ghost who separated them. It's the Holy Ghost who sends them.

And yet the church is operating in all of these things, recognizing the call of God on a man, recognizing that call, and then separating them at the right time. Do you see how a local church has to operate with the Holy Ghost? And what's my first point? To be an incubator of apostolic ministry. To be an incubator.

Imagine a church that says, no, we don't believe in that ministry. No, we don't believe your call. No, we need you.

Can you imagine that? They would no longer be an incubator. They would be a hindrance. They'd be an obstacle to the call of God.

It would be a terrible thing. Do you see how they get sent out in twos here? This is the biblical pattern. They're sent out two by two.

Never alone. I've never preached on the high street alone. Never once in my entire life.

I've been in strange situations. I've always went, I want someone with me. I could prove to you from the Bible how Paul was exactly the same.

You say it was a great dynamic apostle. He never wanted to preach alone. Never.

When he went to Athens, he wanted to wait for Timothy. Didn't want to preach alone on the high street. And so with us, listen, as I close this point, a church of thousands of newborn members function on fire for God.

Some of them very mature, as mature as Saul. And yet the Holy Ghost only sends two. Out of a church of thousands, the Holy Ghost only sends two out as missionaries or as apostles.

How different from the modern church. What do we do? We send the youngest. We send the most immature.

We send those who know least. We send those with least experience, not the Holy Ghost. And today's church sends out many.

How different from the Holy Ghost. He sends out few, very, very few. But they're the most mature, the most gifted, the most thought of in that church.

The ones with most mature character. And so you see the strategy of the Holy Spirit is the strategy of Gideon. Yet they truly were a missionary church.

Look at this church. It's the church that's a missionary church. It's a church that's an apostolic church.

Look, they are willing to send out to support such a task. Did not mean that the whole church went. In fact, few went.

But they had a missionary heart to send. Point number two, a support for apostolic ministry. Not only an incubator, but a support for apostolic ministry.

Antioch become the host church for missionary evangelism into the entire Gentile world. Could you imagine the call of God on us as LCC? What if there is a call upon us to initiate something, to embark, to do a great work that you don't even know about yet? You know, when we started this church, and I put the banner up there, Forge in a Vessel of Recovery. For six years, I thought I can't even tell this bunch what we're called to.

We're actually called as a church to put back in the stream what's been lost. We're actually called to put back in the church things that have been lost, that aren't even taught anymore. I couldn't have even told you at the start.

What us few stuck between the fridge and the cooker in the kitchen. Candice's on her rickety, she called it the toy piano or whatever it was. She was embarrassed that anyone outside of her professional career would see her playing something so despicable.

She would have lost all reputation. This was us three people sitting in a room. And here we are having meetings, and I'm preaching my heart out.

You know what? I couldn't have told you then, we are called to put things back in the church that have been lost. You'll say, you're crazy. You're crazy.

We can't even fill this kitchen. The neighbors next door are banging on the wall. But I want to tell you, God had a plan and purpose.

This second point, a support for apostolic ministry. To support such a task did not mean that many went beyond their own locality. But in prayer, in encouragement, as a base of fellowship, they stood with these two men.

They blessed them. They set them apart. They agreed with it.

They were in unity of faith. What a support. To be a support for apostolic ministry.

We're here praying for you. We believe in what you're doing. We fully agree that the Holy Ghost has sent you.

We believe that God is going to reach Gentile nations. Imagine having a church like that. When you begin to see them sent out twice in chapter 14, they're called apostles.

In 14, verse 4, it talks about the two men being apostles. In chapter 14, verse 14, it says, which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul. So it names them.

They are now called apostles. They weren't apostles in the church. They weren't apostles in the years before.

Only when they're separated and sent out are they suddenly called apostles. Before they're called a prophet and a teacher. Now they're called apostles.

What happened? They were sent by the Holy Ghost. They were sent out. You know these mega ministries? You've got mega ministries in our generation.

Sitting as the hierarchy of a great mega church. It's all back to front. These men weren't the heads of a mega church.

They're sent out into nothing from a mega church. It was a big church, a large church, a successful church. What do they do? They send out the apostles.

How are you going to look after yourself? Well, Saul's a tent maker. I'm going to work with my hands. We'll preach in the evenings.

We'll evangelize. We won't ask anyone for money. We don't take anyone with us.

You know all these new strategies. Francis Chan, years ago, I was so disappointed. He put up a video.

He said, we are going back to biblical church planting. He said, I was the pastor of a mega church. And he says, I got tired of it, the mega church.

So I stepped out of it. And he said, we're going back to New Testament principles. I'm listening to the video.

I'm going, amen. Praise God. I want to hear anyone who can tell me more.

Then the more he went on, the more I went, oh no, oh no, oh no. Do you know how he started this New Testament church? We're going right back to scripture. We won't have anything attached.

He took 50 members, 50 couples, moved them to the new city. And they started a new church. This is apostolic ministry.

I want to tell you, that's not apostolic ministry. It's when an apostle, a chosen man goes in the community. There's no Christian there.

There's no churches there. Nobody's reaching those people. You have no financial backing, no one to hold your hand.

And you begin to evangelize. You work during the day. You preach in the evening.

And you raise up a church. You put elders over it. You establish it.

It becomes independent financially, governmentally. It has its own leadership. It becomes independent of outside help.

It begins to evangelize and reach out and begin to establish its own churches. You see, this church was a support for apostolic ministry. There were three missionary journeys of Paul's that began here in this church.

His three great missionary trips began here in this church. Every time they returned to this church, this church supported him, prayed for him, encouraged him. This is his home church.

This is where he comes back to. Listen what happened on the first missionary journey. On the first missionary journey, as they are sent out, they go to the island of Cyprus and part of Asia Minor, which is present-day Turkey.

It was a two-year trip, not a two-week trip, not a two-month trip. Two years. They never came back and do a church service.

They had been sent out by the Holy Ghost. This was the shortest of the three missionary journeys. Its distance was the shortest.

It was the closest to the church and it was the shortest time of the three trips. So this was the beginning. And you read about it in chapter 13 and chapter 14 of the book of Acts.

And it covers this time period of two years. Then when they come back, they're going to spend another three years in Antioch in the church. So they went out for two years, evangelized nations.

Then they come back and stay in the church for three years. So how did they embark on this? Well, they left the church after being sent out. They went to their local seaport, a bit like our local airports.

It was 15 miles away on the coast. They boarded a ship. They then sailed to the island of Cyprus.

This was not the beginning of evangelism on Cyprus. There were believers there, but no functioning churches, no eldership. There were scattered believers.

There was no structure, but there were scattered believers. Now you've got two men apostles. By the time they finish on the island or the nation of Cyprus, at the beginning, a handful of scattered believers, they'll find them on their journey.

They will. But at the end, you're going to have churches established, elders over them, foundations beginning to evangelize. That is apostolic ministry.

It begins to take place. And so they started at the east of the island at Salamis. It says in verse six, And when they had gone through the aisle onto Patmos, that going through means they zigzagged.

They went through every village, every town, every community. They missed nothing. How did they evangelize? They went through every single.

They crisscrossed the island from the east. They're going west. When they reached the west, it was onto Pathos.

It was the head city of Cyprus. Pathos on the west coast of the island was the capital. This means they traversed.

They went everywhere. They pierced it through. They crisscrossed.

They missed nothing. They reached every village. Let me compare Cyprus to Ireland.

We know that the island of Cyprus was 140 miles by 60 miles. Ireland is 300 miles by 170 miles. In other words, Ireland is twice as long as Cyprus, three times as broad as that.

Ireland is three times as broad as Cyprus. And they crisscrossed that entire island. Listen, I won't go into all the details of these mission trips, but this is what I want to tell you.

At the end of evangelizing Cyprus, it was apostolic ministry. This was one mission trip, one journey, and they evangelized the entire community. They lead Christians everywhere.

They lead churches everywhere. They raise up leaders everywhere. That is apostolic ministry.

Now notice when they get to the far side of the island, something strange happens. Paul's name is changed from Saul to Paul. We've called him Saul until now.

Now we call him Paul the Apostle. Not the Apostle Paul, that's a title. But Paul the Apostle, like the Bible talks about him.

So at the end of this mission, his name is changed. There's another thing changes. The leadership structure changes.

See, until now, it's always been Barnabas and Saul, Barnabas and Saul. You find this in chapter 11, verse 30, chapter 12, 25, chapter 13, verse 2, Barnabas and Saul. All of a sudden, for the first time, after evangelizing Cyprus, we read about Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Barnabas.

And there's more I'm going to say on that in the weeks ahead. Also, another thing changes. The method of evangelism changes.

See how they've crisscrossed all the way across this island, reaching everywhere. Barnabas is the prominent one. Barnabas is the mature one.

He is the older one. You know what suddenly happens in the evangelism? Paul now becomes prominent. He is the leader and the evangelism changes.

From here on, in all of the evangelism, you know what they do? They don't crisscross every village, every town, every community. They no longer do that. Paul now has a different way to evangelize.

You know what he's done from here on in? When they get to Asia Minor, you know what they do? They go for the main centers. They evangelize a nation by going to the main cities, the main communities, the biggest realms of population. Not every village, not every small town.

They go to the main city and they begin to evangelize there. So there's changes. Instead of trying to cover the whole territory, they focused and established the church, the gospel in key centers.

In spite of great danger, Paul and Barnabas made a return journey. Once they got to Asia Minor, they established churches wherever they went. In Lystra, Iconium, in Antioch of Asia.

It's a different Antioch. There was two Antiochs. There's a different one.

Then they come back through. Although it was dangerous, although there's been riots, you know what to do? To establish them and to raise up elders. That's the first missionary journey.

They then come back to Antioch and spend two years there. The second missionary journey, Paul and Silas this time. Where'd Barnabas go? He's gone.

Do you know it comes a time where Paul says, I think we should go and see our brethren. I think we need to go see how they're doing. Are they still walking the word of the Lord? Barnabas says, I want to take Mark with me.

And there was a conflict. We're going to come to this in the weeks ahead. I don't want to deal with this.

And they split. Now you've got two apostolic teams that go out from the church at this time. But this second missionary journey, you've got Paul and Silas.

Who was Silas? He was a gifted prophet sent from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch functioning as a prophet. But all of a sudden he becomes an apostle. His other name is Silvanus.

He was called a leading man from Jerusalem. Now you've got him going out with Paul. He also now in 1 Corinthians is called an apostle.

The letter is written not just from Paul. It's written from Silvanus and Timothy. So here's the second missionary journey.

It's going to last three years, not two years, but three years. Do you know what he picks up on this journey? What's so important about this journey? It's a very interesting journey. They begin to evangelize again.

They visit the churches they've already planted. Then they begin to push out into new territory where there's no church, no preacher, no gospel, just pure paganism. In chapter six, verse four, it says, And they went through all of the cities.

They went through Phrygia and into Galatia. Remember how he ended up in Galatia? When you read it, he got sick. Paul got sick, ended up having to stop in Galatia, and all these churches got raised up through being sick.

God actually used that. And then he was going to go into Asia. This is Paul's method.

We need to evangelize Asia, an entire nation, an entire province. What does it say in verse six? They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. They were prevented, stopped by the Holy Ghost.

So they go north. And in verse seven, it says, But the spirit suffered them not. Who's in charge of the missionary activity? Who's in control? It is the real Holy Spirit, not only of commissioning these apostles, but when they're out there.

So Paul couldn't go to Asia. He couldn't go north into Bithynia. Do you know what he does? He keeps walking.

Do you know their entire journey, if you measure, is from the bottom of Britain to the north of Britain. That's the length of this journey. And you know what? Paul is trying to find the will of God.

They must evangelize. But what is God's will? You know people who say, I just know God's will all the time. The Holy Spirit speaks to me every day.

I know all the will of God. I'll either call you a liar, ignorant, or very immature. Take your choice of one of those three.

Oh, I know everything. Do you really? I believe in the Holy Spirit speaking. Paul believed in the Holy Spirit speaking.

But do you know what? He wouldn't let me go that way. Wouldn't let me go that way. What do I do? Just keep walking.

When he'd done a whole circuit of present day Turkey, he finally gets a place called Troas. And in Troas, he has a dream or a vision of a man from Macedonia calling him to come over. Do you know what was so important about this missionary trip? That detour, not going into Asia, not going into Bithynia.

Do you know what he picked up on this journey? He picked up young Timothy, who's to become his coworker. If he'd gone into Asia, he wouldn't have found Timothy. He also picked up Luke in Troas, who wrote the book of Acts.

He also picked up Aquila and Priscilla, a married couple who traveled everywhere with them. And so there's a remarkable missionary journey. He goes over and begins to evangelize in mainland Europe, what we know Europe.

This is a whole new region. There's the beginning of evangelism into Europe. Then after that, they go into Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica, all in Europe.

And then they go into Greece. They go to Athens and preach in the capital, the Greek capital. They also go to Corinth.

Can you imagine this missionary journey if the Holy Ghost hadn't have been in control? Could you have imagined? One of their greatest churches to be raised up was in Corinth. Paul and his team settled there for 18 months, one and a half years. Half of the missionary journey is spent in one city.

You know, most of the places they went to, they would spend a few weeks. Thessalonica, it was literally several weeks, if not less. It was minimal time.

And yet you've got a great church like Thessalonica. What about little Philippi? Maybe a couple of months. And it was a dynamic, small church.

Always small, but dynamic, very powerful. But here's Corinth. He spends a year and a half and raises up this remarkable church.

Saints, I can take you through this and show you how dynamic. Do you know what Antioch was? It was a supporting church all through these missionary trips. Paul's raising up Corinth.

Paul's raising up Philippi. Paul's raising up different churches. Paul's evangelizing entire continents.

You know who's standing behind them? It's the church at Antioch. An entire church, a praying church, a believing church, a loving church, a sending church. How invaluable.

You know, you think Paul's out there alone, two dusty men walking into a new city. No, they weren't. An entire home church was behind them, supporting them.

You know what? When they got tired, they'd been whipped. They'd been beaten. They'd been stoned.

They'd been left for dead. They'd been in prison. They had long journeys.

And then they arrived back in Antioch again. Third and final missionary journey. When you begin to study this, they went and evangelized or they reached out to the places they'd already been.

But one unique place, Ephesus. This mission trip lasted four years. And the main focus was Ephesus.

Two to three years was spent in Ephesus. Paul stayed in Ephesus. It was a mega city, 250,000 people.

He stayed there, planted a church. But listen, remember what he says in Acts chapter 19, verse 10. They're preaching there for two years in Ephesus.

The word of the Lord went out into all Asia. All the Greeks, all the Jews heard the word of the Lord. He stayed in one city, preached in one city, day in, day out.

He labored with his hands. He worked as a tent maker. No modern apostles here.

You know, I asked someone once, two young guys came into this church and they began to talk. They had worked with the top apostolic ministries in America. I got tired of it.

Let me just tell you what a biblical apostle is. And I started going, he suffers. The two of them go out and plant new churches.

They evangelize on the streets. They work with their hands. They don't ask for anything.

I gave him a whole list. I said, there's a biblical apostle. There's Paul the apostle.

And at the end of it, his jaw dropped. And he says, I actually don't think I've ever met an apostle. I'm sure.

Because all those American apostles that you mix with, with their mega ministries, none of them operate like this. None of them at all. It's radical.

And so you have here Paul preaching at Ephesus, but his fellow laborers went out. He didn't plant them. He didn't leave Ephesus, but those he trained, those he won to the Lord, they went and established a church in Laodicea while he is there.

In Colossae, Hierapolis, Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Pergamon, all of that is going out. He's in one church. And you know all the time, Antioch is praying for them.

At the end of the third missionary journey, just hold on, give me a few more minutes here. And I don't want you to miss this saints of God tonight. He was now about 60 years old.

He's come back to Antioch. It was more than 20 years ago that he was converted on the road to Damascus. It is more than 10 years since the Holy Ghost sent him out on his first missionary trip right across the Roman Empire for the first time in world history, an area representing 300,000 square miles.

This apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ had planted and established churches to carry on the work of evangelism, to be centers of their regions and of their areas in Galatia, Macedonia, that's sure, Achaea and Asia Minor, four of the major regions of the Roman Empire. When he began on the first mission trip, there were no churches in any of these vast regions. Just over 10 years later, there are churches across the entire Roman Empire.

And Paul, not counting the journeys by boat, walked 1,200 miles by foot between those trips during that 10 years. Let me bring it home here because I calculated this. During his travels, Paul walked an estimated 1,200 miles by land.

Let me give you local stats. That would be like going from Limerick to Dublin, which is about 200 miles. So walking from here to Dublin, and if you walk that distance 30 times in a return trip, and he volunteers.

I'm not talking about all the ministry, the weapons, the imprisonments. I'm just talking about walking in 10-year period to Dublin and back 30 times within that time period, or three times a year for 10 years. You would only just begin to experience or understand how Paul functioned as an apostle.

You know, the next time you meet a man who calls himself an apostle, ask him to show you his faith. He'll look at you rather strange, but he gives you an inroad to begin to explain what is a true apostle. A church was behind these missionaries.

Third and finally, let me finish briefly. A home base for apostolic ministry. At the end of the first missionary journey, they come back for three years.

At the end, it says in Acts chapter 14, 25, and when they had preached the word of God in Perga, they went down into Italia and from there sailed to Antioch from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfill. Now, this is after two years of missionary work. Now, they're going to stay here for three years.

What is this? It's a home base for apostolic ministry. When they're out there, they're apostles. When they come home, they serve as local elders, local leaders.

They're not an apostle in the local church anymore. They fit right back into local ministry. You know what? They're going to get refreshed, built up, prepared, prayed up to go out again.

This church served them for the next three years. This is their spiritual family. This is their home.

This is where they get fed. This is where they get encouraged. This is where their wounds on their bodies get healed.

Can you imagine some people there medically applying things to Paul's back from the whip marks that he received during this journey? And so it says they come back to Antioch from whence they've been recommended to the grace of God. The word recommended means surrender, to yield up, to entrust. See that letting go of I mentioned at the beginning.

Oh, it means more than just letting go of them. Okay, bye-bye. See you in three years, two years, four years and letting them go.

No, it doesn't mean that. It means more than that. It means to hand over to the grace of God.

They weren't let go of. They were entrusted. As an entire church of thousands of people, two men, you're sending them into the most dangerous regions of the earth.

You know what you're doing? We commit you. We entrust you into the hands of God, into the hands of the grace of God. God's grace was gonna be the power, the influence on them to keep them.

And you know what it says? When they return, they have fulfilled the work. They made it full. They completed it.

They finished it. What they were sent out to do. When they return after this two years, they have fulfilled the task.

They come back saying, guess what? There's new churches. There's groups of new elders across these nations. There's real Christians.

There's young evangelists. There's preachers in this community and that community. And in this city, there's even provincial leaders.

The leader of Cyprus, born again. It's a historic fact, born again. Can you imagine coming back? And it says in chapter 14, 27.

And when they were come and had gathered the church together, this is their home church. This is coming back to family. This is the people who prayed for you.

You know, thank God for those who actually testify as well as ask prayer requests. They say, pray for me. It's wonderful when you come back in this church and say, you know what? God answered this.

God did this. God used me to speak to my boss. There's this family member who opened to the gospel.

It is wonderful. You know what? We're a family, but can you imagine me being sent off for two years, coming back? Can you imagine that gathering? You haven't seen me in two years. I come back, you go, boy, you're thinner.

You've got a few scars on your face you didn't have before. Man, you're becoming a man of God. And I come back to the pulpit with these testimonies and these stories of evangelism and new churches.

What is here? No, it's everywhere across the empire. This was dynamic. They gathered the church together and they rehearsed all that God had done with them.

Oh, it wasn't us. It was the grace of God. They knew every time you testify, testify about what God has done.

Oh, I've done this and I've done that and I did this. No, it is what God has done. And that he had opened the door of faith onto the Gentiles and they abode long time with the disciples.

A long time. That was the first time they came back from a missionary trip. It was three years, a period of three years that they settled on into the normal rigors of church life.

Maybe they weren't sure, will this ever happen again? We just settled on teaching the word, preaching the word of God. Then it says, chapter 15, verse 35, Paul also in Barnabas continued in Antioch teaching and preaching the word of the Lord with many others also. What were they doing? They just fitted right back into church life and began teaching, preaching.

Imagine having these men, your Pope, but just preaching after this first missionary journey for three years, two years in the mission field, three years back. But do you know what happens? A day comes and some days after Paul said on the Barnabas, let us go again and visit the brethren in every church where we have

preached the word of the Lord and see how they do. Do you see this heart for a second missionary trip? Oh, did the Holy Ghost say no? In a meeting did the Holy Spirit say, go send them a second time? No, here's the heart of an apostle saying, you know what? We're here three years now.

I wonder how they're doing. Three years since we planted those churches, three years since we laid hands on men and made them elders. I wonder how they're doing.

I've been praying daily for them. But Barnabas, let's go and see what the Lord is doing. So we know they split into two mission teams.

They went off. Paul comes back after three years. And listen, it says in Acts 18.22. And when he had landed at Caesarea and gone up and saluted the church at Caesarea, he went down to Antioch.

He's been away now for three years. As soon as he comes back, where does he go? Antioch, that's my church. Oh, you're a great apostle.

You've raised up Corinth. You've raised up Ephesus. You've raised up all these churches.

You're a big man now. I need my family. This is the church that sent me out.

It's a church that supported me out there. This is my home base. This is the place I come.

They know me. They know my character. This is the first church I ever taught for one entire year in a local body.

This is home for me. And you know what? They went down to Antioch. And after they had spent some time there, he departed and went over all of the country of Galatia and Pnygia and order, strengthening all the disciples.

I've got about another 10 pages, but we're closing tonight. Saints of God, it was a missionary church. And I pray God makes us a missionary church.

I pray in the days ahead that we cultivate such a love, such a fellowship, such a safe place, such a secure place that ministries, that lives can grow here, that ministries can prepare themselves, that callings that are on individual lives. Let me just say before I close, if the call of God is upon you, expect the church to recognize it. If no church ever recognized the call on you, I would gravely doubt you have the call of God on you.

I know the church is dysfunctional, but if it's a church that's praying, that's being led of the Holy Spirit, that knows the word of God, I believe within that environment. You need to trust me if I say you're too immature or what you're telling me is unbiblical. I know what I'm talking about after all these years.

I'm wise and I believe the Holy Spirit can raise up ministry, but I'll never hinder you. I'm telling you now, I'll never hinder you in the call of God. I'll never hinder you going and serving God.

I'll never hinder you in blossoming into the ministry of God or preaching. But I want to tell you, I'm wise enough to tell you you're too immature. I wouldn't say it like that, of course.

I'll tell you it's too soon or you'll make a great mistake. I've seen an awful lot of my life and I want to tell you I want this to be a safe church that's a missionary church, that you can find your feet, spread your wings,

enlarge yourself, grow, mature, become what Christ wants you to be. I never want to hinder that, but I never want you going out there to be a curse to the body of Christ.

I don't want any false teachers going out of here. No false prophets going out of here. I don't want any false evangelists going out of here.

You know what? I want to be genuine ministries that are biblical, spirit-filled and that God will use. Please stand with me here. Let's just pray together.

Pray for yourself, saints of God. Let's begin to pray. Let's unite our hearts here for a moment.

Let's begin to pray for this church. My God, we pray that you make us a missionary church. Only you know the call of God in this church.

Only you know your will for this church. The individuals in this meeting tonight, others that are online, others that will listen afterwards, others that are going to join this church, be converted, become a part of it. Father, we're asking that we be a church where ministries can grow, where they can blossom, where they can mature.

Lord God, we're asking of you that we become a missionary church, that you raise up apostolic ministry. My God, that you would send out ministry into new areas, new preachers, new leaders. My God, that out of this church, many are going to be raised up in the body of Christ.

Father, we pray together. Let your will be done. Let the Holy Spirit speak to us clearly.

Reveal your plan in the lights in this room. My God, make your will known in the ministries, in the columns, in the lights in this room. My God, we don't want to create it.

We don't want to make it happen. But oh God, we're praying for your rain to fall, the wind to blow. We yield to you.

We're submitted to the sovereignty of your Holy Spirit. We believe, oh God, that he's here and that he indwells us tonight in Jesus' mighty name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/R6J7jDVesaA.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/keith-malcomson/a-missionary-church/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net