



## Life Group Sermon Study Notes

### “Let’s Talk: An Unlikely People”

Bishop Rice Brooks & Pastor James Lowe – February 16, 2020

#### Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Have you had a time when God showed up in a supernatural way?
- Share a favorite group or team of yours and what made it a good experience.

#### Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at [www.bethelworld.org](http://www.bethelworld.org)

Acts 13:1-3 (ESV) <sup>1</sup>Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup>While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup>Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

In Acts, Luke details how the Christian church reached the nations with an unlikely team, at an unlikely time, and with an unlikely message. Limited resources, lack of knowing, imperfect people and situations, combined with praise and worship makes things happen for the glory of God.

In Chapter 13 we are introduced to five men, with varying backgrounds and persuasions, who from here led in the establishment of one of the most influential churches in history, Antioch. This diverse team included:

Barnabas, an “encourager”, businessman native to Cyprus, financially generous to the church.

Simeon called Niger, whose name means black prince, came from north Africa.

Lucius of Cyrene, prophet and teacher of the congregation in Antioch; evangelist.

Manaen, a “consoler”, brought up with Herod Antipas the tetrarch, educated in Rome, and teacher at the church of Antioch.

Saul (later called Paul), line of Benjamin growing up in Jerusalem, once a zealous Pharisee, active persecutor of Christians, miraculously converted to Christianity, and preacher.

This was an unlikely time and place, yet Gentiles received salvation in great numbers. Why unlikely? The first Christians were scattered from Jerusalem due to persecution. In the natural, that would not typically attract anyone. Also, the Jews misunderstood what it meant to reach the nations and preached only to Jews. However, one day there was an unintentional conversation with a group of Hellenists which led to many Gentiles being saved! This caused a supernatural chain of events: the church in Jerusalem had their ears open and sent Barnabus to Antioch; then he sought Paul in Tarsus; Paul, remembered prophetic words spoken about reaching the Gentiles, and went to Antioch with Barnabus; and the team was formed. The Holy Spirit sent, they went, proclaiming the word of God and people were saved. The unlikely message of the Gospel, being beyond what can be invented, has proven powerful and unstoppable in bringing salvation throughout history. Unlikely us? Yes, the sinners that we are BUT, the grace of God covers us! When we pull together, we not only have strength with collective capabilities, but we show the world God's love for all people. Have a Bible and a passport, have your ears open to God's timing and direction, and go!

### **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose one of the points below and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.**

- From what we can know about the five members told in Acts 13, how do they differ from one another and how did diversity add value and/or promote the Gospel being heard and accepted?
- Practically speaking, how does the Holy Spirit help knit diverse people together?
- What are the benefits individually and as a church to being a part of a diverse community of believers?

### **Prayer (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as other requests you may have.**

- Thank God for creating you unique with gifts and talents unlike anyone else on earth, and for his care, guidance and wise benevolence in leading you to a diverse family of believers.
- Ask God to bring to remembrance and keep in forethought, his prophetic words given to you so that clues aren't missed for opportunities to advance his kingdom.
- Ask God for wisdom and understanding in all relationships, strengthened and secured with humility and love.