

taking action!

small group material



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Turning Lost Students into Christ-Centered Labourers

PAUL'S STRATEGY I • Broad Sowing and Multiplication

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

Acts 13

Acts 13 records the first half of Paul's first missionary journey. The Holy Spirit has called Paul and Barnabas to take the gospel outside of the confines of Israel and Samaria. Obediently, they travel across the Mediterranean and through several cities in what is now Turkey. A close look at their actions, and the results that were produced, will reveal strategies we can employ on campus.

The first thing to notice is the diversity and number of places in which they communicate the gospel. In verses 4-5, they share the gospel in a synagogue in Salamis, Cyprus, then continue throughout the whole island. In Paphos, Cyprus they lead a Roman proconsul to Christ (verse 12). Leaving the island, they teach in a synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (verse 14), and later they teach the Gentiles in the same city (verse 46). At the end of the chapter, they leave Antioch to go to Iconium (verse 51), then Lystra and Derbe. In all the places they go, they offer the gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike. In every place they go, people become believers.

In the same way, we need to sow the gospel broadly. Because we don't know who will respond in faith, we need to communicate to everyone we can, and trust God to work in people's hearts. We need to go after every student in every dorm, and every student living off campus. We need to start ministries on campuses where there is no witness for Christ and go to countries where the gospel isn't heard. We need to reach out to students of every ethnicity, and reach into every subculture on campus.

Paul was captured by Jesus' heart for every person. This is why he said in Romans 15:19-20, "...So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known..."

A second thing to observe in this chapter is that the gospel spreads in ways greater than Paul and Barnabas could have personally accomplished by themselves.

In verse 16, Paul begins to speak in the Pisidian Antioch synagogue, arguing that Jesus is the Savior that God had promised to send. He is persuasive and clear and speaks in a way that his Jewish audience would understand and appreciate. He is invited back to speak again on the following Sabbath, only this time the entire city shows up to hear (verse 44)! Those that heard Paul's message the first week invited their friends and neighbors to hear him the second week.

What's the Big Idea?

In this passage, Paul and Barnabas begin their first missionary journey. Two strategies can be observed here: broad sowing – taking the gospel to every person they could; and spiritual multiplication – new believers becoming messengers of the gospel. Both of these strategies can be used on campus to help fulfill the Great Commission.

What's the Problem?

There are massive numbers of unreached people on our campuses and in the world. Since the gospel is only good news if it gets there in time, unwise and nonstrategic approaches leave millions at grave risk.





Certainly, some had believed the gospel the first week, while others were still questioning. But whatever their maturity or faith, the people who heard Paul's message were themselves becoming the messengers of the gospel.

Similarly, in verse 49, Luke writes that "The word of the Lord spread through the whole region." Surely, this doesn't mean that Paul and Barnabas themselves shared with everyone in the region. The Word spread! From former unbelievers, to soon-to-be new believers, the gospel was carried throughout the region. This "spiritual multiplication" is exactly what Paul directs in II Timothy 2:2. "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." That is how the gospel spreads. New Christians become messengers and carry the gospel to unbelievers, who come to faith and themselves become messengers to yet more unbelievers.

Our obligation is not only to share the gospel, but also to equip new Christians to share the gospel. Campus Crusade for Christ's mission statement is to "turn lost students into Christ-centered laborers." The essence of this mission statement is spiritual multiplication.

What's Our Response?

With your group, evaluate your current ministry. Are you sowing the gospel broadly, or only to a limited number of people? Choose a group of people who aren't being reached, and make a plan to share the gospel with them. Think through a strategy. For example, an ad in the campus paper would give everyone on campus the opportunity to hear, or read the gospel. Are you practicing spiritual multiplication? Seek out one reliable person to whom you can entrust the gospel. Teach them how to share their faith.

What Are the Questions?

Acts 13

LAUNCH

Think of your favorite product – it might be a movie, computer, brand of shoes, anything. How did you hear about it? From how many sources and how many times? Was it through professional ads or word of mouth? What implications can you draw about effectively communicating the gospel based on that company's ability to get news to you about their product?

EXPLORE

Read Acts 13.

Pay special attention to the settings in which Paul and Barnabas preach and the people with whom they share.

1. How would you have felt if you were with Paul and Barnabas, leaving the fellowship of Antioch, and going out to make Christ known? Scared? Energized? Disappointed?
2. How many places do they visit?
3. With what types of people do they share?
4. What seemed to be the type of person with whom they had shared?
5. What were some of the barriers they overcame to make the gospel known?
6. What areas of your campus would you say are virtually unreached with the gospel?

7. Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogues first. What was the strategy in doing this?

Reread verses 42-45.

8. Why did Paul and Barnabas get invited back to the synagogue?
9. Verse 43 says that many followed Paul and Barnabas. This doesn't mean that they believed, but that they literally walked after them. Why?
10. In verse 44, the whole city shows up. Why did they come? How did they know Paul and Barnabas would be speaking?
11. As the Jewish leaders stirred up trouble, Paul and Barnabas went to the Gentiles and many believed. Verse 49 says, "The word of the Lord spread through the whole region." How was this accomplished?

APPLY

12. Let's say God has set you apart like Paul and Barnabas to reach an area of your campus. Where would you start? What would you do? What would be your strategy?
13. Come to think of it maybe He has set you apart for that very purpose. What would keep you from doing this?
14. What practical strategy could you implement to expose your entire campus to the gospel?
15. Another strategy for exposing many to the gospel is found in 2Timothy 2:2. Read the passage and explain how this approach would help spread the gospel.
16. Try to avoid a Sunday school answer here, but for you, why is it even worth it? What is it about Jesus that motivates you to put in the effort to tell people about Him?

What Are the Answers?

1. Allow the group to discuss.
2. They visit: two cities in Cyprus, in addition to the whole island (verses 4-6); The synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (verse 14); a gathering of Gentiles in Pisidian Antioch; Iconium (verse 51) and other cities in chapter 14.
3. The people they visit include: Jews in the synagogues (verses 4, 16); a Roman proconsul (verse 7); Gentile converts to Judaism (verse 16); and Gentiles in Pisidian Antioch (verse 48).
4. They shared the gospel with anyone at all.
5. The barriers include: racial lines, geographic lines, opposition, and hatred.
6. Allow the group to discuss. Think in particular of ethnic students or affinity groups like greeks and athletes.
7. They felt the Jews would have the best chance to respond because of their familiarity with the Scriptures and anticipation of the Messiah. Also “god-fearing” Gentiles would attend the synagogue – another receptive audience.
8. Discuss the topic. Their message was attractive, and it was communicated in terms meaningful to their audience.
9. They were thirsty to hear more. Perhaps some of the people had questions.
10. Apparently, the people who were there the first week, spoke broadly about what they had heard.
11. The new believers must have shared the gospel with non-believers.
12. Allow the group to discuss and brainstorm the best approach.
13. Allow the group to discuss. Help them get to the heart level of what motivates their behavior.
14. A practical strategy might include a campus-wide ad in the paper or on Facebook. Maybe a student speaker or something weirder like an outreach built around beerisproof.org.
15. If you find (or produce) reliable people and motivate and equip them to share the gospel to others, and they do the same you can see exponential growth in the numbers of people experiencing and communicating the gospel.
16. This is the big heart question. Help your group wrestle with what they love about Jesus and how that should affect their everyday life.

Memorize

The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:2