

Paul and Barnabas
Message 4 in the series, "Faith under Fire"

"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, 'Appoint 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. 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." Acts 13:1-5 (NLT)

1. It's easier to hear God speak when you are speaking to him.

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."
Jeremiah 33:3 (NLT)

"I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: 'O Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill your covenant and keep your promises of unfailing love to those who love you and obey your commands.' While I was still praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice. He explained to me, 'Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and understanding. The moment you began praying, a command was given.'"
Daniel 9:4, 9:21-23 (NLT)

"And Samuel said, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" 1 Samuel 3:10 (NLT)

2. God is not committed to your comfort — He is committed to expanding His kingdom.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NLT)

"Then he said to the crowd, 'If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to save your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.'" Luke 9:23-24 (NLT)

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

"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. John Mark went with them as their assistant. 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)

3. Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey started on Barnabas' home island of Cyprus.

"... Barnabas (which means 'Son of Encouragement'), was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus." Acts 4:36 (NLT)

Note: Your first mission field is your home.

"And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (NLT)

"But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15 (NLT)

"Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just. Then the Lord will bring about for Abraham all he has promised." Genesis 18:18-19 (NLT)

4. When you begin living your life on mission, you can expect opposition from the enemy.

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are." 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NLT)

"And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it." Matthew 11:12 (NLT)

"Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it." Matthew 16:18 (NLT)

"Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil."
Ephesians 6:11 (NLT)

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