

SEPARATE UNTO ME!

Acts 13:1-12

INTRODUCTION: In the text for tonight we find some precious thoughts to guide us in what our God would have of us, what our God could do for us and in us. The great lesson here for us tonight is that the Holy Spirit is the director of the work of God which He would have done on this earth. We must give the Holy Spirit of God first place in our hearts.

I. THE LORD HAS HIS OWN PLANS FOR HIS KINGDOM!

God had started the church at Antioch and God had certain plans and intentions with regard to Asia and with regard to Europe. The Lord conceived these plans; they were His and He made them known to His servants. God in heaven has a will regarding His work on earth and as to how it should be done. We must as individuals and local churches seek to learn of God's plans and God's ways: Jeremiah 33:2-3. If we are faithful to what our God has revealed to us, He will reveal even more to us. John 5:21. Often we want to make our own plans and just ask God to bless them. We think we know what God wants and how He wants things done, but if we don't ask we will never know. Matthew 7:7-8.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WILLING AND ABLE TO REVEAL TO HIS SERVANTS WHAT HIS WILL IS!

Our Lord is still speaking to His Church through the Holy Spirit today just as He did with the early church in Paul's day: Acts 13:1-4. Part of our problems is that we ask God to bless our plans and we never ask God what His plans are for His church and our lives. We must learn that what God will; God will bless! Our God will only reveal His will to His servants whose hearts are humble and tender to His plans and empty of their own plans: Proverbs 8:34; Proverbs 29:21. Since it is the Lord's purpose that will prevail, wouldn't we be wise to start with that?

III. NOTICE THE DISPOSITION TO WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS GOD'S WILL!

Notice the disposition of the men here seeking God's will: Acts 13:1-4. These men were worshipping the Lord and fasting, and the Holy Spirit came and spoke to them. We need to get this vision of seeking God's will. These men were waiting, empty, ignorant, glad for the Lord's blessings; joyfully and humbly waiting on God for His next step. When our hearts are totally surrendered to the will of our God, and we are separating ourselves from the ways of this world, and praying for our God's direction—it is to such hearts that the heavenly will of God will be made known. Romans 12:1-2. Even after being given the directions of their God these men still fasted, prayed, and they sent them off: Acts 13:3-4. You might ask, "What does fasting have to do with praying and receiving answers to our prayers? Food is one of our last connections with this world. When we are so serious with God that we must have an answer from the Lord, at times we must also break away from this world and fast, even from our daily bread to get the answers we need.

IV. SEPARATED UNTO ME!

This is the keynote of the message from heaven: "Set apart for me!" If we will set ourselves apart for the work of God the Holy Spirit will direct and empower us for His glory and honor. Ephesians 2:8-10. So, what is needed that the power of God should rest upon us more mightily, that the blessing of God should be poured out more abundantly? We must be separated unto the Holy Ghost! John 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 2:12.

V. OUR SEPARATION UNTO GOD CALLS FOR MORE FASTING AND PRAYER!

Before these men were sent to the work God had called them notice what this church did: Acts 13:1-4. This lets us know that it is not just at the beginning of our separation onto God that we need to fast and pray but all the way to the end of our separation to God we need the power of fasting and prayer. If in all our work for our Lord there were more fasting and prayer there would be more blessing. Galatians 3:3; John 15:5. Sadly many start out humbly acknowledging they need God's direction but later think they can just run their own show and do the will of God.

Just before our Lord Jesus ascended up to heaven He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until what happened? Acts 1:4-14; 2 Timothy 1:7. Let me ask you: "Do you have God's power in your life? Do you have God's love in your heart? Do you have God's sound mind in your heart? Do you even want those things in your life? Is it possible that prayer and fasting might make those things possible?"