The Book of Acts Series

Lesson 26

Acts 13:1-12

“Selected for Service”

Introduction: Most male citizens in the United States are required to register with the Selective Service System when they turn 18. In 2010 there were approximately 15 million men registered in the U.S. This was instated by the Selective Service Act of 1917 and first put to action in 1940 for World War II. This is a method that the government has chosen to call upon the men of our country to fight for the cause of our nation. For some this has seemed to be a scary proposition, as many as 30,000 young men left the country to avoid the draft. Many more have received the call from their country with pride and gratitude. At the moment the U.S. military is made up of only volunteers, but God is interested in a few good men as we will see in our passage this morning.

1. God needs men to carry out His cause in the world.
   1. The church of Antioch was busy preaching the gospel and teaching the Word of God to new believers. God had sent and equipped men within that local church for the edifying of the body of Christ.
   2. God has brought men to Hillcrest Baptist Church to serve in the areas that need attention.
      1. The Lord brought JJ Lusk in 2011 to be a help to ministry here in El Paso.
      2. Bro. JJ was busy while he was here and did not expect to leave, at least for quite a long time.
   3. God has brought you here, and you have a purpose in this body.
      1. The Bible compares us to members of a body

1 Corinthians 12:11-12 *But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*

* + - 1. We are all different and have different functions
      2. We all play an important role in the ministry here
      3. We are all supposed to contribute to God’s purpose in this world
    1. As long as God has you here commit to the avenue that he has given you for serving Him. You don’t have to look very hard to find a way to help around here:
       1. Faithfully attending the services
       2. Hospitality volunteer
       3. Sunday School helper
       4. Parking lot attendant
       5. Nursery worker
       6. Youth helper, etc.

Transition: To some it may seem like just another thing to add to their busy lives, but when people embrace God’s will for their lives they will discover fulfillment and joy that is irreplaceable. Sometimes there is pain that is involved in the joy of serving God.

1. The Holy Spirit is the superintendent of God’s work in our lives and in the world.
   1. Paul and Barnabas did not ask to leave, and I feel safe in saying that the church in Antioch probably was very thankful to have them around.
      1. In verse 2 it is clear that they were busy serving the Lord while maintaining a sensitivity to His leading in their lives.
   2. The Lusk family and many others throughout the years have been a blessing to the members of Hillcrest but the Holy Spirit called them to other things.
      1. There have been times however when God moved and made it clear to His servants and to His church that He was calling them somewhere else.
         1. Ed Jr. & Nicole Taylor grew up in this church and are not missionaries in Germany.
         2. Martin Chilando came on staff and recently left to minister in Zambia
         3. Most recently the Lord called the Lusk family to plant a church in Rockville, Maryland. They are on deputation preparing for that work now.
         4. We can talk about many others, but it is clear that we are blessed at Hillcrest to send out God-called men and women for the cause of Christ.
      2. I don’t imagine God is done calling people, but that doesn’t mean that it will always be easy for us.
         1. Saying goodbye can be hard, especially when we know we will not see people we care about for a long time.
         2. If God called your son or daughter to the ministry how would you feel?
         3. What if God called you, would you be willing to go?
         4. Maybe God is not calling you into the ministry, but maybe there is something that God has been speaking to you about and you need to commit to it.
      3. The church at Antioch laid hands on them and sent them away.
         1. The laying on of hands is not a means for supernatural protection or enabling, but a show of approval and support of that individual.
         2. The word for “sent out” in verse 3 carries a sense of release. When God called them there was no arguing like Moses, no complaining like Elijah, no resistance like Jonah. When God spoke they obeyed.
         3. As we will see in the coming weeks this decision made by Paul and Barnabas as individuals as well as the church in Antioch as a whole had a profound impact on our world.

Transition: When we recognize that God is at work in this world it should excite us that He has called us to be a part of it. If you are desiring to be used of God you do not have to worry about his direction, He will give you guidance.

1. There are indicators that can help us discern the Spirit’s leading in our lives.
   1. Many times we worry that we will miss what God wants for us because His will can seem cloudy or uncertain.
      1. In times like these we must remember that God is not the author of confusion.
      2. God knows you and is able to work in your life so that you have no doubt about what He wants you to do.
      3. God does not delight in your uncertainty, but does things in His timing and not our own.
   2. If you are struggling with a major decision ask yourself if your desire comes from delighting in God.
      1. If you are not doing right spiritually you will not be able to discern spiritual things. God is not grievous when it comes to this, we just have to confess our sins to Him and surrender to Him.
      2. Many times we can start to believe that God is leading us when we are actually being motivated by what we are going to get out of it, or simply by things being more comfortable for us.
   3. God will lead you in decisions by the principles found in God’s Word. Psalm 119:105
      1. God will never lead you to do something that is contrary to His Word. If you see something in scripture that warns you then take that seriously.
      2. It is important that we keep verses in their context but God speaks through His Word sometimes in a way that seems like it was written just for you.
      3. Exposure to the Word of God will always help cleanse us and help us think right. Ephesians 5:26 *…that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*
   4. God will lead you through spiritual people in your life.
      1. God instituted the church to be a help to you in your faith. There are many blessings in Christian fellowship, one of them is learning from the experiences of others.

Proverbs 11:14 *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

* + - 1. God has worked in the lives of others before you and led them through situations similar to the one you may be going through.
      2. It is important that you not go to just anyone for advice, if you pray God will lead you to people who have sincere faith.

Conclusion: The truth is that we are all called to serve God in some capacity. We are all responsible for fulfilling the Great Commission. We all know we should be faithful to church, but there are times when God has specific plans for us. If God is calling you or directing you to do something special for Him remember that there is no greater purpose that you can serve. We hope that Hillcrest will be a place that you are able to see the amazing things that God can and wants to do through your life.