

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

PAUL – SESSION 2 (Called to Go)

Remember that you can join any group any time:

Mon @ 3 pm – Sandy Stein; Thurs @ noon – Jeff Vamos; Thurs @ 7:30 pm – Sandra Dennis

Last session summary: The first session video focused on Paul's life. It helped us to see that Paul's background as both a practicing Jew and a Roman citizen whose native language was Greek, positioned him perfectly to be a powerful presence in his world. Initially, Paul persecuted Christians because they posed a threat to his Jewish faith. To him, they were heretics preaching a false gospel. Then came Paul's own experience of the risen Christ, who in a life-changing vision, called him by name. Suddenly, Paul knew that the Crucified One was indeed alive. His life was forever changed. Others helped Paul to understand what it means to follow Christ. Two people who were mentioned were Ananias (who lay hands on Paul and introduced him as a brother in Christ to others), and Barnabas (who mentored Paul and ministered with him for a year in Antioch).

Intro

In today's video, Adam Hamilton will talk about Paul's missionary journeys. They are *missionary* journeys because Paul's only reason for traveling is to share the good news of the gospel with the people he encounters. He made these trips to various cities in the Gentile (non-Jewish) territories over a 15-20 year period. In this video, Hamilton notes that Paul and Barnabas go from Cyprus, to Perga (Turkey), then to Pisidian Antioch (different Antioch from Paul's birthplace), then on to Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. In each town, Paul preaches in the local synagogue with mixed results.

View video (10:29) – you may do this ahead of time

Questions for the group

1. The book of Acts, chapter 13, is the backdrop for this video. Here is the account of how Paul/Saul and Barnabas were chosen to go on this journey.

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler and Saul. ² 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." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

- What strikes you about how Paul/Saul and Barnabas were chosen?
- What role did prayer and fasting have, if any? Have you ever fasted for religious reasons? What happened as a result?
- Why do you think that the Holy Spirit and those gathered decided to send 2 people?

- How important to you are Christian friends/family/companions? What difference do they make for you?
2. The video shows the spectacular ruins of Perga and Pisidian Antioch. How did seeing those places help you to imagine the first-century world of Paul and Barnabas? In what ways did those places differ from images of Palestine and Galilee that we saw in the study on Moses?
 3. The world outside of Palestine meant that people were Greek-speaking. Paul and Barnabas spoke Greek as their native tongue. There were fewer Jews outside Palestine as well, so that the majority of people to whom Paul preached would not have knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures. How do you think this would make Paul's gospel message different from what was being preached back in Jerusalem?
 4. Adam Hamilton shows us the Temple to Caesar, at the center of the city of Pisidian Antioch. Caesar demanded to be called King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Paul's preaching was a direct challenge to this. Note the main points of his sermon (Acts 13:16-41) preached to the residents of Pisidian Antioch; it's his longest sermon and it was preached to a mixed crowd of both Jews and Greeks who are God-fearers (meaning that they are interested in learning more about the God of the Jews).
 - *The God of Israel chose the Jews, delivered them from Egyptian bondage, accompanied them during their wilderness journey, and gave them land as fulfillment of a divine promise.*
 - *They asked for a king. God gave them Saul, then David, who was a man after God's own heart. It is from David's line that God brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as promised.*
 - *The message of this salvation has been sent. He was rejected by the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders because they did not understand that the words of the prophets were fulfilled in Jesus. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they had him killed.*
 - *But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to many who are now his witnesses. We bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors has been fulfilled by raising Jesus.*
 - *Let it be known to you that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.*

Where do you see challenges to Caesar in these words? How might Jews have heard this message? How might Greeks have heard it? What do you make of the fact that as a result of this message, Paul and Barnabas were run out of the region?

Closing prayer: Holy God, you call each of us by name and ask us to follow you. Help us to see the ways that we can answer your call. Enable us to find ways to encourage each other as we seek to follow Christ. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.