

Modeling a Ministry of Multiplication
DA Horton ~ Momentum Conference 2014
Acts 15:36-16:5

Intro: If a famous evangelist won 10,000 people a year for 30 years 109 million would've made a 'profession'. If one person disciplined one person a year & their disciple disciplined one, so on – 30 years 1 Billion disciples.¹

Main Point: A ministry of multiplication includes a desire to **follow up and follow through** with those who we've won to Christ, a heart to live out the gospel by having **fellowship after the friction** we've had with other saints, and a **focus on building up the Faith of the Saints** in our local church.

I. **Follow up and Follow through - Acts 15:36**

A) *“And after some days Paul said to Barnabas”*

1. Paul and Barnabas are in Antioch. **Acts 15:30-35** informs us they were there building up the saints with the report and decree's given at the Church council in Jerusalem alongside the prophetic ministry of Judas and Silas who were also sent from Jerusalem to encourage the church in Antioch (**Acts 15:22-27**).
 2. **Challenge:** Because we live in a nation that is post-Christian and relativistic and because there are churches who reject the inerrancy of Scripture, and because people often try to fill the Bible with speculations when it doesn't make sense to them, I want work through a textual issue as an appetizer this morning
 - (a) **15:33** - *“and after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them”* (Judas and Silas were sent back to Jerusalem)
 - (b) **15:34** – This better manuscripts leave this verse out² (it is a scribal commentary) – it was added during the 16th and 17th centuries and appear in many English Bible margins
 - i. **Sadly**, It was added in order to give an explanation for Silas being around for Paul to chose in **Acts 15:40**.
 - ii. *“they were sent off”* - **indicative mood** (a real life event) **passive voice** (they received the commission of being relieved of their teaching duties) **its plural** (meaning more than one person)
 - iii. *“after some days”* - in the Greek that it is an indefinite period of time, safely estimated to be between a few weeks and a few months³. **SO there was plenty of time allotted in the original text to see Silas return from Jerusalem back to Antioch before Acts 15:40.**
 - (c) :35 - *“with many others”* - Paul and Barnabas were able to leave and go out knowing the church in Antioch would be left in good hands.
 3. **Application:** Two points of application from this “appetizer”
 - (a) **When it comes to transitions in life and ministry – do all you can to leave the people/project you're called away from in plenty of hands to prevent them from falling through the cracks!**
 - (b) **God's Word is inerrant (without any error) and sufficient. We do not need to attempt to upgrade it or add it. Observe it (dissect it), interpret it, and then apply it!**
- B) *“Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are”*
1. Paul's heart was not to expand and go a mile wide and an inch deep rather, it was his heart to go back and follow up and follow through with those whom he won to Christ and ministered to during his 1st Missionary Journey with Barnabas.
 2. **Question:** Where all did they go?
 3. **Answer:** Cyprus (13:4), Perga in Pamphylia (13:13), Antioch in Pisidia in Turkey (13:14), Iconium (13:51), Lystra and Derbe (14:6) = Southern Galatia (**this is important**)
 - (a) **Acts 14:21-24** – after their mission journey was over before they went back to Antioch

1 <http://answers.libertybaptistchurch.org.au/answers/57.pdf>

2 Gangel, Kenneth O. Vol. 5, *Acts*. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. 254

3 *Acts of the Apostles Vol. II*. Edited by H. D. M. Spence-Jones. The Pulpit Commentary. London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909. 5

(their head quarters) they went back through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia

- i. strengthened the souls of the disciples, encouraged them to continue in the faith, told them *“through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God”*
- ii. Then they appointed qualified elders (pastor/leaders) for every church they started
- iii. They then dedicated those whom they won to the faith to the LORD, not to themselves
 1. churches and movements in Christianity have come and gone because they were built on a foundation of *man, “easy believism” or both man and easy believism.*
 2. The model that Paul and Barnabas set is the only model that works! The proof is you and I today are here because of it! This is the model we are to follow.

(b) **Illustration:** Elicia, I and KBC - “empty nesters”

(c) **Application:** As we follow up and follow through we must hold onto people loosely. We must raise them up not to be **INDEPENDENT** (from the local church) nor **CO-DEPENDENT** (on the pastor or leaders) but **INTERDEPENDENT** with the saints in the local body. **We must follow up and follow through with those we've led to Christ!**

II. Fellowship after the Friction - Acts 15:37-41

A) *“Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them the one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work”*

1. What I love about God is that He used humans (who are not perfect) to carry out His plan on this side of eternity. This truth should bring comfort to all of us here today.
2. God saw it fit to allow the narrative of imperfect humans who have conflict be captured in His perfect Word.
 - (a) Barnabas wanted to take his little cuz (**Colossians 4:10**) John Mark with them.
 - (b) Paul wasn't feeling this idea because John Mark dipped on them in Pamphylia (1st journey)
 - i. **Acts 13:5** - John Mark was present with Paul and Barnabas on Cyprus in the city of Salamis (east coast)
 - ii. **Acts 13:13** – They sailed from Paphos (west coast) and came to Perga in Pamphylia it was here that John Mark dipped for reasons we don't know
3. John Mark's departure didn't leave the best impression on Paul as he says John Mark had *“withdrawn”* and didn't put in work
 - (a) *“withdrawn”* - is where we get the word apostasy from and it's written in such a way that it clues us into the fact that John Mark actively and purposefully went in the opposite direction of where the work God called them to do was. **John Mark didn't abandon the faith only the missions trip!**
 - (b) **Illustration:** My Cross-country story my Freshman year – Wrestling was my sport, I couldn't get hurt in football so Cross-Country was my option. I ran one lap and quit – **abandoned the course!**
 - (c) **Application:** The coach never took me serious about anything again for the rest of my high school career – he rightfully labeled me a quitter. **This was Paul's view of John Mark.**

B) *“And there arose a sharp disagreement so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commanded by the brothers to the grace of the Lord, and he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches”*

1. *“sharp disagreement”* - high level of irritation during an argument⁴ it was so sharp it caused Paul and Barnabas to split
 - (a) I think there's more to this than the dispute over John Mark – I think if we look at the relationship between Paul and Barnabas we can see a roller coaster
 - (b) **Acts 9:27** – Barnabas went to bat for Paul being a true believer before the Apostles
 - (c) **Acts 13:2-3** – Barnabas was clicked up with Paul by the Holy Spirit for Paul's 1st

4 Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. 780

Missionary journey

- (d) **Acts 14:26-28** – After their 1st Missionary journey Barnabas and Paul remained in Antioch for about a year⁵ during this time I believe Paul wrote the Epistle of Galatians (to strengthen all of the saints in the churches of Galatia they just planted)
 - (e) In **Galatians 2:11-13** – Paul confronts Peter to his face about his Anti-gospel hypocrisy (eating with Gentiles then played them shy when Judaizers came up from Jerusalem) and guess who followed Peter's example...Barnabas!
 - (f) **Acts 15:1-35** – The Jerusalem council, everyone got on one page theologically and practically. Paul was good with Barnabas again and they were about to head out for a 2nd Tour.
- 2. They split up after a heated fight. Paul takes Silas and heads north and God uses them!
 - 3. Barnabas takes his little cuz John Mark and they sailed to Cyprus
 - (a) **Reflection Question**: Where did John Mark first join Paul and Barnabas?
 - (b) **Answer**: Cyprus and he didn't do any ministry beyond there!
 - (c) **Follow up Question**: Why Cyprus?
 - (d) **Follow up Answer**: This was where Barnabas was from, and **Sometimes God has a way of taking us back to where we left things undone in order to tie up loose ends before He moves us forward!**
 - i. **Illustration**: My fractured relationships with TopSpin & Awe-StruKC (6 year beef settled August 2011), heart-wounds from 2010 with my fellow elders, settled in August 2012).
 - ii. **Application**: In my life, God took me back to a place where I had to face awkwardness, admit error so he could allow all of our heart wounds to heal properly before He moved us on to our next assignments
 - (e) Paul and **Barnabas** rebound & reconcile and are co-labored in Corinth (**1 Corinthians 9:6**)
- 4. For **John Mark** we don't hear about him again until:
 - (a) Over 10 years⁶ later **Colossians 4:10**, where Paul says he was with him in Rome!
 - (b) Around 6 years⁷ after that **2 Timothy 4:11** where Paul says, “**Get Mark, and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry**”
 - 5. **Application #1**: For us, reconciliation that produces fellowship after the friction begins at the Cross!
 - (a) **Friction** – our sin **Fellowship** – made possible because of the substitutionary death of Christ
 - (b) **Friction** – our relationships with saints are fractured, wounded hearts and hurt feelings
 - (c) **Fellowship** – At the Cross we find our needed healing
 - (d) **Application #2** – What the enemy intended for evil (splitting up of saints) God allowed to take place for good (the gospel covered more ground with two missionary teams)
 - i. The friction the enemy has caused has not escaped the eyes of our God who **loves** you
 - ii. **Romans 8:28** - “**And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose**”

III. **Focus on building up the Faith of the Saints - Acts 16:1-5**

- A) “**Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium**”
 - 1. Paul now goes into Derbe and Lystra.
 - (a) His first visit to Lystra – Paul healed a man and the people thought he and Barnabas were gods.
 - (b) Another group stoned Paul drug him outside the city (thought he was dead).
 - 2. Paul is back and he meets Timothy a dude who is mixed. ½ Jew and ½ Greek.
 - 3. **Question**: Why is Timothy's race important?

5 MacArthur Study Bible, 1660

6 Galatians was written in A.D. 49 and Colossians A.D. 60-62 a time span of 11-13 years

7 2 Timothy was written in A.D. 67

4. **Answer:** God provided Paul with a **POTENTIAL** cultural-hybrid! Because of Timothy's race and upbringing he **COULD** be a bridge between both the Jewish and Gentile worlds. The only problem was...the Jew's wouldn't embrace his words if he wasn't circumcised!
- B) ***“Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”***
1. The Bible identifies Timothy's Mother as Eunice and grand-mother as Lois. Both believers, who taught Timothy the Scripture at a young age (**2 Tim. 3:15**).
 - (a) **I don't want their sacrifice to go unnoticed!**
 - (b) Arguably they were there to see Paul's bloody body outside of the city of Lystra after he was stoned – they saw the face of persecution
 - (c) Now, Paul returns and say, “I want him to roll with me”
 - i. **Application:** sometimes the people we pour into (even our own children) we will have to hand over to the Lord for His will to be done – even if they are to face persecution/death
 - ii. **Application:** Our Father did send His Son to voluntarily sacrifice Himself on our behalf.
 2. **Question:** The decree from the Jerusalem council was that Gentiles didn't need to be circumcised to be saved, when did Paul have Timothy circumcised?
 3. **Answer:** The text identifies Timothy as believer (he's called a disciple), Paul decision for circumcision was not dealing with Timothy's salvation rather his ability to be used by God in seeing the gospel penetrate the lostness in the Jewish world.
 4. **Here we have two opposing worlds and cultures: Jewish and Greek (Gentile)**
 - (a) In the Jewish world the children were affiliated with the religion of their mother
 - (b) In the Greek or Gentile world, the children were affiliated with the religion of their father⁸
 - i. Timothy was not circumcised, so the Jewish world rejected him
 - ii. The Jerusalem decree stated Jewish Law was not to be put upon Gentile converts
 1. **Example:** Titus – a gentile was not given the same requirement because he was non-Jewish (Gal. 2:3).
 2. **Point:** John MacArthur rightfully said, *“Paul would be wrong if he mandated Titus be circumcised because he was gentile and Paul would be wrong if he didn't mandate Timothy be circumcised because he was Jewish”*
 - iii. Paul's practice was to go into a new city, hit up the Jews then the Gentiles (cf. Romans 1:16 ***“for the Jew first...”***)
 - (c) If the Jews knew Timothy wasn't circumcised it would hinder the gospel ministry to the Jews
 5. **Question:** What was the result of Paul and Timothy's obedience?
- C) ***“As they went on their ways through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily”***
1. Here we have a team of men who are living in obedience to God. They are living on mission and their focus is: strengthening the faith of the saints.
 2. God then brings the increase!

Conclusion: Here we have a model of what multiplication looks like. The same Holy Spirit who indwelt Paul, Barnabas, John Mark, Silas and Timothy lives in every believer present.

A ministry of multiplication includes a desire to **follow up and follow through** with those who we've won to Christ, a heart to live out the gospel by having **fellowship after the friction** we've had with other saints, and a **focus on building up the Faith of the Saints** in our local church.

⁸ Gangel, Kenneth O. Vol. 5, *Acts*. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. 266