**Responding to the Spirit Who Speaks and Sends**

**The Word**

Read together Acts 13:1-4

**Questions for Discussion**

1. It was said in the sermon that it’s a mistake to assume that the people in Acts are special cases and unlike us. Why would that be a problem?

2. Do you remember a time when someone said something to you at just the right time and you knew it was from the Lord? Describe what happened.

3. The message talked about the sent life as one of adventure. Does that idea resonate with you? Why or why not?

4. Are you inclined to think of the Holy Spirit as a person? Or as an impersonal force? How has that affected how you relate to him?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Context: Antioch is a growing, generous church with gifted people (v. 1)

A. One could say they had an “embarrassment of riches.”

B. At some point, a question began to arise: “Might it be time to send Barnabas and Saul to the Gentiles?”

II. Antioch’s leaders set their gaze on the Lord (v. 2)

A. Through worship - a priestly duty; ministering to the Lord (cf. Hebrews XX)

B. Through fasting - Which is a way of seeking Christ, the bridegroom:  
“Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.” (Lk 5:34-35)

C. Implications

* 1. Devotion to Jesus is a prerequisite for Christian and church leadership.
  2. If we want to hear from the Lord, we start by setting our gaze on him.

III. The Holy Spirit speaks (v. 2):

A. This picks up on one of the fundamental themes of Acts. Remember what Peter said at Pentecost, quoting from the Prophet Joel in Acts 2:17-21.

1. In the OT, the Spirit rested on individuals such as Moses, Deborah, Samuel, David, Isaiah, and Jonah. Peter’s sermon tells us that with the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the last days have begun and God’s Holy Spirit has been poured out on all people.

2. “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (v. 21). This is the heartbeat of the Holy Spirit, who wants all humans to come to the knowledge of the truth and who invites us into a life of kingdom adventure.

3. This is demonstrated in Acts 5 (Ananias and Sapphira), 8 (Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch), 9 (Ananias and Saul’s call/conversion), 10 (Peter’s vision), and 11 (Agubus predicted a famine).

4. This is our inheritance as daughters and sons. We’re invited to believe that the same Spirit who spoke to them speaks to us.

B. Question: How have you had the Holy Spirit speak to you? How is he speaking to you?

1. The thing we know we should do, but fear or comfort prevents us.

2. The loving thing we could do.

3. ENCOURAGEMENT: Friends, I’ve seen and heard it here. The Lord is speaking to you. Make room in your life to respond.

IV. What the Spirit said: “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (v. 3).

A. “YES” (Greek particle) - He is a person with whom we can engage in a relationship.

B. HE SENDS THEM. As we’ve noted earlier, this is the heartbeat of the Holy Spirit: compassion for a lost world and an invitation for saints to join him in the adventure of the kingdom.

V. The Church, Barnabas, and Saul respond in obedience

A. Antioch’s YES: “So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off” (v. 3). The Antioch leaders/community responded with their yes to what the Holy Spirit said, setting apart Barnabas and Saul, identifying with them, and sending them.

1. They had a practice of listening together and for each other, calling out the gifts they saw in each other. Beautiful expression of God’s heart and the work of the Spirit.

2. But it didn’t stop there: the laying on of hands meant identification and mission.

B. “The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus” (v. 4). Barnabas and Saul responded with their yes to what the Holy Spirit said

1. Barnabas’ yes leads him into the adventure of the kingdom

This isn’t the first time we’ve heard about Barnabas (“son of encouragement”). Barnabas had a history of yeses to God. It started with a gift of land for the needs of the poor in Acts 4.

2. Saul’s yes leads him to fulfill his call and gives him a new name

While they’re in Cyprus, under the influence of the Spirit, Paul calls out a magician, proclaiming blindness over the man (v. 9).