

Bible Story 11: PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

SCRIPTURE: Acts 13:1-52; 14:1-28
MEMORY VERSE(S): Matthew 28:18-20

BIBLE STORY:

The Holy Spirit of God said to the church leaders in Antioch of Syria, "Choose **Saul (Paul)** and Barnabas for a special ministry." They prayed and appointed **Saul (Paul)** and Barnabas to be missionaries, going to other places to share the Good News about Jesus. **John Mark** went with them as their helper.

Saul (Paul), Barnabas and **John Mark** sailed southwest to Salamis, a large city on the east coast on the island of Cyprus. They preached the Good News about Jesus in the Jewish synagogues.

Then they continued traveling onto Paphos, a city on the southwestern coast on the island of Cyprus. The governor of the island was Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. He wanted to hear the word of God. However, Elymas, a sorcerer, tried to prevent the governor from accepting the Christian faith. **Paul** said, "Elymas, you are deceitful in trying to turn people from the Lord. Therefore, God will blind you for awhile." At that same moment, Elymas became blind. When the governor saw what happened, he believed in the teachings of Jesus.

Continuing their missionary trip, Paul, Barnabas and **John Mark** sailed northwest to Perga. (For the first time they were entering Asia Minor on their missionary journey.) Here **John Mark** left them and returned to Jerusalem.

Paul and Barnabas went north to Antioch of Pisidia. On the Sabbath, they went to the synagogue. Paul said, "Although Jesus was innocent, He was condemned. Jesus died on the cross and placed in a tomb. God raised Jesus from the dead. Through Jesus you can have forgiveness of your sins if you believe in Him." Many believed. Jewish leaders stirred up the people against Paul. They began to persecute them, driving them away from the region. So Paul said, "We will go preach to the non-Jews (Gentiles)."

When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Iconium, they spoke boldly about the Lord. Hearing there was a plot to stone them, Paul and Barnabas fled, continuing to preach about Jesus.

In Lystra, Paul healed a man lame since birth. The people thought they were gods. Paul said, "We are only human, like you. We bring you Good News. Turn to the living God who made the sky, the earth and the sea. Also, God made everything in them." Jews from Antioch and Iconium stirred up the crowd and stoned Paul. When they thought Paul was dead, they dragged his body outside the city. The disciples gathered around Paul and he got up, returning to the city. The next day, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Derbe where many accepted the teachings of Jesus.

Paul and Barnabas began returning to their home base, where they began their missionary journey. Along the way, they stopped and revisited places where they had shared the Good News about Jesus. They appointed elders (leaders) for these new churches. They encouraged the new believers to remain true to the faith.

Finally they arrived back to their home base, the church in Antioch of Syria. Paul and Barnabas reported all that God had done through them on their first missionary journey.

Saul - Paul:

When Saul became a believer, he was using his Jewish (Hebrew) name "Saul."

On his first missionary journey, he began to use his Roman name "Paul," because he was reaching out to the non-Jews (Gentiles).

John Mark

was Barnabas' cousin (Col 4:10). It is believed that he later wrote the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: *(Ask questions appropriate for your group of listeners.)*

PERSONAL QUESTIONS:

1. What did you learn from this story?
2. How can you apply this story to your life?

GENERIC QUESTIONS:

1. What do you like about the story?
2. Who are the main people in the story?
3. What problems did the people face? What happened?
4. Have you had any similar problems you would like to share? What happened?
5. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1. Through God's guidance, what did the church leaders appoint Paul and Barnabas to do?
 - What did Paul and Barnabas do on their first missionary journey?
 - Does God call believers to be missionaries today? How?
 - What are some things that missionaries do today?
 - What are some mission activities that people can do where they live? Another location?
2. John Mark helped Paul and Barnabas at the beginning of their first missionary journey. How can you help missionaries who are serving the Lord?
3. When the governor of Cyprus wanted to hear God's Word, what did deceitful Elymas do?
 - As a result, what happened to Elymas?
 - What are some things people do to prevent people from hearing God's Word today?
 - What happened when the governor heard about the teachings of Jesus?
 - Why is it important to share Jesus with others?
4. Why was Paul stoned? What happened afterwards?
 - What should you do when people are unkind to you or persecute you for sharing Jesus?
 - How does Jesus help you when you face difficult situations for sharing Jesus?
5. Paul and Barnabas revisited and encouraged the new believers and the new churches that had begun. How can you help new believers? A new church that is beginning?

LIFE LESSONS: (Choose Life Lessons appropriate for your group of listeners.)

1. God calls specific people for special ministries.

Paul and Barnabas were chosen to be missionaries. They were to go out and share Jesus with other people groups. God continues to call people to share Jesus to people from all over the world. Obey God's calling.

2. God punishes people who prevent others from hearing about the Lord Jesus.

Elymas tried to prevent the governor of the island of Cyprus from hearing about Jesus. So God punished Elymas and he became blind for awhile. Avoid God's punishment by not hindering someone from hearing about the Word of God and His Son, Jesus.

3. Christians should encourage new believers and help new churches that have begun.

Paul and Barnabas revisited and encouraged the new believers. They appointed elders (leaders) to help in the work of the new churches. Seek to encourage and help new believers and churches.

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES: (Choose an activity or activities appropriate for your group of listeners.)

TV / RADIO INTERVIEW:

Do an impromptu TV/Radio interview.

- The leader takes the part of a TV/Radio commentator who interviews people who are in the story. This can be the leader or someone else in the group.
- Ask volunteers to act the part of a person in the story, responding in their own words to the questions asked.

Examples of persons in the story being interviewed:	Examples of questions the commentator may ask:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One of the church leaders appointing Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Why did you choose Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries? ■ What happened after you appointed Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ John Mark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What did you do on the first missionary trip? ■ Did you stay with them the entire missionary journey? ■ Where did you go?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sergius Paulus (governor of Cyprus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are you the governor of the island of Cyprus? ■ What did you want to hear from Paul? ■ What happened? ■ As a result, did you believe in the teachings of Jesus? Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Elymas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tell us what happened when you tried to prevent the governor from hearing about the teachings of Jesus.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Paul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Why did you decide to go preach to the non-Jews, the Gentiles? ■ Tell us what happened when you were stoned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Barnabas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tell us what you and Paul did on your first missionary journey.

MISSION ACTIVITY:

- Plan and be involved in a Mission Project. Examples: Welcome and extend friendship to newcomers in your neighborhood, such as giving them a plant, cookies, etc. and inviting them to your church or group meeting. Help exchange students learn about your culture, such as inviting them to visit your church or group meeting, and/or eat a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner with you. Extend friendship and invite into your home children of missionaries who are living stateside and the parents are overseas. Send care package(s) to a missionary family or a missionary's outreach for the Lord. Help financially in supporting missionaries. Pray for the missionaries.