**Unstoppable - wk 20 – Batter up!**

**Bat - Today a person past his prime - serving on the side for over a decade as back up and bench warmer - now called up to bat.**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel. Luke Vol 2 – The “what now?”**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” \* Supernatural growth / intense persecution, yet unstoppable.**

**It’s about 20 yrs since that moment, the church is growing, but millions have yet to hear the good news of Jesus**

**Saul, a former terrorist turned church intern, been a Christian 13 yrs - Barnabas calls him out of the minors (after 9yrs at home) to help him lead a new church in Antioch. They're now currently serving there.**

**Acts 13:1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets (edify, exhort thru the Word of God) and teachers: (of the Word of God – the church leaders) Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. (Saul is last on the list)**

**Lots of names - Acts is the most authenticated book of the NT. Contains more people, places, official’s names, and historical events than any 1st century book - we get a sense of it here - The who – the where – the how - Acts is a true story**

**What a unique group of men – teachers of the Gospel.**

* **Barnabas (Cyprus - Mediterranean Island)**
* **Simeon (African - writers say man who carried Jesus’ cross)**
* **Lucious (Cyrene – N. Africa / Mod Libya – an original founder)**
* **Manaen (Galilee - household Herod the tetrarch. Step bro of Herod Antipas who beheaded John and condemned Jesus. Same household – diff directions – anyone know about that?**
* **Saul – (Asia Minor Pharisees who became a fierce persecutor of Christians – now making disciples of Christ.**

**We are united in Christ**

**From all over, all types, ethnicities, backgrounds, families – working together. Saved & redeemed from their past life.**

**That’s what the Lord does. Saves, redeems, unites. Turns enemies into comrades and friends. Beautiful diversity.**

**Acts 13:2 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.”**

**\*\* Notice they were mean of teaching, worship, prayer and fasting.**

**This is the primary role of the shepherds.**

**(Acts 6) Equip, Delegate, Pray and Preach – and release.**

**What was the work they were called to?**

**To take the gospel to the unreached Greek and Roman world.**

**BTW – notices the HS is referred to as God and voice of God.**

**THE SENDING**

**Worship precedes witness**

**2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,**

**We are expanding the kingdom and worship of God – that is the goal – that people would exalt the LORD!**

**“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.” - John Piper, Let The Nations Be Glad.**

**To say yes to God means you might have to say no to other things**

**V2 - the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me”**

**To follow Jesus will separate you from other things.**

**Holy = separate – set apart. We are to be different and have different pursuits than the world.**

**Don't count out the strike out kings or bench warmers**

**V2 “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work”**

**Barnabas was an apostle back up and Saul a bench warmer.**

**God doesn't always pick who you think.**

**Maybe you think to old - to young - not talented enough - that someone else is more qualified - God might say - your in...**

**Keep in mind Saul was saved 13 yrs ago – just now being sent out.**

**He spent yrs preaching the gospel to family and friends, serving in the background – before he was sent to the world or became an apostle.**

**Saul was last on the list – last pick – but a first draft by Jesus.**

**God knows what he's doing - don't rush - be faithful - serve, even if you’re on the bench for a while.**

**3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Eventually they will return to give a full report and accountability)**

**The time frame is not overnight – but there was no delay. Days of fasting and praying. To confirm what was said by the HS. They began to prepare and plan. Set a date and left. Clothed in prayer – laying on of hands - sent and supported by Antioch**

**Laying on of hands – appointment and dedication to service. Like we did today with Van and Lennette.**

**God often confirms through others what He is telling you**

**3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Lit – the word is - set them free – released)**

**If someone says to you - God told me you need to do this or that and you do not already have on your mind, it’s probably not God. It should be a confirmation and not invention.**

**If you’re a Christian, you have the HS. NT prophets and leaders confirm what God is often working in you. Our role is to encourage and release you to do what God has put in you.**

**2 Important Principles Here:**

* + 1. **All healthy ministry begins w/ the local church – Lone rangers ministries, w/out covering of a local church, are destined for trouble. (Church - only organization Jesus commissioned)**
    2. **Your gift will make room for itself - if you are called, others will see it - if you are good at something - others will see it -**

**Jam 4:10 - Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.**

**Acts 13:4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit,**

**“Sent” – diff word than in v3 = lit to send out / led by God**

**Unless the Lord build the house, we labor in vain**

**This was the Lord’s doing - not an idea of people, a team, or council. Crucial, if it’s not the HS we won’t be effective in a ministry or in life.**

**Psalm 127:1 Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, (Your family) the watchman (Husband / parents) stays awake in vain. 2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; (Because of stress and can’t sleep) for he gives to his beloved sleep. (Because we know God is leading and in control)**

**Striving for a perfect family and home – Unless the Lord builds the house – Unless the lead by the Holy Spirit – it won’t work.**

**So, Barny and Saul leave and go… to Cyprus (Barnabas home Island)**

**Acts 13:4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia (15 mile walk south from Antioch) and sailed from there to Cyprus. 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John (John Mark) was with them as their helper. (John was an eyewitness to many of the events of Jesus)**

**They hit the ground running – preaching the Word of God.**

**This was their practice moving forward – cast the net to Jewish people (Synagogues) and then to gentiles.**

**Cyprus was known for its cult of goddess Aphrodite (Venus in Rome) goddess of sexual lust and fertility and her son Eros. Great immortality and darkness, including required sacred prostitution. Temples all over.**

**6 They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos.**

**Several weeks to walk, talk, sleep, eat, and preach.**

**Paphos is the capital of Cyprus - had large temple to Aphrodite**

**There they met a Jewish sorcerer (magon = astrologer - magician) and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, (lit. son of Jesus) 7 who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. (wealthy governor of the Island) The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul (Notice Barnabas name is first) because he wanted to hear the word of God. (Bar-Jesus told Sergius about them. “Bring them to me.” They came to him and told him of Jesus.) 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) (Bar-Jesus) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul (Sergius) from the faith. (They call themselves a son of Jesus but are actually false prophets!)**

**There are enemies of the Gospel**

**Elymas attempted to distract and persuade Sergius not to believe it. Intentionally trying to keep him from faith in Jesus.**

**People still do that today - activity try to keep people from Jesus. Enemies of God that set out to ridicule and turn people away from God. Politicians, board members, advisors, musicians, writers, preachers and religious leaders. The infamous, famous, and next-door neighbor.**

**Expect opposition. We should not be surprised by opposition to the gospel. If there are no adversaries, you might not be preaching the Word of God.**

**9 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, (first mention of his name as Paul – his “other” Roman name all along) filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, (did not back down or call him Bar-Jesus) 10 “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? 11 Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.” (Just long enough to get him out of the way) Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. (Miracle blindness)**

**Paul steps in righteous boldness. Rebukes / pronounces a heavy judgement - just as you are spiritually blind you will be blind.**

**Why was he so harsh? When the destiny of a person’s soul is at stake, God does not mess around. You want to ruin your life, run from God, serve yourself – that’s your business (you will answer to God) But it is a whole other thing to try to persuade another or distract one from Christ.**

**(Ma 9:42, Lu 17:2) Matthew 18:6 “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.**

**Again, and again the most server words in the NT are for those who try to draw others away from Jesus. (Matt 23, Mar 12, Lu 11, 20)**

**(Elymas / Bar-Jesus is never heard of again) Acts 13:12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, (the gospel) for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.**

**The Gospel will always trump a miracle**

**As stunning as the miracle was, “the teaching of the LORD” amazed him and transformed his life – a greater miracle.**

**Miracles don’t save, they make you wonder. They might get attention – but only the Word of the LORD can change a person.**

**Churches and people that chase miracles and worship experiences find only emotions – and little lasting fruit.**

**They can draw numbers – but sometimes lack in disciples.**

**The Gospel is for everyone who believes**

**V7 Sergius was an intelligent man / politician, and rich.**

**Just a thought - Jesus did not just come for the poor and downtrodden – but also for the wealthy, the politicians and the well-educated.**

**You don’t have to give everything away or check your brain at the door to know Jesus.**

**When one hears the Gospel – That God came to you – JESUS – walked this earth – though innocent, died like a criminal in our place for our sins, was buried and rose again – so you could know the Father.**

**When the HS intervenes in the heart of any man or woman – they believe and are forgiven of sins and made right with God almighty!**

**What happened in your spirit when you just heard that?**

**Do you believe this? Are you ready to follow Jesus?**

**Question to the Christian, what is keeps you from sharing the Gospel?**

**Location / resistance from others / personal resistance and prejudice / assumed their heart is hard?**

**Charles Spurgeon - If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.”**

**Acts 13:13 From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, (Modern Turkey) where John left them to return to Jerusalem. (That is a loaded verse – but I want to point out something)**

**Turning point, Paul becomes the primary leader. Barny passes baton. Saul goes by Paul from here on out and his name is 1st from here on out. Now referred to as Paul and Barnabas. From here, the rest Acts is the journey of Paul.**

**Paul takes over – Barnabas not the lead anymore - John Mark (cousin of Barnabas) leaves. This will come up later as a divisive point between Barnabas and Paul.**

**Maybe you feel like strike out king – think you're too far gone - to much of a past - everything you touched has turned to garbage - and you are convinced that God is done with you – Is Jesus calling your name.**

**Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."**

**Jesus came for the strike outs - mess ups - the losers - the sinners like you and me.**