



## Sermon Series Notes

### "The God of a Second Chance" (Acts 12:25-13:51)

Danny Hodges - NT3636

12:25 Their mission? See 11:25-26; Evidently Barnabas and Saul go from Antioch back to Jerusalem, probably gave a report on the work in Antioch, then went back to Antioch, and from there God calls them to their next mission.

13:1-3 We are not given details as to exactly how the Holy Spirit spoke here, but it was more than likely through a prophetic word. We are also not given details on where they are being sent on this second missionary journey.

13:4-12 Inscriptions bearing Sergius Paulus' name have been found on Cyprus confirming that he was a Christian and that his entire family became Christians. It was 90 miles across Cyprus, & no other notable fruit from their ministry is recorded, even in Salamis, the largest city of the island. I do not want to downplay this conversion in Paphos, but after 90 miles, only one recorded conversion could be discouraging for some people, especially when you consider the tremendously fruitful ministry they had seen in Antioch.

13:13a From this point on in the book of Acts, with the exception of Acts 14:14, Paul's name is listed first. Acts 14:12 tells us that Paul was the chief speaker. Was he initially? This is interesting, because it was Barnabas who convinced the Jerusalem church that Saul was really a disciple (Acts 9:26-28). It was Barnabas who searched and found Saul in Tarsus and brought invited him to co-labor with him in Antioch. It is Barnabas' name that comes first as the obvious leader of this ministry team in Acts 11:25, 30; 12:25; 13:7. But here there is a change, and it is clear that Paul now becomes the leader.

13:13b We know John left without good reason because in Acts 15 Paul & Barnabas have a very sharp dispute over whether or not to allow him to come along on their next missionary journey. John has seemingly repented of his failure during that first missionary endeavor, and he desires to go on the next. Barnabas more than likely encouraged him to do so. Barnabas was not only an encourager, but he was John Mark's cousin. But Paul says that John had "deserted them in Pamphylia and not continued with them in the work." The debate gets so heated that Paul & Barnabas split up. Barnabas takes Mark and sails for Cyprus. Paul takes Silas and goes through Syria and Cilicia. At this point there is no further record of Barnabas & Mark's ministry. So what happened to them? Barnabas we don't really know, and John Mark, well, we'll come back to that question a little later. But for now, back to the first missionary journey, without Mark as part of the team.

13:14-51 Despite the opposition, Paul & Barnabas finally see an abundant harvest. It was a harvest that John Mark could have & should have enjoyed with them. But he didn't, and why? He quit.

Quit: Give up; abandon; cease; stop.

Have you ever quit something and later regretted doing so? (Let some people in audience answer).

I quit little league after my first year, only to stand on the streets of Hartsville, S.C. the following year, watching the annual Christmas parade, and as one float came by, I fought back tears. It was my old team, who had gone from worst to first in one year (without me, ?), and had won the city little league championship.

I quit football in 10<sup>th</sup> grade (show pic?), only to watch the team go out onto the field that first game, and I held back tears because I was not with them.

I came very close to quitting Christian college my very first semester when I found out I had to take speech class.

I have wanted to quit as pastor of this church (many times!), but as I stand here today I am so thankful that I didn't. It does not necessarily mean that this ministry would not exist. It only means that I would not have had the privilege of being a part of the great harvest that God has brought about, and I would have no reward connected to my part in what God has done.

God has prepared something for each of us to accomplish for His kingdom.

Eph.2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us do.

Eph.4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Read Eph.4:11-12

What work has God called you to do?

The least a member of the body of Christ can do is give \$; Parable of the talents.

The most a member of the body of Christ can do is get involved serving, remaining faithful in the small things, and allowing God in time to confirm giftings and callings related to fulfilling His ultimate will for their lives. For example, Phillip began waiting on tables in the church at Jerusalem. He ultimately ended up as an evangelist. My ministry began as a sanitation engineer.

John Mark's work on this fist missionary journey was as a **helper** to Paul & Barnabas.

\* 5257. huperetes, hoop-ay-ret'-ace; from G5259 and a der. of erness (to row); an under-oarsman, i.e. (gen.) subordinate (assistant, sexton, constable):--minister, officer, servant.

For a ministry "ship" to keep moving, there must be those willing to be "under-oarsmen." Their work is usually more physical, & is pretty much out of the spotlight. Their names are usually not known, etc. Thanks to all the under-oarsmen here at CCSP!

Some in the church remain under-oarsmen all their lives, for that is what God has called them to. And they will have the same reward as the captain of the ship, because they were faithful to their calling. Some will begin as under-oarsmen, but will later launch out to fulfill God's ultimate calling in their lives.

Perhaps you have been a faithful under-oarsmen, but now you feel called to venture out by faith. May the Lord lead you every step of the way.

But for some of us, the message from this passage is more of a rebuke than an encouragement to venture out by faith. Some of us, like John Mark, have for whatever reason, quit. You are no longer serving the Lord the way you once did. You are out of the will of God. If that's you, why have you quit?

What caused Mark to quit?

- Offended at "Barnabas and Saul" now becoming "Paul and Barnabas?"
  - It's interesting to me that the record of his departure comes right after Paul's name begins to be mentioned first (13:13a).
- He was partnered with the apostle Paul
  - (See II Cor.11:23b-29; Acts 20:22-24).
- Fear
- Fatigue
  - There is evidence that John Mark grew up in a well to do family. For example, the house where the church met to pray for Peter while he was in prison was where John Mark lived. It must have been a large house. And when Peter showed up at the door, the servant girl opened the door. With such an unbringing, this missionary journey, especially with someone like Paul, would more than likely have been very hard for John Mark.
- Unrealistic expectations
  - John was young, and probably had a spirit of adventure. But his adventurous expectations were not met.
- Not satisfied as an under-oarsman
- Sickness
  - There is some evidence that Paul became sick in Perga (in Pamphylia), and its possible John Mark feared the same for himself. The city of Perga was subject to malarial infections, and scholars conjecture that Paul contracted malaria in Pamphylia (which was noted for the ailment) and as a result moved to the safer climate of Galatia. (Gal.4: 13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you.) Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe all were cities in Galatia.
  - Anybody ever been sick on a missions trip? I have many times. One time was in Nairobi, & I thought I was going to die. Every time I've been to India I got sick.
- Homesick

- He smelled mama's cookin in his mind every morning, missed mama, the dog, having a servant in the house. Now he was the servant!
- A girlfriend
  - I have seen many romantic relationships lead people away from the will of God.
- Rebuke by Paul?
- Love for the world
  - II Timothy 4:10...Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...

What ever happened to John Mark?

He missed future opportunities as a result of his initial failure (Acts 15:39-40). Timothy would fill a tremendous void in Paul's team as a result of the loss of John Mark & Barnabas (Acts 16). On this next missionary journey that John Mark should have been old if not for his failure, the church of Philippi is miraculously birthed. Then churches were birthed in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth. Tremendously fruitful ministry is seen in Ephesus. A young man named Eutychus is raised from the dead. John Mark missed out on all this, and he will never have the same heavenly reward he could have had. Because Mark quit, he lost some things that could never be regained. But Mark did not remain a quitter, and Paul did not continue to exclude him from his ministry team. Acts 13 & 15 is not the end of his story.

Years later when Paul writes the letter to the church at Colossae, check out what he says:

Colossians 4:10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)

And when the time for Paul's departure from this world was at hand, look at what he writes in II Timothy 4. Read II Timothy 4:6-11.

Paul had a change of heart. He obviously allowed adequate time to confirm John Mark's genuine repentance, and once he did the two were reunited as brothers in the Lord, and as fellow workers for the kingdom of God.

But his being reunited with Paul is not the end of Mark's story.

John was not only reunited with Paul and his ministry, but He would later in life have the awesome privilege of penning one of the four gospel accounts - the gospel according to Mark!

## CONCLUSION

Gal.6: 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest ***if we do not give up.***

Heb.10:36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

He had less than three years of formal education, failed in business in '31, was defeated for State Legislature in '32, failed again in business in '34, finally succeeded to State Legislature in '35, ran for Speaker & lost by a landslide, was defeated for Elector in '40, for Congress in '43, but finally elected in '46 but lasted only a two year term, defeated in re-election attempt in '48, failed in business once again, ran for Senate and defeated in '55, for President in '56 and was crushed, defeated for Senate again in '58. Then in 1860, Abraham Lincoln won the Presidency and went on to become one of the greatest political leaders in American history.

"I have failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." (Michael Jordan)

There's someone listening to this message, and you are contemplating quitting. Don't do it! You're going to miss out on blessings God has reserved just for you, both here in this life and in heaven.

For those who have quit, whether it's ministry in serving, devotional life, righteous living, this is your invitation from the Lord to "get back in the game."

My 8<sup>th</sup> grade geography teacher would write on the chalkboard every day of class "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." None of us can go back and change the past, but we can make decisions that will allow God to change our future. He is the God of a second chance today. Take advantage of it today!