

THE PLAN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Thomas Lindberg

Text: Acts 13:1–5

INTRODUCTION

As a blueprint guides the construction of a building, so the Holy Spirit guides the missions involvement of the church. Not only did the Holy Spirit call the first missionaries (Acts 13:2), but the Spirit also presents us with three amazing facts:

MESSAGE

1. WE HAVE AN UNFINISHED TASK

“The work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2). Observe the Holy Spirit expressly says there is work yet to be done.

- a. Task to tell every person.

Jesus stated that He came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). We are to be like Christ.

Illustration: Show how Jesus worked with individuals and crowds. Cite how frequently He led people to decide for God.

- b. Task to love every person.

Love is the badge of the believer (John 13:35). Love in God’s people will draw men and women to Jesus.

Illustration: A missionary told how Africans would walk past government clinics and travel extra miles to receive medical treatment at the mission compound.

“They have the same medicine we have. Why walk farther?” asked the missionary.

“Yes, the medicine may be the same, but the hands are different,” the patient replied.

2. WE HAVE AN UNCHANGING MESSAGE

“They preached the word of God” (Acts 13:5). Believers do not invent the message; they spread a changeless message (Jude 3).

- a. It is an eternal message.

We live in an ever-changing world. Often what was “in” 2 years ago is “out” today. However, God’s Word is eternal (Matthew 24:35).

- b. It is an effective message.

Peter believed the message of Jesus, and it changed him. The gospel also transformed Paul, Lydia, a Philippian jailer, and many other people. Be proud of the gospel; it’s life-changing (Romans 1:16).

Illustration: Dirty, scarred logs enter a paper mill. Clean, white paper emerges at the other end after men have completed their work. When Jesus completes His work in a life, that person is changed.



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3. **WE HAVE AN UNFAILING PROMISE**

“Sent forth by the Holy Ghost” (Acts 13:4). Not only are God’s people sent by the Spirit, but we are also accompanied by the Spirit. Jesus’ unfailing promise is, “Lo, I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20).

a. Responsibility of the messenger.

Being the messengers, we have a responsibility to pray and yield ourselves to Jesus. Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness.

Illustration: A box containing a child’s toy often has “Some Assembly Required” printed on the label. The manufacturer is saying, “For this toy to work properly, you have a part to play.” For God’s plan of missions to work properly, we have a part to play. Are we willing to pay the price?

b. Activity of the Master.

Jesus gave us many promises: “Seek, and ye shall find” (Matthew 7:7). “Give, and it shall be given unto you” (Luke 6:38). Go, and I will go with you (Matthew 28:19). Believe me, it works.

CONCLUSION

Few street lamps existed in 18th-century London. A law was passed requiring people to hang out a lantern from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. At dusk an official with a lantern would walk through the streets crying, “It’s time to hang out your lights!”

Millions of people in our world need Jesus. The Holy Spirit is calling to us, “It’s time to hang out your lights! Let people see Jesus.”

Endnote

1. Scripture references are from Holy Bible, New International Version®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.