

Letting Go and Going On

(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Twenty-Six)

Acts 13:1-13

- A. The words obedience and change seems to make many people shutter
 - 1. It's impossible to be obedient if we're unwilling to change
 - 2. Obedience and change threaten our comfort, interrupt our rhythms, challenge our priorities, and raise our anxiety levels
 - 3. ...and change often catches us unprepared
- B. The early church experienced numerous crucibles of change
 - 1. Webster defines change as "*to make different in some particular; to transform, to undergo a modification, to become different.*"
 - 2. Change can be good and healthy, but it is seldom easy or pleasant

*Change my heart, Oh God, make it ever true;
Change my heart, Oh God, may I be like you.*

You are the potter, I am the clay; Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

*Change my heart, Oh God, make it ever true;
Change my heart Oh God, may I be like you.*

"Does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?" (Romans 9:21)

- 3. Putting our lives in the hands of the Potter can be a painful process, but the results are (always) magnificent
- C. Barnabas and Saul have been ministering in Antioch and experiencing revival
 - 1. The church is growing; suddenly God steps in and changes everything
 - 2. Paul has been dealing with significant change all his life

BEING READY

- A. The Church in Antioch is a model of health and effectiveness
 - 1. Each leader was called, gifted, devoted and set apart for the Lord's work
 - 2. There was incredible encouragement
 - 3. The preaching was deep and rich
- B. The Spirit says: "*Barnabas, Saul, you need to leave and go where I send you*"
 - 1. God is full of surprises; he sees the big picture
 - 2. When the Lord speaks, Jesus' disciples are to listen...carefully
- C. God's way of doing ministry is often hard to get our head around
 - 1. We serve a master we can't see, listen for a voice we can't audibly hear...

- a. People-pleasing can be a major impediment to doing God's will
 - b. There is a major temptation to promote our will as God's will
 - c. When we're not fully devoted to God, it's impossible to discern God's will
- 2. God's call to obedience means a journey; a journey always involves change; change involves risk; risk means stretching our faith

LETTING GO

- A. Letting Go to follow (obey) God is an indication of our trust in Him
 - 1. Are we willing to let go and go out before all our questions are answered?
 - a. Are we willing to let go of control and micro-managing?
 - b. Are we willing to listen for God's voice in his Word...?
 - c. Are we willing to set aside our agenda and risk change/obedience?
 - 2. Most churches are simply focused on maintaining the status quo
- B. 13:3 - "*When they had fasted and prayed... they sent them away.*"
 - 1. When Barnabas and Saul heard the community's discernment, they jumped!
 - 2. Believers trusted believers to listen to and discern God's will
 - 3. More change. Why would they leave the safety of Antioch for that?
Because God called! They changed everything for the sake of obedience.

STAYING PLIABLE

- A. How do we keep the clay of our lives pliable?
 - 1. We need to remove all limitations so we stay open to what God has for us
 - 2. We need slow down so we can hear God when he speaks
 - 3. We need to let need to let God be God
 - 4. We need to be ready to say "yes" when God asks
 - 5. We must stop comparing ourselves to our fellow believers...
- B. Is your life ready to be molded and shaped by the potter?
 - 1. If you're walking close to God, you know what he is asking you to do...
 - 2. See the water below. Take a deep breathe. Now, jump!