

Recap of 10/31/21 message by Joe Ricchuiti – Acts 12:25-13:3

1. Acts 12:24 is one of the seven progress reports of Luke in the Book of Acts (2:47; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31). Despite persecution the Church was thriving. No opposition from any source will prevent God from building His church

2. Acts 13 begins a new chapter in the expansion of the church. Previously, in fulfillment of Jesus' words in Acts 1:8, the church has witnessed in Jerusalem (chapters 1-7); Judea and Samaria (chapters 8-12); and now it begins the witness to the "ends of the earth," (chapters 12-28) starting from Antioch. Starting in Acts, chapter 13, Paul replaces Peter as the dominant figure; Antioch replaces Jerusalem as the center of the story; the main theme becomes the extension of the church in Europe and Asia Minor and Gentile evangelism.

3. Acts 13:2, stretches our understanding of what worship is. The church worshipped and fasted, we are told. The Greek word which is translated "worshiping" means to serve, as in an office or ministry. Some examples of its uses are: Philippians 2:17, of the practical faith of the Philippians; Philippians 2:25, of the ministry of Epaphroditus to Paul; Romans 15:16, of the duty of proclaiming the gospel; and Romans 15:27, of ministering in material things. All are considered ways in which we worship God.

4. Concerning "fasting:" The only sure references to fasting in the New Testament, outside of the gospels are Acts 13:2,3 and 14:23. In an entry on fasting, Larry Richards, in his ministry resource, **Personal Ministry Handbook**, writes: "In the Old Testament, fasts are generally associated with repentance, or at times with mourning or prayer. The New Testament usually links fasting with prayer. Yet there are no instructions in the New Testament calling on believers to fast and few suggestions that fasting holds particular spiritual benefits. Although fasting can be a positive experience, it should not be thought of as a religious duty or as an especially 'spiritual' exercise."

-Fasting should not be undertaken: in an attempt to force God to act in a certain way or to bring about a certain result; to prove that we are spiritual.; or to curry God's favor (God already acts toward us in grace).

5. The key point of this section of Scripture is this: the missionary activity of the church was not the result of clever, strategic planning, but as the church prayed and worshipped the Holy Spirit directed them. It was "initiation by the Holy Spirit...as in all of Acts" (Willimon).

-“We don't understand just how the Holy Spirit interacts with our human spirit, but we do know He most often uses His Word. He brings to our mind some Scripture particularly appropriate to the situation. He may do this through a sermon, a Christian book, the encouraging words of a friend, or our own reading or study of Scripture. In my case, since I've memorized so many Scriptures over the years, He often brings to my mind a memorized verse.” (Bridges)