



Service – 01/22/2017  
*2 Corinthians 10:13 – 18*  
*Ephesians 4:11 -12*  
*Acts 13:1 – 3*  
*Acts 16:6 – 10*  
*Matthew 9:35 - 38*

If you saw the Aggie basketball game yesterday, men's hoops, it was great. Played really hard the whole game. We were at the game and so at first it's pretty close and then half-time we're down by ten, and we get up to four and then back to ten and up to four and back to ten. And it just really didn't look like we were going to pull this out. And then at the end all of a sudden we're up by one. Their best shooter has the ball. He's heading down the court dribbling around, it looks like we foul him and there's five seconds on the clock which means their best shooter's going to get two free throws, we're probably going to be down 1-1. So we've got five, less than six seconds to get down the court and make the winning goal. But it takes a long time, refs are doing whatever they're doing, checking everything they can, I'm yelling out "We have church tomorrow!" Might as well do a little confession here while I'm in the pulpit. So finally the refs come out and go, "It's over. Aggies win." It was great. It is the perfect metaphor for what we're looking at today.

For a basketball to work you've got to have a team, but you've got to have at least five guys on the floor and they all have a particular position, call it a calling, but they have a particular position, all of them have particular gifts in that position. Some guys can see the floor well, know which way to go. Some guys pass well. Some guys do threes. Some guys are great at free throws. Some guys are great being under the basket, grabbing the ball, dunking it, I mean everybody's got a different ability. And they've got to play hard for the whole time which is what our young men do there. But then you've got all sorts of people behind the scenes that you don't see. You've got the people that wash the clothes. You've got the people that make sure Reed Arena's doors are open, the lights are on, the air conditioning's going. You've got to make sure somebody's got basketballs on the court. You've got to make sure the goals are down. I mean there's all sorts of things that have to be done even though you have really basically five guys called to particular positions.

Now we're going to walk a little ground today, OK. Playoffs are not until later this afternoon. We have time today. Now we don't have a team in there. So we're

going to cover a little ground because I want us to understand something very clearly today. 2 Corinthians 10 is where we are. Paul's defending his ministry, but he's come to a place to talk about his own position on the floor; his own calling and his position in the church. Now I want you to go to 2 Corinthians 10 and then I'm going to read you, we're going to cover a little ground, but I'm going to read you from the book of Ephesians. Now I want you to listen to some of the position players that God gives the church. Now these are not all the position players, but every one of these people has a particular calling. Now I want you to listen carefully because I want us to finally get in our head what it is; this thing called missions. What are we about? What are we supposed to do as a church? Should we stay here? Should we go? What exactly is involved in all that? When I hear somebody say, "We've got a ton of Christians here in America but there are a handful in Nepal. Should I sell everything I have and go there because of the need?" Now that's a question. What does it mean to have a heart for the nations? So I want us to clear all that up today by what Paul says. Now we're going to clear it up from the scripture. So I want you to divorce yourself of anything you think is Southern Baptist or not Southern Baptist. We're going to throw all that out the window. We're going to look at the Bible today. First of all I want you to listen to what he writes in Ephesians 4. He says:

<sup>11</sup>And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ,

He said, now these are not the only position players, but he says he gave certain position players to the church. One of those, actually two of those, are Paul. It mentioned apostles and evangelists. Now Paul was an apostle. We know that. But the second thing he was is an evangelist. Now I grew up, and it's still taught at the Southern Baptist Convention that evangelism and evangelist is somebody who travels church to church and preaches revivals, but that's not the meaning in the New Testament word. The New Testament word evangelist is actually what we would term missionary. It's a person that is able to cross cultures easily and bring the gospel from his culture to another culture. It's a calling. It's a gift to the church so the church can live out its mission in the world.

Now Paul was an evangelist. He was a missionary. Now listen to 2 Corinthians 10. Listen to what he says particularly about his own ministry. Look in verse 13.

<sup>13</sup>But we will not boast beyond limits, but we will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you. <sup>14</sup>For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. We were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ.

Now he tells you a couple things there. God called us and he sent us to you. So God determined the people as missionaries and he determined, as he says, look in verse 13:

<sup>15</sup>We don't boast beyond limits and labors of others. Our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged, <sup>16</sup>so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's area of influence. <sup>17</sup>"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." <sup>18</sup>For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

Now listen carefully. He says God called him and then he says God put him in a particular area. Now I want you to listen, look in Acts chapter 13 with me. We're going to travel a little bit today. I want you to listen to Acts 13 beginning in verse 1. Now listen to what it says.

<sup>1</sup>There were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, so a bunch right, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup>While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, so in other words, they're in a worship service, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup>Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

So here's the first thing we see. He's exactly right. He's in Antioch, bunch of preachers, bunch of prophets, bunch of teachers, and in the middle of a worship service, we don't know how it happened, but somehow in the middle of a worship service, the Holy Spirit comes in and speaks to the church and says, "I want two of you. I want two of you to leave Antioch and you're going to take the gospel where I want it taken." And he names them. He doesn't say to the church pick two. The Holy Spirit named them: Paul and Barnabas. It lists others by name that the Holy Spirit said "No. Even if you see the need I don't want you. Even if you think you need to go with the apostle I don't want you to go. I could have named you but I didn't." He named two men and he pulled them out of the church at Antioch and sent them on their way. And they do. They make a missionary run. When they go out the second time this is when the assignment comes. Look in Acts. Do we have large rats in the building? Is that thunder? Wind. Well. Got to die of something. So. Acts 16 look in verse 6.

<sup>6</sup>They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. <sup>7</sup>When they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus didn't allow them. <sup>8</sup>So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. <sup>9</sup>And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there,

urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and helps us." <sup>10</sup>And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, Luke has joined them, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Now I don't normally do this. Little toy here. Please tell me it works. There we go. OK. But I want you to catch what's happened here. They start out here in Antioch right. They run their first missionary here and then back. Now they're on the second missionary journey. Now watch what they want to do. They go up here. They want to go into Asia right here. God says, "No." So they kick up into Mysia and they wind up, they want to go to Bithynia and Pontus. They want to go over here and the gospel go this way. Now if the gospel, if they get their way, right, if they go this way what's over here. Africa. Now but the Holy Spirit says "No. You can't go in Asia. You can't go here. I want you to go to Macedonia and Achaia. Now here's Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi. When we go this way what's up here? Europe. Now so here's what I want you to understand. They wanted to take the gospel over here because apparently they felt like there was a greater need in Bithynia and Pontus and Asia, but God said, "No." They tried twice. Paul had his own human agenda set, "It's better to go this way." And God twice said, "No." And then the third time he gives him a vision so that Paul winds up in Macedonia and then the book we're reading in Achaia to Corinth, and then we have the book to the Thessalonians, and the book to the Philippians. Two letters to Thessalonians, two to the Corinthians, one to the Philippians. So the gospel goes up into Macedonia, into Europe, into America. So that it is Americans who are founded as a, at least Judeo-Christian nation, we send missionaries to Africa. They did not send missionaries to us. God chose the area of influence for Paul and Barnabas. He made that choice. He called two men out and when he got them out they thought, "OK. We'll figure out where to go." And God said, "No, no, no, no, no. I'll decide where you go." He decided the area of influence and then they say, Paul writes to the Corinthians and he says, "I'm hoping that our ministry with you will be enlarged so we can go even further to a place where no one's gone." What he's saying is I'm hoping at some point you can get solid enough spiritually that I don't have to write you anymore letters. I don't have to visit you anymore. Not because I don't love you, but because I want to go where nobody's taken the gospel. I want to go other places. So he's called to be a missionary. He's one of the players. God chose him and Barnabas even though the scripture names other people. He picks their area and he picks how long they're there. They will stay in Corinth a year and a half. They will stay in Ephesus three years. On the second missionary trip as they meet, he and Barnabas have the big fight, they split, Silas goes with Paul. Very first place he comes to he finds Timothy. Been raised by his mother and his grandmother. Great believer. Timothy joins Paul as a, as an evangelist, he's a missionary with Paul. In time, though, God will change that in Timothy's life. He will become the pastor at Ephesus and die there. So God alters his timing. So when you look at the evangelism calling in the Bible God calls people to missions. He makes the call. He decides where you go. He decides how

long you stay there. And then he decides whether or not you stay as an evangelist or He puts you somewhere else. All those things are not your choice. All of those are God's choice. So with that being true what does that mean for us in this room? I mean seriously. I hear continually the idea of a heart for the nations. Boy that's right. We should care about missions. So when you hear that we have a ton of people here in Texas that are believers and there's only a handful of believers in Nepal what should we do.

Now I want us to be clear here. Number one: now listen to me carefully. I'm sorry. Listen to the scripture we're about to read carefully. We must mobilize, now listen I'm choosing every word I choose carefully here, we must mobilize believers for missions biblically. Let me show you. Go to Matthew 9 verse 35. Now I'm going to assume we all will walk out of here with the agreement that Jesus Christ never runs his mouth. That anything he says he means and that if we do not obey it, we damage the call right. If coach Kennedy tells his players to do something and they decide as a team, "Nah, we're just going to do what we want to do." Point guard decides I'm not going to call this play. I want to do what I want to do. What happens? The team, it's still there, but it doesn't function well. So if we're going to function well as a church then we have to decide that if the King says to us, "This is what I want you to do." Then we have to decide that's what we need to do. And if we ignore it, we damage what He's trying to do in the world. Now look at this. 35 chapter 9 Matthew:

<sup>35</sup>Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. <sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup>therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Now do we need to tell people about Nepal and the 10/40 window? China? Do we need to tell people about the need over there? Absolutely. Do we need to be clear about that? Absolutely. Now listen. I can't go because I'm impressed by the need. I can only go if the one who showed me the need tells me I'm to go. So we tell people? Absolutely. But we do not horizontally mobilize people. We don't go up to people and say, "Listen we have got to get 20 people over into Nepal. We've got to get all these people over here because if we don't, we've got more Christians here so we need more Christians there." Absolutely. That may be true but that is not my call. That is His call. Now I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand. But how many of you this week, particularly those of you that are real committed to missions, and I appreciate that, but how many of you this week prayed earnestly, which I believe is exactly what Jesus said, pray earnestly that the Father, the Lord of the harvest, the One in charge of the entire world would send people out to the

need. We haven't prayed earnestly because really buy that. There's so many of us that are more consumed with the horizontal calling than a vertical appeal. What Jesus says is, "I kneel and I earnestly say, 'Father there are non-believers here, they've never heard the Gospel, there are unreached people groups, I need you to send people there.'" And if do not earnestly pray because we think we're a point guard on the team, we can ignore the coach, and we can ignore the King, then the kingdom of God, through the church, does not do what it's meant to do because missions will not work, because we have not prayed for people to go. It's why I think it's so important that we know about it because hopefully if I know about it, it's not my call, I will ask God to send somebody over there because He's not letting me go. So number 1: we mobilize, but we mobilize biblically.

Number two: we have to be willing to answer the call. I think it's easier to answer the call if you live in Sudan than if you live in America. We have a pretty nice life in this country. I mean we have nut cases but they're on Fox and CNN. But we just had an easy change of government. And most of us do pretty well. We have a pretty cush life so it's a little so it's a little harder sometimes for us when the Holy Spirit comes and people have been praying and the Holy Spirit walks along and says, "I want you and you to go over here." It's a little hard sometimes for us to surrender to that because we're giving up a lot. So I understand when I preach this and God's leaving me here, I understand. This is a little difficult to go, but that is the second thing. You and I have to decide no matter what age we are, that if God says, "I want Chris and Bob to go to here." Then we go. No questions asked. No issue.

Number three: we in this room that stay, we stay tethered to those who are called. Paul and Barnabas finished the first journey they go back to Antioch. They went back to Antioch more than once. It's their home church. It's the church that God called them out of and they maintained this relationship with Antioch. We have to do the same thing. You know one of the, one of the smartest things we did in Southern Baptist life, maybe the really smartest thing we did, was the cooperative program where, for example in this church we could finance, if we wanted to, several missionaries on our own with our budget. But my first church we could have fit everybody up in my office. Small church. They couldn't finance anything. But you get 20 or 30 churches like that and all of a sudden you finance two or three. So we started the cooperative program where churches gave a certain amount. We funneled it up to Nashville and Nashville basically takes the money and they give it to the Ethics & Religious Liberty commission, the six seminaries, North American Mission Board, what used to be that, NAMB, or still NAMB, and then what used to be the Foreign Mission, but now it's the International Mission. The International Missions gets the biggest chunk. Now it was a brilliant idea and it worked really well for a long time at least while the directors were honest. We had a little issue in the last few years, but it was good in the sense that we never had a missionary come home from lack of funds, right. But there was one giant failure. We lost a personal acquaintance with the missionaries in our churches. We sent our money but we

didn't know the missionary. So we need to make sure that whoever's called out of our church we stay tethered to. So let me give you an assignment. Now I'm not going to ask you to do anything. I thought about doing that but I never have liked those kinds of invitations. Here's what I want you to do for me today, not for me, but in staying tethered. Walk out those doors in the back there and you look to the left and there are, I think I counted 23, pictures of kids that have come out of this church that have answered an Acts 13 call in their life to go to missions. They're all over the world. So here's what I want you to do when you leave the building today. I want you to find that wall before you go home. I want you to take a name; their names are there and where they're serving. I want you to take their name and where they're serving and write it down and I want you to go home and make sure every morning at breakfast you breathe their name to the Father. We have lost our understanding of the power of prayer and we kept our power of the mouth. We use it well horizontally. We blast everything we can on Facebook. I'll give you one challenge. If you'll pray as much as you post in Facebook, I'll bet you we change this world. So let's pray. I want you to ask God, I want you to find a name out here, and I want you to do two things. I want you to pray for that family and then I want you to ask God to send whoever He believes needs to be sent into the field.

Number four, last thing. We need to do missions here. If you're not called to the 10/40 window or you're not called to Europe, or you're not called to the African continent, you're called to stay here. Then we need to do missions here. It's great to have these five guys on the court but if the people running the basketballs, making sure they're in there, cleaning the clothes, all those people don't do their job, then it doesn't matter who the five are on the court, they can't function. You know what percentage of this state is lost? 80. I had a lady in this church come up to me the other night and said she was wearing a cross necklace to school. Showed it to a young man and said, "Do you know what this is?" And he said, "Not a clue." Now you can live in this city with as many of us that are in this room and we have kids in our schools that have no idea what that symbol means. That's tragic. So we have a responsibility to do missions here. What I want to see is us be like Aggie men's hoops. We come to the end, looks like we'll lose, but we do what we're supposed to do, we pray for those that need to go, we pray for those that are going, we tether ourselves to them, and we do what we're supposed to do in Bryan/College Station so that when we come to the end and it even looks like that maybe we lose, that our Lord and Savior comes down, he stops the game and he says, "Time's out. You win." And we go home well. That is what we need to do.

Father I speak to myself today. I've not earnestly prayed for you to send people into the harvest and I'm not always tethered well with those that have left this church and their where you've called them. So Father I want to do that well. Let us do that well. Father let us do what you've called us here to do. Father I would ask you that we do well enough that when this is over that there's not a person in our reach that ever can say they don't know what that cross means. Father make that real in our

lives today and in there. Thank you for your word and its clarity. In Jesus Christ name.