

Week of May 27-June 2

MISSIONS' MOMENTS

Scripture Reading: Read Acts chapter 14

One of the key themes of Acts is missions. From Jesus' promise to his disciples about the Holy Spirit empowering them to be witnesses in Acts 1:8 to the missionary journeys of Paul, Acts is about missions. Therefore, a church that seeks to be faithful to the Scripture will be a missions-minded church.

Through the years, I have been blessed to be part of churches that had missions at their heart. When I was a child, my family volunteered to host missionaries in our home that the pastor invited in to speak at the church. I had a chance to rub shoulders with these faithful servants of God who had dedicated themselves in missionary service to the king. When I was in college, I regularly attended a church where the pastor's heart was stirred by missions and they hosted annual missions' conventions. My first ministerial position was on staff as a youth pastor at a church that regularly invited missionaries in to speak and hosted annual missions conventions as well. Through these experiences, the importance of missions was impressed upon my heart.

When I became lead pastor at Calvary Assembly, then, it was only natural that we would stress missions here too. We regularly invite missionaries in to speak at the church. We now support over 30 missionaries/missions efforts on a monthly basis. One Sunday a month, we dedicate part of the service to sharing missionary updates and receive a special offering for missions. Through the years, we have also held missions conventions as well as sent out short-term missionary teams from the church.

In doing church like this, we're no different than the church at Antioch. In Acts 13, the church sent out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries. After a term on the field, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch for a missions' service. Look how Luke describes it at the end of Acts 14: *"From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."* We know they didn't have slides from their trip (as the missionaries did when I was a child). They didn't have a PowerPoint presentation, play a video or show a DVD from their excursion as missionaries do today. But, they did hold a missions service, not unlike what we still do today. In this service, they shared what God had done through them on the mission field.

The early church caught the Lord's heart for missions and rocked their world. Twenty centuries later, we need churches that will do the same. Why? Because there are still lost people in need of a Savior that we are called to reach. Let's follow in the footsteps of the church at Antioch and be a missions-minded body of believers.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Are you engaged in missions today? We're all called to pray, give and share so that the lost will be won to Christ. Pray for the Lord to show you what you are to do today in missions.

Take-a-way: *A church that isn't missions-minded isn't minding the mission of the church!*