

THE SECOND LESSON

ST. PAUL'S THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

(Biblical Readings for the lesson: The Acts of the Apostles 13-21)

ST. PAUL, THE GREATEST MISSIONARY: St. Paul is known as the greatest missionary of all time. He went to the ends of the known world, heart set ablaze, to bring the Gospel message to all the lost people groups of the earth. His missionary journeys helped spread the gospel throughout much of the ancient world. Over the course of his ministry, the Apostle Paul traveled more than 10,000 miles and established at least 14 churches. Paul's travels played a crucial role in the formation and development of the early Christian church. Many of the communities he encountered on these missionary journeys were the same ones he wrote to in his pastoral epistles. In this lesson, we're going to follow Paul's footsteps as he travelled across the ancient world, looking at the places he went and the major events that took place along the way. How many missionary journeys did Paul take in the book of Acts? Traditionally, it is believed that Paul took three long missionary journeys through the Mediterranean, but it is possible that he went on four missionary journeys, even going as far as Spain. Let's make a thorough examination of Paul's journey's so we can better understand the purpose and model of missions.

The First Missionary Journey: He undertook his first missionary journey from 46 - 48 AD, found in the book of the Acts of the Apostles 13- 14.

The Second Missionary Journey: He made his second missionary journey lasted from 49 to 52 A.D. and is recorded in Acts chapters 16-18.

The Third Missionary Journey: He undertook his third missionary journey from 53 to 57 A.D. and is found in Acts chapters 18:23-21:14.

BIBLICAL GEOGRAPHY: In order to know the strength and length of the missionary journeys of St. Paul, it is better to have some Biblical Geography of the first century AD. Below we find the list of important Biblical Places and their positions in the current world. Paul spent most of his ministry in Syria, Turkey, Greece, and Italy. When "Asia" is mentioned in the Book of Acts, it refers to Asia Minor (present day Turkey) Paul traveled to two different Antiochs. One in Syria, and the other in Pisidia (Turkey)

Biblical Name	Where in the modern world
Decapolis	Northwestern Jordan and a small part of Israel
Antioch	Northwest Syria (coastal)
Alexandria	Mediterranean Coast of Egypt
Athens, Berea Corinth, Philippi and Thessalonica	Greece
Cyrene	Northwest Libya
Damascus	Cyria
Galatia	Turkey
Ephesus, Pergamum and Smyrna	Western Turkey
Iconium and Lystra	Central Turkey
Malta	Malta in Europe
Antioch	Turkey
Attalia	Turkey
Berea	Greece
Iconium	Turkey
Lystra	Turkey
Lydda	Israel
Myra	Turkey
Neapolis	Greece
Nicopolis	Greece
Pergamum	Turkey
Philippi	Greece
Puteoli	Italy
Rhegium	Italy
Sardis	Turkey
Smyrna	Turkey
Thessalonica	Greece

Assos	Turkey
Macedonia	Macedonia
Achaea	Greece
Perga	Greece

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Acts 13-14) takes Paul from Antioch to Cyprus then southern Asia Minor (Anatolia), and back to Antioch. Barnabas and John Mark are with him. In Cyprus, Paul rebukes Elymas, the magician (Acts 13:8-12) who was criticizing their teachings. They sail to Perga in Pamphylia. John Mark leaves them and returns to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas go on to Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath day they go into to the synagogue and preach Jesus and the Gospel. Both the Jews and the Gentiles invite them to talk more next Sabbath day and at that time almost the whole city gathers. This upsets some Jews who speak against them. Paul then announces a change in his Evangelical Mission which from then on would be mainly to the Gentiles (Acts 13:13-48).

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Acts 16:23-20:38) Paul and his companion Barnabas left for the Second Missionary Journey from Jerusalem, in late Autumn 49 AD, after the meeting of the Council of Jerusalem where the circumcision question was debated. They stopped in Antioch where they had a sharp argument about taking John Mark with them on their trips, as in the previous trip he had left them and gone home. Unable to resolve the dispute, Paul and Barnabas decided to separate; Barnabas took John Mark with him, while Silas joined Paul. What is the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas? Paul and Barnabas disagreed sharply over Mark. Paul did not want to take Mark with him because he had left them earlier. Many reasons are proposed for Mark's refusal to go with Paul in Acts 13:13. Some of the suppositions are that Mark was homesick/resentment towards change in leadership from Barnabas to Paul/ weak to withstand dangers in the journey. Paul in 15:37-38 implicitly accused John Mark of lacking courage and commitment, refusing to take him along on the second missionary journey. However, Paul grew to respect Mark (Col 4:10) and that he needed Mark in his work (2 Tim 4:11). Frictions and disagreements are unavoidable and it takes grace to handle them when we are animated by God and not self. Disagreements and differences of opinion need not affect spiritual unity. Certainly some issues are central to our faith and worth fighting for but many are based on individual

differences and should not be legislated. Our principle should be: In essentials, Unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in everything, love.

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Acts 18:23–20:38) Paul began his Third Missionary Journey by traveling all around the region of Galatia and Phrygia to strengthen, teach and rebuke the Christian believers. Paul then traveled to Ephesus and stayed there for nearly three years. In Ephesus he performed miracles, healed people and cast out demons by the power of God, he preached and taught the Gospel of Christ (Acts 19:11-12). Even sorcerers turned from their evil practices and repented upon witnessing the power of God (Acts 19:17-20). Paul eventually found himself in grave danger from worshipers of the pagan goddess Artemis (also known as "Diana of the Ephesians"), and those who were in the business of supplying to them (Acts 19:24-27). Paul left the city after an attack from a local silversmith resulted in a pro-Artemis riot in which most of the city was involved. (Acts 19:28-41). Paul went through Macedonia into Achaia and while waiting to sail for Syria, he discovered another plot against him, so he instead returned through Macedonia (Acts 20:3). Paul and his companions visited other cities on their way back to Jerusalem such as Philippi, Troas, Miletus, Rhodes, and Tyre. At Miletus the church elders from Ephesus came up to meet with him for the last time (Acts 20:17-38). Paul finished his trip with a stop in Caesarea where he and his companions stayed with Philip the Evangelist before finally arriving at Jerusalem (Acts 21:8-10 - 21:15).

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM PAUL'S JOURNEYS? So much can be learned from the life of Paul and his missionary journeys. Not only can we learn the example by which we are to model present-day missions, but we can also learn 'what living an abandoned life for Christ' actually looks like. *"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ* (Philippians 3:7-8). Paul did not shrink from fulfilling his mission although he experienced suffering and imprisonment. He was simply compelled by the Holy Spirit. Missions work is no easy business, in some countries we may not face the threat of death, in others we might, but one thing is true of all countries, living in a different culture can be incredibly challenging. In Philippians 3, Paul is explaining and contrasting his life before surrendering to Christ, and he had everything--status, money, respect, knowledge, all of it. But none of it meant a single thing to him next to knowing Christ. That is the life that all Christians are called to. We don't necessarily mean suffering to the extent that Paul did, but rather, our lives should be wholly abandoned to Christ. By following

Paul's example and posturing our hearts in the same way, we will find ourselves living Godly lives and walking in effective ministry whether overseas or in a local church.

Among the many many other things we can learn, we know by his example how to live abandoned and obedient to the call of God and we learn that the key to perseverance in difficult times is through eyes set on God and God alone. And we know that we do not do this alone but rather are enabled through and by Christ's love for us and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, to reach into the scariest and darkest places on earth and declare the name of Jesus Christ. Mission work is God's work. The Holy Spirit told the church at Antioch to set out Barnabas and Saul "for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2). We see from Luke two perspectives. The earthly perspective has Barnabas and Saul "sent off" by the church (Acts 13:3) but from an eternal perspective, Luke immediately clarifies that they were "being sent out by the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:4). Yet God uses us to perform his mission. Paul reminds the Romans, "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'" (Rom. 10:14-15). How do we participate in the mission of the church? We need to add our prayers for those among us who have gone out into the mission field. Missionaries in poor countries need our prayers and support.

Missionaries of the New Testament and their journeys in the book of the Acts

Philip (8:4-10)	One of the first to preach the gospel outside Jerusalem
Peter and John (8:14-25)	Visited new Samaritan believers to encourage them.
Peter (9:32-10:48)	Led by God to one of the first Gentile families to become Christians - Cornelius' family
Barnabas (11:25-30)	Went to Antioch as an encourager, travelled to Tarsus to bring Paul back to Jerusalem from Antioch
Barnabas, Paul and John Mark (13:1-14:28)	Left Antioch for Cyprus, Pamphylia and Galatia on the first missionary journey
Barnabas and John Mark (15: 36-41)	After a break with Paul, they left Antioch for Cyprus.
Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke (15:36-18:22)	Left Antioch to revisit churches in Galatia, then traveled on to Asia, Macedonia and Achaia on second missionary journey.

Apollos (18:24-28)	Left Alexandria for Ephesus; learned the complete gospel story from Priscilla and Aquila; preached in Athens and Corinth.
Paul, Timothy and Erastus (18:23/ 19: 1-21:14)	Third missionary journey revisiting churches in Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE SACRED TRADITION ABOUT THE APOSTLES' MISSIONARY WORK AND MARTYRDOM?

Jesus commanded before his ascension that the gospel was to spread geographically from Jerusalem, into Judea, Samaria and finally to the whole world. It would begin with devout Jews in Jerusalem, to spread in Samaria, a mixed race and finally to the Gentiles in the uttermost parts of the earth. We get lot of information from the tradition about the apostles' mission after Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them on the day of Pentecost.

Peter is traditionally believed to have first traveled to Antioch and established a community there as the first bishop and after that he may have visited Corinth before heading to Rome where he was ultimately martyred by Nero around 64 AD in Rome. Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican is built on top of St. Peter's tomb.

Andrew (Peter's brother) became an Apostle to the Greeks. It is believed that he preached to Greek communities and was martyred at Patras on a cross in the shape of an X. His relics were eventually transferred to the Duomo Cathedral in Amalfi, Italy.

James the Great: James was the first apostle to be martyred by Herod the king with the sword" (Acts 12:1-2) in 44 AD in Jerusalem, but his tomb is nowhere near this location. After his death his body was transferred to Spain and is currently located in Santiago de Compostella. His tomb is the destination point of the centuries-old pilgrimage, El Camino, still popular today.

John: He is the author of the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation, the only apostle who had a natural death. In Revelation he writes from the island of Patmos, Greece (Rev 1:9). He died around 100 AD and is buried near Ephesus.

Philip: He ministered to Greek-speaking communities. He was martyred around 80 AD. His relics are located in the Basilica Santi Apostoli, in Rome.

Bartholomew: Various traditions have him preaching in different areas. It is believed that he was martyred and his remains are currently located at the church of St. Bartholomew in the Island, in Rome.

Thomas: The “doubting” apostle, Thomas is widely known for his missionary efforts in India. There is a popular story about one of his adventures that focuses on the conversion of a local “doubting” king. He died around 72 AD and his tomb is located in Mylapore (Chennai), India.

Matthew: He is one of the four evangelists. He preached to various communities in the Mediterranean before his martyrdom in Ethiopia. His tomb is located in the cathedral in Salerno, Italy.

James the Less: Scholars believe that Saint James the Less authored the “Epistle of St. James” found in the New Testament. After the apostles dispersed and left Jerusalem, James remained and became the first bishop in the holy city. He remained there for several decades until he was stoned to death by the Jewish authorities in the year 62. Some of his relics can be found in the Basilica Santi Apostoli, in Rome. It is also believed his tomb is located at the St. James Cathedral in Jerusalem.

Judas Thaddeus: He preached the gospel in various places. He is revered by the Armenian Church as the “Apostle to the Armenians.” He suffered martyrdom around 65 AD in Beirut, Lebanon. His remains are currently in Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

Simon the Zealot: Simon is often depicted with Judas Thaddeus and some believe they preached together as a team. This is due in part because a tradition states they were both martyred in Beirut in the same year. Some of his relics are believed to be located in Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

Matthias: After being chosen as the “replacement apostle,” one tradition states that Matthias founded a church in Cappadocia and ministered to Christians on the coasts of the Caspian Sea. It is believed that he died a martyr’s death, and was beheaded with an axe in Colchis at the hands of the many pagans there. Some of his relics are said to have been brought to Rome by St. Helena.

WHAT IS THE MIND OF THE CHURCH NOW REGARDING HER EVANGELIZING MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS?

Jesus fulfills the prophecies of Isaiah concerning his mission to the Gentiles (Isaiah 56 and 60) Isaiah clearly proclaims the radical message that God's blessings are for all people even foreigners and eunuchs who were often excluded from worship and not even considered citizens in Israel. Whatever our race, social position, work or financial situation, God's blessings are as much for us as for everyone else. We should not exclude anyone in any way.

Ad Gentes - "To the Nations" - is the decree issued by the Second Vatican Council that deals with the missionary activity of the Church. Ad Gentes affirms the work of missionary activity within the larger context of the Church's mission of evangelization to all people, even those who are already Christian. The Church is charged with "preaching the gospel and implanting the church among people who do not yet believe in Christ" (AG 6), yet the activity of the whole church "is by its very nature missionary" (AG 2). God has sent the Church, "the universal sacrament of salvation," to the nations (Ad Gentes) to preach the gospel to all. This responsibility falls on the whole people of God. Missionary activity is supported by inculturation and trained local catechists, as well as efforts to improve social and economic conditions, and efforts to seek justice and to promote the human dignity of all. While there are people who hear a special call to serve as missionaries, spreading the faith is the responsibility of every Christian. Spreading the faith begins with interior conversion and the effort to lead a profound Christian life. Our faith is rooted in scripture and tradition, and while the methodology surrounding evangelization may have changed, our mission remains the same. There are still souls who do not know Christ. We are called to spread the knowledge of the love and saving power that only Jesus Christ can give to the ends of the earth. We are called to be the sign of the living Christ Ad Gentes - to the nations. "And the glory of God which shines on the face of Jesus Christ may shine upon all men through the Holy Spirit." (2 Cor. 4:6) (AG 42)

WHY WE NEED MISSIONARIES? Some people wonder why we need missionaries if people can know about God through nature (the creation). The answer: 1. Although people know that God exists, they suppress that truth by their wickedness and thus refuse a relationship with him. Missionaries sensitively expose their error and point them to a new beginning. 2. Although people may believe there is a God, they refuse to commit themselves to him. Missionaries help persuade them, both through loving words and caring actions. 3. Missionaries convince people who reject God of the

dangerous consequences of their actions. 4. Missionaries make the commandment of Jesus a reality (Matt 28:19-20). 5. Most important, though nature reveals God, people need to be told about Jesus and how, through him, they can have a personal relationship with God. Knowing that God exists is not enough. People must learn that God is loving. They must understand what He did to demonstrate his love for us.

WOE TO ME IF I DON'T PREACH THE GOSPEL (1Corinthians 9:16) We have a preaching mission. Just as Jesus gives instructions to the seventy-two missionaries, he gives each one of us a mission to carry out. In Jesus' time, there were just a handful of followers to preach the Good News, but today there are 1.2 billion Roman Catholics and one billion other Christians (in 40,000 denominations!) who accept Jesus as "Lord" and "Savior." So there are about 2.2 billion missionaries in a world of seven billion people. As faithful Catholics, it's our job and responsibility to do the apostolic ministry in the universal and local church. As active Catholics, we are expected to participate in the threefold ministry of the church: priestly, prophetic and shepherding ministry by your words and actions. We are people of new evangelization. What is new evangelization? Evangelize the evangelized. Before we evangelize others, we need to evangelize our own family members.

A recent survey asked the question, "Why do adults join the Catholic Church in spite of the scandals publicized in the media?" Seventy-five percent of the new adult converts to the Catholic Church reported that they were attracted by a personal invitation from a Catholic who had a lively relationship with Christ and his Church. As faithful Catholics, we will attract others to the Catholic Church—just as a rose attracts people by its beauty and fragrance. Let us conclude our reflection with the words of St. Francis of Assisi "preach the gospel at all times if necessary use words" Let us preach the gospel through our witnessing lives, if necessary, let us use words.

Call to Lay Leadership: We are grateful to the apostles and bishops, their successors and priests, the collaborators of the bishops in the pastoral ministry. It is through their life of sacrifice and commitment, the Gospel has taken root in every nook and corner. Mission work is meant for every baptized person in Christ. All the apostles were lay people. It is still vitally important for believers to spread the gospel. Many people still do not know Christ. Preaching the word of God is the most important responsibility given to the church. Although the religious people are solely meant for the mission, let us not assume that all religious persons truly know Jesus and understand the importance of faith to be spread in the minds of the people. Some can be simply nominal religious like some nominal Christians. Some lay people although they love to evangelize are afraid of doing it saying that they don't know all the answers to share

about Christ. We don't need to know everything about Christ. What we truly need is to share how Christ has changed our life. Personal witness is the most convincing tool in evangelizing ministry. When we share the gospel, let us not expect results immediately and we should neither have any frustration nor allow to have any rejected feeling in our mind. Let us not expect everyone to accept our message. When we have the opportunity, we must have the courage to speak for God. People who do not know God may not listen to his word or his messengers. We need to persist. When others reject us and our faith, let us not be surprised or discouraged. We have to continue to tell them about God, trusting Him to open minds and soften stubborn hearts. Let us not assume that people would not be interested in God. We must not gauge a person's interest in God by his or her background, life style or appearance . We should let nothing get in the way of our telling people about God.

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."*

When someone is dying or or leaving us , his or her last words are very important. Jesus left the disciples with these last words of instruction: They were under his authority; they were to make more disciples; they were to baptize and teach those new disciples to obey Christ. Christ would be with them always. We are to go (whether it is next door or to another country) and make disciples. It is not an option but a command to all who call Jesus "Lord". We are not all evangelists in the formal sense but we have received gifts that we can use to help fulfill Great Commission.

Roman 10:15 "And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!"