

## **LIFE OF PAUL SERIES**

### **THE BIRTH OF A MINISTRY**

Last week we considered the silent years of the apostle Paul. The purpose of this series on the life of the apostle Paul is that we may know this man who wrote nearly two thirds of the New Testament and whose life was anointed and called especially to be a minister to the Gentiles. We have covered his life before he was born-again, his born-again experience and conversion, his silent years and his commission. This morning we want to look at the birth of his ministry and we want to outline it in this manner.

There is a difference between the birth of a ministry and the recognition or acceptance of a ministry. They are both based on different principles. As we have mentioned, Paul was born again in about A.D. 35 and in A.D. 45, seven years later, Acts 13 records that Paul was sent out into the apostolic ministry by God. Just a year earlier in A.D.44, Barnabas called Paul to Antioch and in Acts 11 that was the beginning or the birth of the ministry of Paul. We noticed that Acts 13, which took place about A.D. 45, divided almost equally the period between Paul's first trip to Jerusalem in A.D.38 and his second trip in Acts 15, fourteen years later in A.D. 53. The first time he went to Jerusalem was after his three years Arabian experience but his ministry had not begun yet.

Although he was called, the beginning was yet to come. The seed of a ministry was placed in his life when God called him when he was born again in A.D. 35 but in Acts 11, we see the beginning or the birth of his ministry. The beginning actually took place in Acts 11 when his ministry was nurtured and it grew. That

was the birth of his ministry though he was called much earlier in A.D. 35. Paul's ministry was eventually accepted after seven years later in about A.D. 53 when he made his second trip to Jerusalem for the Acts 15 council meeting. According to Galatians 2, they gave him the right hand of fellowship. There are many views but we are taking the view that Acts 15 and Gal. 2 are of the same period and event that is Paul's second trip for the Jerusalem Council meeting recorded in Acts 15.

*In Acts 11, Paul was already in his second set of 'silent' years and had been waiting in Tarsus. In Acts 11:19 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.*

That was the beginning of Paul's first open door. If you remember in Acts 9 Paul tried to preach the gospel after he was born again in Damascus and in Jerusalem but both times, his ministry was pre-matured and there were people who tried to kill him. In Damascus he was let down in a basket. In Jerusalem he was sent back to his hometown, Tarsus. So Paul's ministry never took off even though he was anointed, appointed, called, baptized in the Holy Spirit, yet his ministry could not take off because there were some other things that God has to deal with in his life. And in Acts 11 was the first time that there was an open door for Paul, and he was not an apostle yet.

Now in the birth of a ministry, there are some principles involved. First principle is mentoring. You see in our modern days society we expect somebody who is called by God to go in a normal school system, in a normal school way, just like

in the secular world. We see that the training school is 'separate' in term of course, class and subject and it is impersonal. In today modern society we give our children to people whom we do not know, to bring them up. We give them to organizations. They teach them principles; they teach them all kind of things, some of God, some not of God. Then we give them over to teachers in university. Then finally they graduate and sometimes the children come out as a stranger, not the same son or daughter that you have sent earlier. That kind of concept sometimes creep into Christianity and we think that a ministry can come forth just by sending someone to an organization and when they come out, we will just select the graduate from here. It almost looks like a world system that has crept in.

If you study the Bible, God's method of training was mentoring or personal discipleship. Because we have not been doing it God's way there is a lot of pain and agony that has been suffered by those in the ministry as a result of the lack in understanding of God's system. In the Bible, peoples who were greatly used by God, we find certain degree of mentoring in them such as serving under a ministry and then taking over and replacing or what I call taking the anointing and the mantle of the previous ministry.

Jesus' training of the twelve disciples was personal. For three years the disciples walked with Him, ate with Him, fellowshiped with Him, and there was a personal mentoring that went on. During those three years there were married people, like Peter, who followed Jesus. There was a time in Capernaum when Jesus was in Peter's house and Peter's mother-in-law was sick and Jesus healed her. So we know that there were some contacts that Peter had made with his wife but yet there are other times like Mark 10 when Peter says "Lord we have left all and followed You". So we know that during those three years they literally followed Jesus very closely. They almost had no family life and Jesus was their main trainer for those three years. They not only heard what Jesus spoke, they saw what Jesus did and all these events were impressed upon their hearts. The Lord Jesus did not say 'to go out and teach only' but He commanded 'go out and teach and make disciples'.

The great lack is not a classroom situation that can train a minister because today more and more Bible schools, and more and more churches and ministries have realized that it is not just the academic training that can equip a person but it's something more, the experiential side. We see people like the apostle Paul serving under Barnabas' ministry when he started out. Barnabas was in the forefront. Barnabas was one of the top leaders of the church in Jerusalem and the fact that in Acts 9 when Barnabas could introduce Paul to the twelve apostles tells us that Barnabas was a man of repute, recognized by the Jerusalem apostles. That tells you that Barnabas knew the twelve apostles on a personal level. So he was one of the top leaders in Jerusalem. When Paul started in his ministry he learned to serve under another ministry.

That is why in our day and age there is a lack of servant's heart because when a person graduate from an academic school they may or may not have a servant's heart. They may only have an educated mind but a servant's heart can only come through service. No amount of teaching can humble a person, only serving can humble a person. That is one of the first things that we see in the birth of a ministry. If you are sincere in God and God calls you to ministry, remember this; 'the way up is the way down' and with a servant's heart, look for a ministry to serve and don't just look for a school to go to. Let me emphasize if you want to birth forth your ministry, the key is not getting the right school and graduating with a degree and saying this is my qualification. The key is to look for somebody, someone to serve under. If you were to obey the voice of God, He will birth your ministry.

This is the biblical truth and the way in which Samuel rose up as a priest was because when he was a small little boy, his mother took him, her only son, to serve God. Later on she had a few other children because God blessed her when she gave up Samuel. She brought Samuel to Eli and said, "Eli this is my only son, my first born, the one I asked from God and I vowed to God that he will serve God". And as a mother that was very difficult surrendering Samuel to serve. The Bible tells us in 1 Samuel chapter 2 that Samuel ministered to the Lord. The fact that when God called him and said, "Samuel, Samuel", he ran to Eli asking, "Yes what do you want me to do?" That was not the only time he did that, he must have done that regularly and that is why when he heard that call he came and asked Eli what he wanted him to do. He was a servant. Later on he became one of

the most powerful men of God, a judge, a prophet and a priest and because of Samuel, Israel was held together during the transition from a theocracy into a monarchy and because of Samuel we have what we call the school of the prophets.

The greatest leaders always learn to serve. There are a lot of people out there who say "God called me, I have this prophecy over my life. God wants me to serve Him. God has a call on my life. I am an apostle, a prophet; I am called to all five-fold ministry". I never knew that there is such a person. I knew Jesus had all five callings. Then they said, "I want a place to minister". "The way up is the way down"! That's not the way you birth your ministry. You may succeed to a certain extent by that. You may go out and learn management, you may go out and learn advertisement, and learn showmanship, learn how to attract the crowd but the way up is the way down because those kinds of ministries are established with the arm of the flesh.

If God really called you and you want to rise up, the first key is to look for a ministry to serve our Lord. You may say there is no perfect ministry, what about Samuel serving Eli? Do you think Eli was perfect? There is no perfect person. What about David's mighty men? I am sure they knew that David was not perfect. It's an excuse not to serve. This is the biblical principle when God wanted to train the apostle Paul, just like He trained Elisha. When Elijah threw the mantle over Elisha and asked Elisha to follow him, Elisha served for ten years. For ten years he is known, in 2Kings chapter 3, as the one who pour water on Elijah's hands. When you rise up to become a mighty prophet with twice the anointing of Elijah and people said "He is the one who pour water on Elijah's hand", they remembered that he was a servant. The way up is the way down. So humble ourselves because the humble shall be exalted.

The birth of Paul's ministry began when he chose to follow Barnabas and serve alongside Barnabas. That was the turning point in his life. Look at Acts 11:26 very carefully, *When he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.* It didn't state, 'Saul followed him' but it states, 'Barnabas brought him'. When the Bible uses this language it tells us who is boss and who is servant. He found him and he brought him. In other words, Barnabas is saying "Saul, I want you to help me. There is

this great work in which the church in Jerusalem had commissioned me and given the authority but I need help. Would you serve with me?" He found him and he brought him to serve and Paul slowly found the place where God wanted him to be as he started learning to submit and yield.

It is very strange that authority is never learnt in the academic school. Authority is learned through experience. Perhaps in an academic school there is a system you learn to abide. You learn lessons about authority but what I mean you don't learn it in a classroom. You learn it in your experience. One of the first things God established is teaching us to yield and to flow and to submit. Paul did the first thing.

The second important thing that Paul did when he came to Antioch was to be integrated with the local church. It states 'so it was for a whole year they [Barnabas and Paul] assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch'. The birth of a ministry firstly is learning to serve and follow somebody else who is already in the ministry. Secondly is to link up with a local church. There are a lot of people who try to establish a ministry outside of the local churches. They succeed to some extent but in the end they have to go back to the local churches for support and help. You could see the delicate situation. We are not against para-church organizations. They have a place and a function in the body of Christ. Even the members, the founders, and the employees and the full time workers of a para-church organization, to really succeed to bring unity back to the church, are themselves belonging to local churches. If a hundred percent of a para-church organization does not belong to any local church then their ministry to local churches is also limited.

Let me define 'para-church' organization. It means a ministry outside the church, like the China Inland Mission by Hudson Taylor was a para-church organization and it was not set up in the church. It was outside the church but it depended on the church people for support. So that's a para-church organization. And any true leader of a para-church organization requires you to belong and identify to some local churches. Sometimes each staff of para-church organization is a member of

different churches and that helps the para-church organization. It even builds the organization stronger so that the organization could be a blessing to the entire body of Christ.

That's the second important fact. Paul found his place only when he chose to be a part of a local church. Be part of a local church. A ministry is not a ministry unto themselves. You know why it's not easy to be part of a local church because all local churches are imperfect. Let me go and hide in a cave for forty days and nights and then another three years and come out as a man of God, no church will recognize me! I mean by the time you came back, perhaps from the jungle where you have never seen any human being, never shaved nor bathed and they may just lock you in a zoo as a zoo specimen.

The real issue is the difficulty of being involved. A lot of people don't want to be any part of any local churches and miss enjoying 'I am free' but they forgot the other part of the song 'I am free to be a servant of the Lord'. You and I are not free to do what we like and the difficulty is people don't want to belong or have a sense of belonging to a local church. Many who are called and have a ministry, do not belong to a local church because it is painful when you rub with both people you like and people you don't like. And you may not like everyone in the family of God although you love the family of God. There are some whom you like more than others. So to belong to a local body means that you may have to understand the grievances and the pains of the local body. There are times when human imperfection and misunderstanding comes in and you are a part of that and these are some ways whereby God perfects us.

That was Paul's second area; he belongs to a local body. You could see later on in his three missionary journeys that he always went back to the church in Antioch because there is a sense of belonging. That is why some people never took off even though God called them. I remember when we started during the Charismatic renewal there were many others, some young men, some young women, some elder people, who started at the same time. The Charismatic renewal touched their lives and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. I knew some of them. One of them has died and gone home to be with the Lord. Some of them were called to be evangelists, some of them were called to be prophets and

what a waste to the body of Christ when we don't have their ministry because there was one thing some of them were doing, they never wanted to belong to a local body. One of the reasons is because of their own inability to get along with people. That is the most dangerous predisposition and they ended up nowhere.

The place where you start is in a local body, not in a jungle somewhere, not with some new group you never know. You got to learn how to deal with people. When you enter into the ministry you begin to know people. You can see all kinds of people; just like our thumbprint there are many types of people and you begin to love people for who God made them to be. Therefore, get started in a local church. Paul's ministry started when he found a place to teach them the Word and the disciples were first called Christians.

The third area that is going to birth your ministry is to open up to the entire five-fold ministry. In Acts 11:27 *And in those days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Acts 13:1 Now in the church there was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

Now this third requirement is slightly different from first, which is to serve under a ministry. This third requirement is to open ourselves or to be exposed to different ministries. Young believers, like little children, tend to have preferences. As we grow up we like certain foods only. But little children cannot live on ice cream the rest of their lives. They need vegetables, they need fruits, and they need to eat other things too. The parents know it but the children do not know it. You ask them what they want and if you ever say ice cream they will love it. But they cannot live on ice cream alone. In the same way we must understand that it is a requirement for us to learn to open to different types of five-fold ministries. They will help to perfect us.

Look at Eph. 4:12 *for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry*. See the purpose of the five-fold is not to do but to train and equip. The five-fold is not just here to do the job but to train. This is why many times when I come across five-fold ministries on the international scene I use to tell them when you come to our country don't just do but impart and train. We don't want just somebody to come and evangelize for us. We want to do the evangelism ourselves but we like you to share with us, train the people, teach the people, work alongside with them and show forth in that sense. We do not just want a ministry to just come and win all the souls and then fly off. We are the ones who are left with the souls but we want them to train people to win souls so that the work of evangelization continues. Otherwise, the next time we want more souls to be won we have to call them again. So the main primary purpose of the five-fold is not just to do, but also to train and to equip the saints so that the saints themselves may go forth.

This third area involves training and impartation of the five-fold and comes in many ways in the Bible. An example is Timothy. Bear in mind that Timothy was called to the five-fold ministry as an evangelist as well as apostle. In Acts 16:1 *Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold a certain disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him*. In other words, Paul took him, disciplined him, trained him, and that was how Timothy grew into the five-fold office. Timothy had the benefit of a local church and was mentored by Paul. Thirdly, Timothy learned to work with five-fold ministry, to link up with them and learnt to help them impart something into their lives. So these are three major areas of what we call 'the birth of ministry'.

We have covered the three major areas on the acceptance and recognition of a ministry. The birth of a ministry and the acceptance of it are different. The birth of Paul's ministry started in Acts 11 and Acts 13 but the acceptance of his ministry is only in Galatians 2 when he says 'the apostle Peter and all the others in Jerusalem gave him the right hand of fellowship'. In Acts 15, which is relating to the same event as in Gal. 2, Paul had already been about seven years in the ministry. He had won thousands of people to the Lord Jesus Christ and had successful evangelistic crusades all over Asia Minor and when he was in Jerusalem in Acts 15, he testified of what God has done among the Gentiles

through his ministry. His ministry was already successful though he had not been accepted officially yet. So the recognition of a ministry and the birth of a ministry are two different things and the time span can be different.

There are three requirements for the recognition or acceptance of ministry. Firstly is faithfulness, you must be faithful and have results. So firstly is faithfulness and results. Secondly is timing. In God's proper timing He brought Paul to be accepted. If it were an earlier time it would have been premature and wrong. Sometimes when your ministry is coming up, people reject you but keep identifying with one local body that accept you and eventually through time you will be given recognition and acceptance. However, if you try to be accepted, be ahead of timing, it will never work because God has His timing.

The third area that cause acceptance is what I call the 'church structure'. Paul by that time, was a representative of the entire church in Antioch. The church in Jerusalem had to recognize that if they make a decision not to accept the Gentiles, they would cut off hundreds of Gentile churches. It was a more difficult decision for them because now the indigenous Gentile churches had their bargaining chips and it's now harder to cut Paul's ministry off for he had all these Gentiles church behind him. We are not covering this area; we are covering the first three areas of the birth of a ministry. We need to mention that so that you could link the two.

Pertaining to the birth of a ministry, firstly in regard to mentoring or working under another ministry there are certain principles involved. These are the principles that Paul taught us regarding what it means to be mentor or to work under a ministry. Firstly you must be prepared to work what and where you normally don't like and that has nothing to do with your call or ministry yet.

Can you imagine yourself in a position of Elisha? In 1 Kings 19, he was just plowing the field and he had a reasonable life and was not looking for trouble, and as he was plowing the field or doing some normal work, Elijah comes along, took his mantle and threw it on Elisha. The meaning in the Old Testament to that was very clear. Everybody knew Elijah the famous prophet. You would be

famous if you stop the rain for three years. Everybody knew who he was and the king was looking for him all the time. So Elijah needs no introduction and when Elijah threw the mantle over Elisha, Elijah was saying to Elisha that he is called to be prophet. And God had told Elijah that Elisha was to be a prophet after him. That is also in I Kings 19. Can you imagine the excitement that he is now going to serve with the 'great' Elijah? He is going to see miracles taking place and it's going to be an exciting work. He got employed under Elijah's Ministry Incorporation and he looked at his job's description. First job wash the pants, second job wash Elijah's cloths, thirdly to cook the food. Imagine Elisha complaining, "But I am not a cook! If I were back home I won't have all these menial tasks to do". That's the first principle under mentoring: Learning to do things you do not like to do, things that doesn't seem to be linked up directly, intellectually, academically, principles-wise, with your call in your life. Elisha would never know that ten years later how important that servanthood was for a double portion anointing.

One of the strengths about YWAM [Youth With A Mission] is their emphasis is on discipleship and one of the things it does to you in any of their programs is to break you down. You learn to wash clothes, you learn to cook, and you learn to sew, regardless of you having a PhD, you learn to do the menial things and believe me, foot washing does something to your inside. God deals with our attitude at the first stage and that was what the deacons found out in Acts 6. In verse 3, they were the seven men of good reputation. In other words, they were high caliber men out there in the natural world. They could be some big shots! They were full of the Holy Ghost and full of faith. They are ministering possibly in home groups and the apostles said, "We need the seven of you to lay the tables". Don't you think that is humbling in the natural? "We want seven of you to do the laying on the tables and to serve the hungry stomachs of the poor widows". Stephen was a mighty man. Philip was called to be an evangelist. As evangelist he could said, "What has laying tables to do with my call?" Absolutely nothing! I am sure it was not easy on a natural man. The church of Jesus Christ is a place where every one of us stands equal, whatever our age, whatever our qualifications, or lack of qualification, whatever of our ability or lack of ability, whatever our social status or whether we are rich or poor, the church of Jesus Christ is where everyone is treated equally. Whether we have a title behind our names makes no difference. That's what the seven deacons did. That's the first area of mentoring which was possibly very difficult.

The second area even as they are serving in 6:4 *but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word*. The purpose for them serving is to free the apostles to give themselves to the Word and prayer. If you were in that situation you would say, "I would prefer to do what he does". But remember the apostles themselves have been serving the widows. It was time for them to move out of that. So the second area is there is a time when that unrelated job description comes to an end and you move on to the next job. But during that time they are to make sure that the apostles have enough time to pray, have enough time to spend on the Word of God. That was what they were supposed to do. Can you imagine if you enter into that situation? Then they say, "You apostles why don't you serve with us?" and "Be of good example!" People are very clever to use Bible. But the very purpose for them being there is that they don't have to do it and that attitude in their lives has to be dealt with.

One of the hardest things is this, to serve in order that somebody has all that reward. That's not easy. See there they are doing all these work and the apostles are having all the rewards. But it has a part to do with learning to receive our rewards from God, if we are not trained in that area we will fail in that area. We must understand that serving in the ministry; our real reward is in heaven. If you ever look for reward down here, Satan can easily distract you. The first training is to humble you to do things you never like doing. Your second training is learning not to receive a reward after you have sowed and labored. They are doing all these 'dirty works' and the apostles are doing all the anointed work. Although the Bible goes from one chapter to the other very fast it may take a long time for them to go to Acts 8 before Philip move into the evangelist office. That's one of the things that the world is different, the world motivates people by saying "Do this, this is the reward now" but for God, sometimes He deals with our lives until we are prepared to do it even if we don't receive anything from Him. You see the Lord checks our motives, "Are you doing it because you love Me or because you want some candy from Me?" We must be prepared to do all these things and let others received the reward and that is the attitude that God must ingrain in us.

Remember Jesus had this attitude, He came, He lived, He died, and He shed His

blood so that we receive the reward. He did all the hard dirty works that no other person could do. He came down on the dirt of this earth so that we could be blessed. That kind of attitude is important because one day when you rise to be the leader in the body of Christ you will care about others and not yourself. That attitude had to be learned at the mentoring stage. All the educational system in world recognize they can teach the world knowledge but they found that some knowledge without principle and attitude destroy people. Which is why God teaches us attitudes at the mentoring stage. That's the second thing, learning to work for free. Nobody wants to work for free. It's against human principle. God will always reward those with good attitude but our attitude must be so that we do it not because of the reward.

The third area of mentoring is the rewards. Acts 6:6 *When they had prayed, they laid hands on them.* The rewards of mentoring are impartation from those whom you serve, through the laying on of hands as you are recognized and anointed and appointed for the work. You will pass out of the mentoring stage into the second area I call the local church that we will look into in Acts 8. Why do we need the local church? Philip now began to rise up in his ministry and he had been mentored under the apostles. Now he had grown up and during the time of persecution he went forth.

In verse 5 *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles that he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice came out of many who were possessed.* Now Philip began his evangelistic ministry but you notice you could never do without the rest of the body of Christ because after Philip left, in verse 14 *Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might received the Holy Spirit.*

So the first reason for the local church is that none of us can impart perfectly to everyone. I am sure if given the right time and place Philip may have been able to lead all his converts into the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But somehow he could not because God brought him on to another place and the work that he started

somebody else had to take over. Somebody else had to do the follow-up work. Can you imagine if Philip was not on good terms with Peter and John? And if Peter and John did not want Philip they say, "Well those are his work I don't want to have anything to do with it". They never had that attitude. They say "Well now this Philip has got all these converts and we heard all these wonderful things that happened, let us send people there to help. Let us send Peter and John to see what God is doing and see if there is anything else that we can do for the people over there".

The local church will perfect your ministry. Any evangelist that comes into town without a local church and goes out without a local church, their converts are scattered on the streets for the devil and the fowls of the air to just devour. That's why we cannot afford to go without a local church. Wherever you are, whether you feel as easy or not, we are talking about commitment to God and I know it's not easy because in this day and age, people don't want to talk about it.

Philip had a certain commitment to the local church. In verse 25 *When they had testified and preached the word of the Lord they returned to Jerusalem preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.* Then in verse 26 *Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."* As you all know he preached the gospel to the eunuch and verse 35 *Philip opened his mouth and beginning at this Scripture preached Jesus to him.* In verse 38 *So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.*

Now Philip had a powerful ministry. I read all that just to let you know that he

got many strange spiritual experiences. He met an angel; he was caught up in the Spirit; he had tremendous signs and wonders take place in his ministry. Most people when they reached that stage they are very independent but yet you notice here he went to Caesarea and you read very carefully in Acts 21 Caesarea became his home and he identified with the local church there. Look at Acts 21 in spite of the greatness of his ministry he still had a base, he could not base it in Jerusalem but he had a base.

*Verse 8 On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.* I want you to know that it's probably like a local church scene. How do we know? Apparently Philip's house has become the stop over point for many ministries because later on Agabus the prophet came right to the house. Philip had established a localized ministry even though he had an international ministry. He based his entire ministry in Caesarea. You see many time a man of God rise up and the higher they go; they find it hard to relate to people. This is because they haven't gone through the mentoring process that would have molded them to build relationship with people but somehow they must have short-circuited the process.

I meet many men of God who have a gift of God but find it difficult to relate to the body of Christ. Some of them are slogging away for five to ten years and their ministry never take off because they lack one thing, their inability to localize. Your success in one local church will be your success to all other churches. Your lack of success in one local church will be your lack of success everywhere you go until you change yourself in some way and say "I have given up going to the wilderness. I will change my way and adapt". Because when you relate to a local body it requires you to change but to be free from the local body, you don't have to change whereas other people need to change. See for people to accept you it requires change not from their side alone, it requires change from your side. It's two ways. So people who find it hard to localize are those who say "You change, not me." But to localize you realize somehow or other we need to change. That is where the perfection begins to come in the localized body.

Philip's house was opened; Agabus and his gang of prophets came ministered

and went. Paul came and visited him. The local church had a place in Caesarea. Here was Philip in spite of his success in Samaria and his other ministry. And in spite of the fact that he had ministered to top officials like the Ethiopian eunuch he found a place in a local body. Do not let international acceptance or acceptance by one high in the social strata cause a lack of submission and the willingness to flow with the localized body. That's an important fact that we see in Philip's life.

The third and final area of the localized church in Philip's life as we see it here in Acts 21:9 *This man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.* In other words, as a result of a local church his own children could continue in the work of God. Anyone who has a ministry and separate themselves from the local body you find that in the end your own children suffer. Because your ministry gains acceptance but your children need a home for a church. Everyone needs a church to call home and as a result of a localized body, Philip was a whole man, married yet he could succeed in being an evangelist. A lot of evangelist find that been married was difficult but Philip could because he had a localized church where his own daughters grew up with the gift of prophecy. That's an important factor to think about when you are thinking about birthing of your ministry. Don't just think about yourself; think about your family too. You may have your gift and your office but your family needs a church to call home. And there are many children of ministers who grow up 'homeless' in a sense, churchless, and they become the very stigma in the minister's life. Many world international ministers have their children grown up without churches. Their children are pulled from place to place. They cannot have a place called home and they grow up turning against the Lord, to the heartache of their own parents who teach the blessed gospel. It's important to understand that fact.

The final area is the five-fold ministry that the Corinthians church had to learn in order to grow up and for that we look at 1Cor. 3:5 *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.* In the Corinthians church, there are some who liked Peter more and some preferred Paul more. They may say "I like Peter more. He is more fiery". Another said, "I like Paul more he seems to have this heavenly atmosphere". Another said. "I like Apollos more for he is more intellectual". But all these are baby talk. Paul says these are little children talking. Paul says accept all that they may increase they will grow within

themselves.

Why do people only like one ministry? Because his or her own strength is usually here, the intellectual like the intellectual, the simple like the simple, the musical like the musical. Some ministers like them to a certain extent because they are recognizing strength of themselves in the other person but what about their weaknesses. A person who likes someone who is cultured and dignified is because they themselves are cultured and dignified but maybe there is a weakness in their life where they cannot relate to the poor and the under privilege. Then the preacher comes with slippers and sarong and they cannot accept him. Then here comes a preacher who breaks grammatical rules and they cannot accept him.

Do you know part of it God is dealing with them through the preacher although they know not. The day they could accept that person is the day their weakness is being dealt with and they become better people after that. See we grow through the different types of preachers God sends. If you ask me I like to hear an intellectual sermon. And if you think you suffer when you hear a preacher talk simple things, what about me. I know the Bible at the back of my hand but yet I learn to humble myself to listen even if it's a young teenage preacher who doesn't know much about life or doesn't know much about the Word but who has something from God to share. I will sit there and I will say, "Lord what can I learn from this preacher". Rather than "Lord I don't want to hear this". We must learn to grow up to say that God you send us the best. And wherever there are areas that we could learn in, we could flow in. "Lord teach me. I want to be opened to it."

You can see the first point under the area of five-fold ministry is that the maturity that cause all these things. We need to grow up. If you really understand God and you really know God, if a preacher can come who doesn't know much of the Bible and he may be startling off. But if he can share one key word or one key thought about his relationship with God you could pick it up and develop it further.

The second area in the five-fold ministry we look over here in Acts 18:25 *This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.* He was already accurate they made him more accurate. Why do you need five-fold ministry? Iron sharpens iron. Which is why a minister's fellowship is sharpening one another up. When you open yourself to men of God and you fellowship with men of God, iron sharpens iron. As you began to work with five-fold ministry, you begin to see their standard. You begin to see that each one having the different gifts and their different strengths and then you realize iron is sharpening iron. You could incorporate what we call finer details.

Have you notice that a five-fold ministry who come up out of the bush jungle all by himself may be anointed, fantastic and powerful but they always lack finer touches, the fine-tuning, and the finer points. But when you take that rough prophet from the bush, put him to fellowship with the city prophet and put them together for a few months, that fellow comes out a bit more 'Holy Ghost cultured', a bit more sharpened, a bit more finer. Where before they preach in sarongs, then the city minister say "No when you do that you will offend some people and who would listen to you? Here take my suit and wear it and go and preach." Changes. Iron sharpens iron. The same way with the city folks going to the jungle for it's a different culture there. Don't bring your suit there but bring your jeans. You look like an ugly duckling which was never a swan, preaching right there in two feet of jungle water in your three piece suit, while the rest of them is half naked. I like to fellowship not only with ministers who move into the depths of understanding in the Spirit but I want to fellowship with some of those who move out in the streets. I mean they used the street lingo. There is something you can learn from them. I like to let iron sharpen iron.

The third and the last is Acts 13:1-2 *As they ministered and prayed together the Lord spoke to them.* That's the third thing. When you are associated with five-fold ministry you hear the spoken voice of God through each one of them more often. How many times I have been in ministers' meeting and prayer meeting and it's different. In a believers meeting like this you have a few come and prophesy.

I tell you in a ministers' meeting everybody knows the voice of God. When one person prophesied, other say, "Yes that's what I heard". And while you are prophesying and you see this vision, everybody there sees some vision and everybody there hears some word from God. It's a different thing altogether. It creates a greater sense of confirmation and that was what the prayer meeting was like in Acts 13:1 because the five-fold gathered together and every single one of the five-fold knows the gifts of the Spirit. They know how to hear God's voice. They know how to prophesy. They know how to speak in tongues. Anything a believer does they know how to do. They know how to hear God's voice. They know how to pray for the sick. All these are common to them. And when you begin to gather together and pray together and seek God, you begin to hear the voice of God speaking even through their life to each other. They began to prophesy one to another. It's a greater sense of confirmation that is possible that you never get elsewhere. If for example we say all those who have fasted for seven days gathered together. I can tell you it would be a different meeting from what we have on Sunday. Why, because the level of depth is different. And if I were to say let's fast forty days and those who fast forty days gather together on a mountain and pray, you would have a different type of meeting again.

So remember the blessings of fellowship of five-fold ministry because they hear God's voice. They may hear God's voice so often that they don't just tell you and prophesy to you over a bowl of noodles and say, "thus says the Lord". As man of God you don't have to do that for showmanship. You could wait until the whole meal is over and then they discuss and say what do you sense. "I sense the Lord saying this..." Usually people don't ask, they don't tell. Real man of God don't tell you what God tells them unless God really tells him to do so or unless you really ask him. But it's those who are "half-baked" man of God who go around saying I saw this or God says this. Why, they need that for acceptance. We are talking about real man of God, real five-fold ministry. It's a blessing to fellowship because you can hear God yourself and they can hear God as clearly but they will tell you what they are hearing from God about you and after that you can tell them what you hear from God. It's a wonderful fellowship. That's why the sense of confirmation is stronger. Do not neglect the fellowship with the five-fold ministry.

