

LIFE OF PAUL SERIES

THE FIRST MISSIONARY

JOURNEY

Acts 13 records the beginning of Paul's missionary journeys. In our study on the life of Paul we have classified Acts chapter 13 onward as his second phase. If you were to regard Acts 11 when he came to Antioch as a preparatory phase, then this would be the first phase but if you consider this as a second phase then Acts 11 would have been the first phase.

We would consider Acts 13:2-3 as the beginning of the first phase of his apostolic office. Acts 13:2-3 *As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.* We can consider as far as his apostleship is concerned that Acts 13:2-3 is the first phase of Paul's ministry and it was around A.D. 45, about ten years after he was born-again in Acts 9. Remember in his born-again experience on the road to Damascus, God spoke to him about his ministry. He did not succeed in moving into his ministry until Acts 11 in A.D. 44 when he was told by Barnabas to come over to Antioch to minister to the Christians there. So we see Paul having a waiting period of ten years.

Kenneth Hagin in his book "I Believe in Visions" described when the Lord Jesus first appeared to him after fifteen years of full time ministry, pastoring various churches and ministering in the field once in a while. After fifteen years the Lord appeared to him in his first vision and said "You have now just begun the first

phase of your ministry.” He has now just entered the first phase of his ministry! The Lord said that some ministers lived and died without even entering the first phase. If you analyze it, Hagin was called to be a prophet and teacher. When the Lord Jesus appeared to him that was the first time he really began the prophetic office. So when Jesus talks about first phase He is talking about the destiny and his ultimate call in your life.

Paul was called to be an apostle and he was also called to be a teacher. As we realize from 1Timothy 2:7 *I was appointed a preacher and an apostle – I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying – a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.* So there were three offices that Paul stood in, namely the office of an evangelist, the office of an apostle and the office of a teacher. When Paul started his ministry in that ‘full time’ sense in Acts 11, notice in verse 26 he started as a teacher. So in a sense that can be his first phase but officially it was not his first phase as we all know sometimes when a place is completed you use it first but there is no official opening yet. Then after some time of using it you have the official opening.

There is a similarity here when God launched Paul into the official apostolic ministry in Acts 13 but before that he was already in some of his other ministry, like the office of a teacher. But from the wording of Acts 13:2-3 apparently God considered that as Paul’s first phase. So his pre-phase in Acts 11 was to get attached to a fellowship, a church. In this first phase of Paul’s ministry, Paul had to establish several things.

In your first phase of ministry you would have to establish the same thing. What are the things that you have to establish in your first phase of ministry? When God calls a man He sometime gives the man a message and a method. The methods may not be so rigid that you cannot sort of move outside of them. But it could be an ordained method that God asks you to operate most of the time, maybe not all of the time but most of the time and some of the time outside of that.

When the Lord appeared to Kenneth Hagin the first time, the Lord took His finger and put one finger in the palm of his left hand and the other finger in the palm of his right hand. From that day onward the palms of his hand burned like coal of fire. Then the Lord Jesus said this "Whenever you minister I have given you anointing to heal", he was called to be a prophet but he has an anointing to heal. When the Lord anointed his hand and the Lord said this "that when he ministered he was supposed to put one hand in the front and one hand at the back. You are to take a person and this was the method that you always had to use." You see God calls a man with a message and a method. So we are discussing His method. Then the Lord said "When that fire in your hand jump from hand to hand you would know that there is a demon there and you shall cast it out. But when the fire does not jump from hand to hand you will know that it's just a healing; pray for that person's healing". That was the method God use. So that was the method he used all the time in his first phase. In his second phase it changed to the eye. Where he had to watch out when there was a vision that appear and he will look into the vision. Later on in his third and fourth phase it was a combination of methods. The reason I said that is that you are not locked into a method when God gives you one. But you need to understand the method He gives. The message that God gave Hagin was to preach faith. He could preach other things but his key subject was to preach faith and minister faith to the people. So having illustrated from Hagin's life we look at Paul's first phase.

When we talk about 'first phase', it means the actual entering to the call that God has for our life all the time. For every minister even if you are not called to the full time, you will have a ministry in God in the first phase. Whether you are called to the ministry full time or not each one of you have a gift and a ministry. When you enter that first phase of your ministry there are certain things that you need to look out for. The first is to understand the method and the message that God gives to you. You may teach everything under the sun or you may emphasize the Bible and every part of the Bible because in a church we have to teach the whole counsel of God. We cannot be teaching evangelistic messages all the time in the church because the older Christians need to grow in God and we cannot always be teaching on just one topic on healing because there are other topics that we need to grow into. We realize that we need a sound balanced diet but at the same time there is such a thing as a certain thrust, a certain emphasis that God calls a man or a woman onto.

It is in this first phase that the minister must understand what their main criteria, their main message or their jurisdiction or their authority that they are to function in and secondly discern the methodology that God wants to use in their lives. Let's look at the apostle Paul as he starts his first phase of ministry. He starts it with fasting and prayer, which is an important way to start any ministry. Whenever God sends you forth somewhere, or God about to reveal something, start always at the beginning with fasting and prayer and at the end, end with fasting and prayer. Where does the feasting come in? In between! Human beings do it differently. They send off a missionary team with feasting and they end off the missionary journey with another feasting but God does it differently. You start with fasting. In the middle you can feast some but at the end you must fast a lot.

In Acts 14 Paul ended his first missionary journey. Acts 14:23 *When they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.* Notice that it ended with fasting before they went back to the church in Antioch. And that's how we are to stop and how we are to begin. End something with fasting, not with feasting.

A lot of people got it wrong today. As I travel most of the time I minister in the night and then when I come back late at night people want to take me out for supper. Then they feast and they eat after a heavy ministry in the Spirit and in the Word. Then I come back all soaked with the anointing and soaked with my stomach gastric juices busily digesting the food away. That kind of lifestyle in the end kills many ministers. I know what it is like because before you minister it's very hard to eat. For example you are invited to a lunch fellowship and you are the main speaker. Try eating and you find it very difficult because you will be concentrating on the burden of the Word the Lord gives to you. It's easier to eat after the meeting but yet sometimes after the meeting when the anointing is still heavy you should not indulge in food. You should just at the most take something light, maybe fruit or vegetables. Then spend more time with the Lord. Just to strengthen yourself and then go on with the Lord.

Paul understood that key. We are talking about ministry cycle and he is talking about a phase cycle, the beginning of his phase and the ending of his phase.

Whenever we end, we must end with fasting, not with feasting. We are talking about your ministry; the beginning and the end. Your ministry will carry wholeness instead of being what I call 'open-ended' where they don't seem to be able to tie the knot at the ending to conclude.

Acts 13:4 Paul begins his journey going to Cyprus, Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in they synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant. The first thing that they encountered in verse 6 which is significant is that they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus., who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, and intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

We are going to discover Paul's establishing of methods and his message in a few moments as we go along. But the second thing that takes place as we begin our phase is that you must encounter and overcome satanic opposition. There is a pattern in the Bible that must not be ignored. It is not so much a counterattack, it's nothing to fear if you walk with God but you must be aware that Satan hits you at the beginning before you can grow strong and Satan would stir up opposition to your life, to your destiny and the gift, call and talent of your life right when you begin your first phase. It's very common and it seems to be the pattern.

Notice in Exodus knowing the Pharaoh represents Satan, we read about how when Joseph died in chapter 1:8 *There arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And this king in verse 11 They set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they build for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Ramses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And right at the time where there was great persecution there was already great difficulty. Pharaoh put a yoke on all the Israelites but strangely right about that time, God was going to ordain and choose someone to set the Israelites free. God was about to bring about the deliverer whom He had promised to Abraham. Right about that time Pharaoh did something new that he never did before but the timing is so significant. About that time in verse 22 Pharaoh commanded all*

his people, saying. "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive. It was just at that time when Moses was born. It's interesting to note the timing of satanic opposition. It comes at the beginning, a time that is vital and important.

I am sure you know the story in Esther how the devil stirred Haman to oppose the Jews at the time when Esther has just entered into a privileged position with the king. Haman was stirred up by the devil to come against the Jews and it looks like the Jews would be destroyed but it was just before the Jews enter a new realm of blessing!

We are going to look over in the gospel of Matthew, bearing in mind the cruelty that is involved in killing young children and babies and infants. Herod in Matthew chapter 2:16 *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.* Notice here that before Jesus grew up there was an opposition that came right at the time when He was helpless, just a little child under two years old and the devil stirred up opposition to kill Him.

Satan tactics are quite clear, that is to hit before they get strong. Hit them while they are still budding. His second tactic is also quite well known, hit them when they take it easy at the peak but we are looking at the beginning here. And Jesus when He was anointed in Mark 1:12 *Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan.* At the beginning of first phase of every ministry, you must face satanic opposition.

There is another opposition at the first phase of every ministry, they must learn to relate between the old revelation and the new revelation, the old wine skin and the new wine, the old structure and the new structure. Even when the church was established in Acts 2 the early church struggled between having one foot in the Jewish tradition and the other foot in Christianity and they found it hard to

separate the two. On one hand they wanted to be Jews, on the hand they wanted to be disciples of Jesus. Most of the time they could, they met in the temple and they prayed. They met in their homes and they prayed and fellowship and they attended all the Jewish customs, the Sabbath custom and all the Jewish feasts but there were times when the two couldn't meet. There were times when the old one and new one couldn't meet and here was where they have problems. And every new ministry and every new call of God always has something new but the skill is how to have that which is new and still minister to that which is old. And that was the struggle that Paul had in this second area trying to appease the old and bring forth the new.

The first opposition will be against satanic forces and the second will be against tradition. In Acts 13 the principles we are talking about not only apply to ministries but also applicable to the secular world. If you have a new scientific discovery it's not going to be easily accepted by the traditional group. There was an article that came out in the medical science magazine of this researcher who studied, analyzed, and researched a phenomenon called 'crib death' that medical doctors were always puzzled about, that is they don't understand why babies just die in their cots. The researcher discovered and came to certain conclusion of what causes it and part of his findings is quite established today; they understood that it was the sleeping position and the bathing materials were involved. But this when this researcher came out with that theory and the explanation, many other scientists opposed him. And in that article he mentioned the difficulties he had in bringing forth a natural truth that could save thousands of babies, just because it was not acceptable in the established science. So the principles are still the same.

Nicholas Copernicus said that the earth goes round the sun and he was nearly killed. Galileo Galilee did not dare to publish some of his understandings about astronomy until after he died. Why, because it was not easy and he will be killed. So we realize that in the natural and in the spiritual, this basic principle is valid. Whatever you have from God, your talent as businessman, or something that God showed you, remember if you have the new wine that firstly you have to fight Satan and overcome him with the name of Jesus. Secondly you will have to overcome traditions that are set with the skills and wisdom developed in your first phase. If you overcome the first phase you can enter into the second phase.

The second phase found Paul fighting against traditions. In Acts 13:14-15 *When they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* Now Paul was on his missionary journey and he has entered into this town called Perga in Pamphylia. The synagogue represents the old structure, the traditions of which Paul was still a part for he was as much as Jew as any other Jews, the only difference is that he had an anointing and a call to be an apostle to bring forth the new revelation. When God gives you something new and He ask you to bring it to those who have the first part of the revelation, this will be your struggle at the beginning. For Paul it meant the Jews, which is why in Romans chapter one he says the gospel must first be preached to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. So Paul wrestled with that, notice each step that Paul took has principles involved in relationship to tradition.

Paul employs certain principles in dealing with old tradition. Firstly he entered the synagogue on a Sabbath day and he sat down. That sitting down symbolizes contact and fellowship. He went into the synagogue and he sat down, he did not go into the synagogue and took over the pulpit just because he has this fresh revelation from God and was sent by Him with the authority. Paul didn't went into the synagogue and knock down the walls, neither did he go into the synagogue and chase the people out nor did he go into the synagogue and burn it down. But he went to the synagogue and he sat down. When you deal with traditions, denominations, established hierarchy and structure, fellowship comes before the revelation. It's astounding to people when you deal with established structure by coming first with revelation before fellowship. I am saying this because I know that there are people listening to our teaching tapes who are in denominational churches and some of them are called to minister to their denominational churches. Therefore when you deal with traditions and old wineskin this principle must come in sequential order one at a time, if you go in with the wrong order, you upset the status quo with chaos. Therefore fellowship comes before revelation.

Supposedly God calls some of you to minister to the Catholics, remember that contact and fellowship comes first before revelation. What happens if you put it the other way round? You will go to them and you will quarrel over doctrine. How many people had quarrel over doctrine, tear one another down and after that repent? Foolishly they put revelation first before fellowship. When you deal with hierarchy and traditions it's different. You may have to sit down with people who differ from you in doctrine. You just sit down, you just fellowship, you just listen and you just wait. Fellowship comes first. If someone can accept you first, then they may accept what you have to say but if somebody cannot accept you first they will not accept what you have to say also. So they must first accept you and in order for them to accept you, they must know you. Therefore fellowship comes first, which is why sometimes when God calls you to do something, you have to discern methods and how He wants you to do it.

When God called me to Singapore to minister to churches there, I sat down and fellowship with a lot of the pastors there. One of those pastors of a bigger church talked with me over breakfast. He said, "Since God called you to unite the churches why don't you go and gather all the leaders together?" I said, "This it's easier said than done". If I were to do that I will have to give myself full time to be a diplomat and work at it and sit down with them and fellowship with them. It will be a full time job and it may take three years. I said, "God did not ask me to do that". I am only there for two years to teach the Word and welcome whoever want to come. See we must discern exactly what God called you to do, otherwise you will be side tracked but wherever there is opportunity I will sit down and fellowship because I understand this principle. When it comes to the established structure, fellowship comes first before revelation. After the fellowship and over the table we talk about doctrine.

Somebody told me that in one of those denominational meeting they had a discussion about me. Someone from an old denomination, whom I had not even met personally, stood up in that meeting and said, "How can you judge him when you had not heard him?" So that somebody who was there asked me do you know this man I said, "I don't know him". "But that man stood up for you!" came his reply. I said, "I don't know that man but God bless him. He did something wonderful, I appreciate that." The discussion was possibly referring to my revelation area and through God's grace we are now able to sit and fellowship

with them.

One of them came recently in the pastors' fellowship about two week ago as we gathered quite a lot of pastors and I told some of them, "Lets gather the old ones and the new ones". One of the pastors came to me and disclosed that before he heard me he had already made up his mind about me because I was associated with Mr. ABC. Most of you will know who the Mr. ABC is. He said, "Mr. ABC is disagreeable with us on doctrine and we didn't agree with Mr. ABC. When you came in with Mr. ABC, we also disassociate you. But when he has heard me he said, "Well no problem now." He says, "I don't have to tell you this but I am telling you this". But the fact is that because I was in fellowship with another person whom I may not agree fully in doctrine the other person disassociate with me. That is how tedious it is to work with traditions but if God calls some of you, I sense in my spirit He does call some of you, He may call some of you to work among the Catholics, some of you to work among the Anglicans, some of you to work among the Seventh Day Adventists and some of you to work among different types of people. He may call some of you to work among the hard nuts. The most important thing, don't talk first; fellowship first. Through fellowship we can check Christ's love and that person understand that you love them and they love you and then you say, "Well now it comes to doctrine". If you disagree in doctrine you say never mind about doctrine I still like you. When we deal with tradition we must know how to be in fellowship. Get into your synagogue don't talk; just sit down. Paul was not there to talk; he was there just to sit down. If Paul was not asked to share he will not share.

Secondly when you deal with hierarchy please be sensitive to the line of authority. Notice in Acts 13:15 'when the rulers', not the members. A member of a Catholic church invites you to minister and if that member has no authority you will get yourself in trouble. When you deal with hierarchy you must understand the line of authority. You don't go until the ruler tells you, not when the member tells you. Paul could be sitting there among all the other members of the synagogue and the member could be pushing you to say something, "Why don't you go and talk to the ruler of the synagogue and say I have something to share". Paul says, "no". Until the ruler of the synagogue said, "Welcome gentlemen do you have something to share?" I tell you once Paul open his mouth he must have wished Paul could shut down! "Do you have anything to share?" Paul walks up

with a big smile and he started preaching. When he started preaching fire came down. In Acts 13:16, Paul gave a long sermon and in verse 42 the people were convicted. When dealing with the tradition firstly fellowship, secondly understand the line of authority.

Thirdly use the same tool they use. It so happened that the Jews used the Old Testament scroll and Paul used the same scroll to teach them, to tell them that actually in the scroll these are what all the prophets say, which I am saying to you now and this is what it means. He uses their tools, their instrument. If you minister to a scientist you must use scientific terms. If you minister to a lawyer you must use lawyer's terms. You minister to a fisherman you say 'come and follow me I will make you fisher of men'. You minister to a woman in the well you must say 'I will give you living waters'. You use their tools and their frame of reference.

This is not the first time Paul did it. In principle he did it over and over again. Look over at Acts 17:22 *Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, "Men of Athens, I perceived that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Now let me talk to you about your unknown God. See Paul always use things that they could identify with and relate from their frame of reference.*

A heathen came to a church one day in the United States for the first time in his life. When he went to church the first thing he realized was he needed a church dictionary. Why because he came to church everybody was saying "alleluia." What does alleluia mean? Then the preacher says justification. What does justification mean? Salvation, what does salvation mean? He needed a church dictionary. So we realize that when we are reaching out to different group of people we have to adapt accordingly.

Paul uses the same frame of reference and he even quoted from their scriptures onto them. He quoted the Bible but notice there are different things that he

mentioned there. In verse 29 *Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.* He uses the term 'we are the offspring of God'. He quotes from their own books. Look at verse 29 where did he get the title 'offspring of God'? From their own poets! Verse 28 *for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said.* Paul said to the Greeks your poets have said it; 'We are His offspring'. So Paul quotes from their books and say 'your own poets said we are His offspring'. Let me explain being His offspring means so that you don't go for these images. So he shows from their own writings that Jesus is the Christ. The reason why one of the most successful Indian evangelists who reaches out to the Indians, successfully converting millions of Hindus to the Lord was because he went and researched the Hindu scriptures and he could find all those 'openings' in the Hindu scriptures that point to the living God. Then he points to them that this living God is the Lord Jesus Christ who has come. So thirdly, use their tools. Therefore you need to allow the Holy Spirit to give you the grace and the wisdom to use those tools to minister.

Apparently in Acts 13 after Paul used every term he could, he still struggled between putting one leg among the Jews and one leg among the Gentiles. He struggled between the two. And he found it was difficult. Why, now back to our first point. You must discover your message and your method and secondly there are oppositions because not everyone is called to reach out to the old wine skin. Paul was not especially called to the Jews rather Peter was the one who was called with the apostleship to the circumcised. Don't try to do another man's ministry. Don't try to do something just because somebody succeeded at doing it because in your first phase you have to discover the limitations of your call. When you are called to be an evangelist, understand where your imitations are. When you are called to be a prophet understand what are the limitations in your first phase. I can assure there are limitations that God has set.

Paul discovered in Acts 13 verse 43 *Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.* Paul has to discover his

methodology and his message and that his main call is to the Gentiles. The sad thing is that sometimes we have to learn through bumping our head on certain walls that we are not supposed to go into. Sometimes we learn by trying to open doors that are not supposed to be opened for us. We looked in and get our head bumped and quickly shut the door. Paul “bumped” his head several times; when the Jews opposed him.

Look at verse 50 *The Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecutions against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.* Paul found out he didn't had grace for the Jews. He didn't have the anointing to minister to the old wine skin, unlike the apostle Peter. Paul was a different apostle from Peter. Paul discovered a closed door. And in Acts 14:1 *Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews.* That's another door God never called Paul to go into. He was not called to minister to the Jews. So he went in to preach and in verse 2 *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles.* Again he has stirring the hornet's nest. Doesn't it looks like someone new in the ministry called to the first phase.

It's just like Col Stingers talked about how in his church there was this song leader. This person wanted to prophesy and he gave a chance to this person to prophesy. This person prophesied, led songs, preached the message and did everything and Col pull him aside and said, “I give you a chance to do this you just do that. Leave the preaching to me. Leave the song leading to somebody else. Just do this.” The person said, “God anointed me”. Col said, “God didn't anoint you, that's your desire to do things”. Therefore this is where we need to understand our limits.

Somebody new in the ministry usually wanted to do this and that and do everything, bump their head a few times and then said that's not for me. How nice if they would go the right way. Pray to the Lord and learn to wait on the God and says, “God if that is not for me then I wouldn't go into that. Let me just be faithful in this area”. Don't try to stick your head everywhere because people who stick their head into everything finally get their head chop off. So learn the limits that God has set and our gifts and talents have set.

Sometimes people like getting into the public ministry fast without realizing the dangers that could destroy them. If they are put in a place and in a position that they cannot handle they don't realize the dangers that are involved. Let me illustrate from something in my past. I remember when I was young in ministry when I started preaching and began to operate the gifts of the Spirit. A lot of those older generations they praised God for the gift and they began to receive me and opened doors for me. Sometimes I travel with them to minister and I was only about 21 years old and there I was standing before crowds. But as I look back now I believe that was a bit too fast. It was more that I could take or handle. You ask, "What do you mean?" Because when later opposition came or as you know the higher you go the greater the pressure, the more the blessings but the greater also can be the opposition. I was not quite prepared to take that kind of strife, that kind of politicking, that kind of diplomacy that was required to handle some of those situations. I don't have that kind of diplomacy in those days because at 21 years old, I have not learned the skills in these areas. I was just young and brand new. I had hardly developed my gift in the Spirit and the call of God that was in my life. It was too fast, too soon, too much, too quickly. So when the opposition came suddenly, I was called into trial and had to defend myself. I couldn't take it. I broke down and I cried. I couldn't stand that kind of pressure. And as I look back now I wish that there were just somebody who was wise and experienced to help me to open a door in the right time and to give me the responsibility a bit at a time and not suddenly. Thank God for His grace somehow by His grace I am still alive!

When I see someone coming up, there are signs of impatience or slowness. Sometimes people want to do something fast and I say, "No cannot!" Or someone wants to lead a song and I say, "No". The leaders we have in our church or people who lead song in our church they don't come because they are my personal friends. A lot of you are my personal friends but because God never call you into leadership or eldership, you may continue here, be at home here, be active here but the position are not used to trade for friendship. This is a church not a club. The reason is because I love the people more than they realize, that those positions may destroy them. If people understand then they realized that it could only come through the Lord's gifting. I always tell my associate pastors if God calls you to an international ministry we would help you into that but not all God may call, some maybe called to function within this church. We cannot

promise position. Why, because if God didn't give that position to you, and you step into it, it can destroy you. Friendship is friendship, work is work, ministry is ministry and God's kingdom is God's kingdom.

Here we see Paul trying to minister, find his place, knocking his head and in the end Paul realizing it. In Acts 14:5 *When a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them.* Let me tell you in Paul's first phase he nearly died because he didn't know his limits. In fact in Acts 14 in a sense he did die. Acts 14:19 *Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.* In the end Paul was stoned.

Now in his second phase he tried to go to the Jews a bit but he was more cautious. He went more to the Gentiles. Look at the conclusion of the missionary journey in Acts 14:27 *Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.* Paul discovered in his first phase, his message, his theme and his call. That took care of the message. His main message was the gospel to the Gentiles.

What about his methods? In Acts 13:9 *Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit looked intently at him and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, no seeing the sun for a time."* And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. You will notice two things in Paul's methodology. Let me read one more scripture before I point to the two things he used. In Acts 14:8-9 *And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked before. This man heard Paul speaking, Paul, observing him intently.* Now look at the word 'observing him intently' and compare it to Acts 13:9 'looked intently, observed intently'. Now there were two operations that Paul had in his method, firstly was his eyes and secondly was his hands. Paul's method of operating the gifts of the Spirit was in his eyes. As he looks, the Spirit and the anointing of God fills him, and he could see things in

people's life or he could discern faith in people's life.

Don Gosett was sharing with me when he was here, about one healing evangelist of the 1950s that he worked for. He shared with me how this evangelist whom he worked under had a marvelous gift. And this was the person's marvelous gift, when he had about hundred or so people lined up for healing, this person had the gift like Paul had, to pick up those who had the faith to immediately receive their healing. And this evangelist would go among the crowd and pull them out one by one. He would select about ten to twenty people and bring them right all the way to the platform and then instantly healed them. From then onwards the faith level rises and it was easy to minister to the rest. But Don told me that this was one of the few guys whom he saw who operated this gift and that was the same gifting that the apostle Paul operated.

To a certain extend I also function in that same manner. There is an ability to discern faith in people's life and in a crowd sometimes when there is a heavy anointing I could even pick up where unbelief is and where faith is. It's very hard to explain but it's a gift of God. Perhaps that was how Kathryn Kuhlman operated, when in a crowd where people worship Him you could pick up where faith is strongest. Sometimes when there are about twenty people linked up you could pick up faith in one or two individuals. It cannot be in the natural because it says here in Acts 14 the man was lying down crippled and looking at Paul. Paul looked at him and he knew that crippled man had faith. It was not natural. I mean if they had laid the man down through a roof it was obvious you can see they are acting in faith but this was supernatural. Paul had to discern faith. That was Paul's methodology.

Of course the second method that he used in Acts 14:3 is the hand. It says here in verse 3 *Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.* So they also use their hands a lot in the first phase of ministry and the use of hands seems to be also a trademark of Paul's ministry. When God calls you to the first phase of your ministry whether it be full time or not full time, you must discern the geographical area that He wants you to

function under because together with that will also be the message. There could be two thousand good messages or good themes but you have to flow with one theme. Stay faithful to it that God has placed it in your life.

Hagin in his early when he was teaching faith, he says he could teach anything but always end up teaching on faith. It's just like a homing instinct of a pigeon, he just home into faith.

Therefore be aware of these two areas in the first phase of ministry, firstly in regard to the message and the method that God has called you to. Be faithful to that as you operate in that area. I only discuss Paul's life because we are studying his life but there are hundred of emphasis, there are hundred of manifestations. One gift can have hundred of manifestations. There are nine gifts and each have different manifestations. There are hundred of ways that God wants you to operate. Be faithful to that. Don't copy another person but find out the anointing on your life and flow with it faithfully.

Of course the second area is facing opposition. You must be prepared for satanic opposition and also human opposition that Paul has discovered in old mindsets and tradition. And in the end it was not Satan's opposition but the human opposition that almost destroyed him. Part of it is learning to stay out of areas that God told you to stay out of. In fact if Paul had not disturbed the Jews he wouldn't have oppositions in the first place. If he had gone straight to the Gentiles it would have been a different story but liked so many called, he stirred up the hornet's nest. When I study Paul's life that there were areas which could have been avoided because I know from Acts 17:2 that it was not necessarily the leading of the Lord that Paul was in the synagogue, it was his custom that he was in the synagogue. And both times in his first and second missionary journey, troubles came because he stirred up the hornet's nests among the Jews. Don't go and disturb the bees. In your first phase understand your limitations that God had called you to.

Something remarkable took place during the first phase of Paul's in his first

missionary journey. You notice that the first missionary journey took at least about five years or so. We learnt earlier that the period from Acts 13 to Acts 15 was about seven years. Acts 13 was around A.D. 45 and in Acts 15 was about A.D. 53. So the first missionary journey took a couple of years and after a period of about four or five years Paul returned and then he stayed one or two year more in Antioch before he went on to Jerusalem in Acts 15. So remember the dates, Acts 13 was about A.D. 45 and Acts 15 was around A.D. 53, a total of seven years in his first phase. This is important because when you look at 2 Cor.12 that was written when Paul was in Ephesus in Acts 19, in 2 Corinthians chapter 12 Paul said in verse 2 onwards *"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I don't not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heavens. And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – how he was caught up into Paradise and hear inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* He talks about himself in the third person. The timing in verse 2 is fourteen years ago. First and Second Corinthians were written around A.D. 60 in Acts 19 when Paul stayed for three years in Ephesus. Acts 15 was around A.D. 53 and Acts 13 is about A.D. 45. If you count fourteen years back that is A.D. 60 minus 14 years, it puts you somewhere in his first phase of ministry, around A.D. 46 when he was on his first missionary journey. So about A.D. 46 to A.D. 47 Paul had that experience described in 2Cor.12: 2-4. He was writing 2Corinthians in A.D. 60 and he points back fourteen years ago, that is about A.D.46, which puts him somewhere a year after the beginning of his first missionary journey around A.D 45 in Acts 13. A year after he began his first missionary journey will take us to Acts 14 when they stoned the apostle Paul and left him for dead. In Acts 14:19 the Jews stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city and that was quite a long journey. So for several hours he was unconscious and presumably dead. We do not know for certain but possibly he died and his spirit left the body and he went to heaven. In the third heaven he was up there looking down on his body. He was thrown outside the city and they left him for dead. That is where Paul in 2Cor.12 said, *"I do not know whether he was in the body or in the spirit"*. Paul was up there in the third heaven having all kind of glorious revelations and when he came back his body was transformed. He got up in Acts 14:20 *when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up.* That was several hours later and during those hours Paul had this marvelous experience described in 2 Cor. 12: 2-4.

The first missionary journey was basically in Pamphylis, in Pisidia and in

Galatia. And all these areas were where Paul suffered his worse physical oppositions. He died or he nearly died and went to third heaven. That is why when he wrote Galatians Gal.4:13 *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.* So Paul with all these inflictions that were slowly healing up was still preaching the gospel. The physical infirmity was not sickness but the results of the physical beatings. Even though he was going through all those things he got up and still he continue ministering, he ordained elders and he went to the surrounding cities to minister.

He reminded the Galatians to recall when he first came to them in the physical infirmity. Verse 14 *And my trials which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.* So that explains Gal. 4 when Paul was persecuted and still in physical infirmity as a result of the stoning. He was physically weak and there were still wounds in his body that had not physically healed yet. When Paul went to them he looks like someone who had just been discharged out of the hospital and all of them received him as an angel with white bandages. All these things took place in his first phase of ministry.

We can say it was God's grace upon Paul's life despite of the areas he bumped his head here and there he established his message and his method. He overcame the oppositions and Paul recognized the most important fact and this is where we close in the book of Acts 'go where your gift is accepted. Go where your gift is welcome'. When in Acts 13 he had preached the Word and the Jews responded differently, in verse 42 when they came out of the synagogue the Gentiles was possibly on their knees begging. Paul's words tell us that if God sends you, God will prepare the way. If you sent yourself you must prepare your own way. God never sent Paul to the Jews but God did sent Paul to the Gentiles and the Gentiles' hearts were prepared. Go where your gift is accepted and go where you can find favor with the gifting God has on your life.

David Ingels' ministry was having a lot of difficulties coming up. One day when he was in John Osteen's church, John Osteen told him a word that was almost prophetic. He turned to David Ingels when the anointing was there and said, "David go where you have favor". That's the same verse we are saying in a

different way 'Go where your gift is accepted' because if God sends you, He has prepared people whose hearts have been touched in an invisible way through the Holy Spirit. People are ready to receive and welcome your gift.

The Gentiles were so prepared and they were ready ripe for the harvest but Paul went to a place where the harvest is not ripe. The Gentiles were ready but Paul was going to the Jews. When Paul came out those fellows who were ready to be harvested, saying, "I beg you tell me" and Paul was going to the wrong place. In the end when Paul went to them the whole city responded. See results are there when you are doing what God wants you to do. The same way as we see in all the other cities that Paul went into and it was an open door to the Gentiles that God set Paul's ministry. Therefore go where your favor is and if your gift is right, go where the harvest is ripe and when the two are connected you see the glory of God.