



“The Call: The Life and Ministry of the Apostle Paul”

By Pastor Adam Hamilton

Session 2: Called to Go

(January 15, 2026 6:30 PM)

INTRODUCTION

Paul's Timeline So Far...

- 5 BC – 10 AD – Paul is born (estimate)
- 16 – 22 AD – Paul begins Jewish studies in Jerusalem
- 32 AD – Paul arrests Jesus followers in Palestine (estimate)
- 35 AD – Paul is converted on road to Damascus (estimate)
- 35 – 38 AD – Paul in Arabia, then Damascus
- 38 AD – Paul meets Peter and James in Jerusalem
- 38 – 48 AD – Paul in Tarsus and region (estimate)
- 47 AD – Barnabas to Syrian Antioch; with Paul at Tarsus
- 48 AD – Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem
- 49 AD – Paul and Barnabas begin “first” missionary journey
- 49 – 50 AD – Paul and Barnabas return to Syrian Antioch
- 49 – 50 AD – Paul writes Galatians (?)

Scripture Focus – Acts 11:27-30

- What is the difference between mission work *to* people and partnering *with* them?

- How do you interpret what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 8:13-14 about the importance of striking a “fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need”?
- What does Hamilton say is God's most common way of answering prayers? Do you agree? How do we make ourselves receptive to God's voice?

OPENING PRAYER

Help us, Holy God, to listen, pay attention, and seek to hear your continuing call for our ministry. Make us truly receptive to what you may reveal to us in your word today and what we may learn from each other. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Session 2 Video – “Called to Go”

Paul and Barnabas left on the First Missionary Journey, traveling on sea and land over the Taurus Mountains to cities in Galatia, including Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, where he preached to Jews and Gentiles and started some of the first churches in Asia Minor.

- Paul was trained as a tentmaker. How do you think he felt leaving his profession and becoming a missionary?
- Paul traveled for weeks at a time to preach the gospel. Why did he do it? Is it something you would do?
- On arriving in a town, why did Paul usually go first to the synagogue?

HEARING GOD'S CALL

Paul and Barnabas journeyed from Syrian Antioch to Jerusalem to deliver relief to the Jewish Christians, and then back to Antioch. Examine the route on the first century map on the next page.

*1st century Map – Paul and Barnabas' journey from Syrian Antioch to Jerusalem, and
1st Missionary Journey*



Scripture Focus – Acts 13:2-3

- Hamilton observes that among the times when he is most likely to hear God speaking is when he is in congregational worship. Have you ever experienced times in worship when you felt the Spirit was speaking to you?
- Hamilton contends that our role in worship is to prepare ourselves spiritually to hear the Spirit speak – sometimes in spite of, not because of, the music or the preaching. Do you agree? How do you prepare yourself to encounter God in worship?
- Have you ever fasted? If so, was it a part of a commitment made by a worshipful community, or did you choose to fast as an individual?

THE “FIRST” MISSIONARY JOURNEY

- Why did Hamilton place the word *first* in quotation marks?
- If what we call Paul's first missionary journey was in fact not the first, then what set this journey apart from those that came before?
- In addition to Barnabas, who began the journey with Paul? Did that person complete the journey? What happened?

Beginning with Acts 13:13, Luke shifts from speaking of “Barnabas and Saul” to “Paul and Barnabas”.

- What is the reason for this shift?
- Have you experienced a similar situation – as either a mentor or mentee?

HEAR AND DISCUSS PAUL'S SERMON

Paul's usual habit upon entering a town was to go to the synagogue and begin teaching. Imagine begin among the regular attenders at the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch – Jews and God-fearers – as Paul began to speak.

Scripture Focus – Acts 13:16b – 41

- Paul uses the word *hamartia* in several different ways. How do you define sin?
- Hamilton contends that nearly all the problems plaguing humankind have their roots in sin. Would you agree?

FACING OPPOSITION

Paul and Barnabas faced opposition in Pisidian Antioch. Remember, the reference to “the Jews” is used to describe the Jewish synagogue leaders and teachers who were opposed to the teaching of The Way.

- How might jealousy have fed the opposition Paul encountered on his journey? Where have you encountered jealousy in your faith life, and how did you deal with it? When have you yourself been jealous?
- What does this account have to say about Paul's perseverance?

NURTURING LEADERS

Luke tells us that instead of continuing on to Tarsus, when Paul and Barnabas left Derbe they returned to the cities where they had just preached and had encountered opposition.

Scripture Focus – Titus 1:5-9

- What positive qualities does Paul suggest are needed for leaders?
- What negative qualities does Paul suggest need to be avoided?

- Do you see these recommendations used in identifying leaders in our church?
- What vehicle did Paul use to encourage, mentor, and help the new leaders?

CLOSING

- What particularly struck you about this first journey of Paul? Were there any surprises?

Ways to Deepen Faith...

1. **Preparing for and Experiencing the Spirit in Worship** – How do you prepare yourself to experience the Spirit in worship? One way might be to find out the Scripture readings in advance of worship and reflect on how God may be speaking through them. Take paper and pencil (or a tablet) to worship in expectation of receiving a word from God.
2. **Explore Fasting** – Fasting traditionally involves abstaining from food, but it often also means abstaining from whatever may be blocking one's ability to attend to God's voice – screen time, social media, etc.
3. **Consider Nurture** – Adults who are involved in some way in the leadership of the congregation may want to reflect in the coming week on their own positive and negative traits for leadership. What might you need in order to further nurture your ability to serve God and the church?
4. **Perseverance and Faith** – Reflect further on how Paul's perseverance may inform your faith life. Pray for insight about how to hold strong to what you believe in the face of pressures in the workplace, in the culture at large, or at home.

Paul's travels were called his "first" missionary journey because prior to that time, he had taken the gospel to familiar territory. Close your eyes and become aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst, as Jesus promised wherever two or three are gathered together.

- Consider the familiar places where you live out your Christian faith – at home, at church, in the workplace, among friends – pray for the Spirit's guidance as you seek to live as disciples in those places and with those people.
- Now, let us invite the Spirit to speak in and through other people and unfamiliar situations. May the Spirit lead us to respond as disciples in ways that we may not have expected before.

CLOSING PRAYER

Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me,
Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me.
Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me. Amen.

Session 3: "Called to Suffer: Paul's Second Missionary Journey"

Thursday, January 22 6:30 PM Facebook Live

(If you have the book, read Chapter 3 in advance.)
