

## TUNED TO HIS FREQUENCY ACTS 13:1-3

Mindy and I spent the last two weeks in Turkey, which has become our favorite place in the world to visit, for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons I like Turkey so much is that so many of the New Testament churches were located there, and when I go I like to read some of letters that were written to churches that existed in the first century—like Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians, and 1 Peter. I like reading Revelation 2-3 where Jesus addresses seven churches, all of which are in modern Turkey.

Those seven letters, perhaps more than any other section of the New Testament, give us insight into what constitutes a successful, effective church in the eyes of our Lord Jesus. One thing is for sure: the effectiveness and impact of a local church is not based on the things that we, in our culture, tend to think makes a church successful. It is not based on the charisma or skill or giftedness of its leaders; it's not based on how well it is organized or how hard it works or how creative its methods are. It's not based on its outstanding programs or its fabulous worship services or its magnificent preaching. It's not based on its financial resources, and it's not even based on the correctness of its doctrine, as essential as that is.

The effectiveness and impact of a local church is based on one thing: the *blessing* of its Lord, *Jesus Christ*. He has hold of the valve of blessing, and He controls the flow. And the flow of His blessing is determined solely by that church's relationship *to* Jesus. A blessed church is one that loves Jesus above all else. A blessed church has its eyes *fixed* on Jesus. A blessed church listens to Him and trusts Him and follows Him wherever He leads. A blessed church stays so connected to Him that His life is flowing into them and is expressed through them.

And what is interesting is that the most blessed churches in Revelation 2-3 are the two that were the youngest, the weakest, the poorest, the least prominent, and the most persecuted of all the others—Smyrna and Philadelphia. But, perhaps because of these reasons, they were the two churches that loved Jesus the most and clung to Him the tightest. And Jesus opened doors of opportunity that allowed them to have an extremely consequential impact in their communities.

That's what I want for our church. That's what the elders and other leaders want for our church. We want the blessing of Jesus. We want to be everything He wants us to be and do everything He wants us to do. We want to be so connected to Him that His life and love and truth are flowing into us, and then emanate from us.

For the next four weeks we are going to sharing with you some direction that Jesus has been leading the elders of EBC. How do we know He has been leading? First, this is the biblical, God ordained method of how Jesus leads His church. Second, we've spent the last several months in His presence together seeking Him, asking Him to lead us and guide us and give direction. And we believe He has.

I want to look briefly at **Acts 13:1-3**. *Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.* <sup>2</sup> *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."* <sup>3</sup> *Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.*

I want you to know that from this seemingly ordinary worship service and prayer meeting emerged a directive from the Lord that spawned the greatest missionary movement in the history of Christianity. The Spirit of God told the church leaders to set apart Barnabas

and Saul for the work to which He had called them. He was able to reveal this to them because they were in His presence long enough to be tuned to His frequency. Thus, they were able to hear from Him and know exactly what He wanted them to do.

The Holy Spirit had an agenda for this church, and they discovered what that agenda was. They were to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work He had called them to do. Note: it was not the work *they* decided to do. It was not the work *they* had determined to do after taking stock of their inventory of spiritual gifts. This was what the Spirit determined to do and what the Spirit wanted to do. It was His plan; it was Him who revealed the plan, and He was going to implement the plan, because this was *His* work.

And that, my friends is the most critical component of ministry in a local church. Someone has said, “The Whole Work...of the Whole Church...is the Work...of the Holy Spirit” (Bob Bakke). I believe that with all my heart. It’s not, the Holy Spirit plus our good ideas, or our common sense, or our clever techniques and strategies. The *whole* work is the work of the Holy Spirit.

So the only way that we at Emmanuel Bible Church can possibly be effective in terms of fulfilling the specific assignment that Jesus has called us to do is if we get on His frequency so that we can hear His voice and do what He tells us to do. If we don’t, we’re going to spin our wheels—we’re going to go through the motions—we’re not going to do anything of real significance.

The key to being effective is being in sync with the Holy Spirit. And being in sync with the Holy Spirit means that we get our marching orders from Him, we let Him fill us and empower us to do what He wants done, and then we go wherever He sends us and do whatever He tells us.

The thing we would like to share with you today regarding how the Spirit has led us is in regards to pastoral leadership in our church.