

Light for the Nations

We all wish for church growth, but how do we react when it happens in ways that make us uncomfortable...like when that growth forces us to change our traditions, incorporate new music, or welcome large groups of people who are different from us? Studying how the early church reacts as they experience the same situation teaches us about the scope of God's mission and what it means to keep step with the Holy Spirit by being a light to the nations and bringing salvation to the ends of the earth.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- Do you know when or why people began calling followers of Jesus “Christians”?
- Has a new group of people ever prompted change in your church/Bible study/etc.? How did existing members respond?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [Light for the Nations](#)

READ [Acts 13](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- Reread [Acts 13:1-3](#) and reflect on it. What can you do (or are you already doing) to keep in step with the Spirit? How do you determine if opportunities for change in your life are the result of the Holy Spirit's leading?
- Why do you think it was difficult for the Jews to accept Paul's message in [Acts 13:38-39](#)? Conversely, why do you think Paul's message was exciting for the Gentiles? What can we learn from this situation? How does it apply to how we teach, share, or pass on our faith today?
- In [Acts 13:43](#), Paul and Barnabas encourage the people of Antioch to continue in God's grace. What does it mean to remain or continue in God's grace? What are Paul and Barnabas encouraging the people of Antioch to do and how can we do the same today?
- Have you seen a response in your church similar to the Jews' jealousy-filled response in [Acts 13:45](#)? Was it the result of an in-group becoming uncomfortable and then lashing out to contradict, throttle, or challenge change? What was the result of the situation?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Acts 11:19-26](#), [Isaiah 49:6](#)

CONCLUSION

Spend some time reflecting on [Isaiah 49:6](#), the verse Paul quotes at the end of his sermon in [Acts 13:47](#).

“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.

I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

You’ve probably heard someone question before if something is too big for God. But have you ever wondered if your vision or perspective is “too small” for God? Think about your life. Where is your mission field? Are there people or places in your life that need the light of Christ? To whom might God be bringing his message of salvation through you? Pray for the clear leading of the Holy Spirit; like the believers in [Acts 13:2-3](#) received when they sent out Paul and Barnabas. Consider whether something that feels big and daunting to you, might actually be too small for God. Pray for his vision, that you might see the people and world around you through his eyes.

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