

# PASTOR'S PAGE.

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## Outline of Missionary Sermon.

### THE FIRST MISSIONARY CHURCH.

Text—Acts xiii. 1-3

IN Antioch was planted the first Gentile Church, which a little later became the first missionary Church. The text furnishes a suggestive word picture of this Church. It was:

I. *A Church impressed with the individuality of Christ-like men.*

Christlike men—because the disciples of this Church were the first to be called Christians. Understand the ridicule of the Antiochians and the force of the nickname *Christian* hurled at these disciples, and destined to stick to them, for shame first, and then for glory forever.

Five of the prophets and teachers of this Church are singled out and illustrate the fact stated.

*Barnabas.*—A good man and full of the Holy Ghost. An ex-landlord of Cyprus, who sold all he had and laid the price of his bit of land at the apostles' feet for the Gospel's sake.

*Simeon.*—A colored man, thought by many to be Simon the Cyrenian, who was compelled to carry the cross for Jesus on the way to Calvary. This much we do know, that he was saved at the Cross to become a leader in the Antiochian Church.

*Lucius of Cyrene.*—The third of the group. By some supposed to be the Evangelist Luke.

*Manaen.*—A converted courier brought up with Herod Antipas, a foster-brother of the Tetrarch Herod. However, Manaen was unlike this last Herod in character and destiny. Herod was guilty of the blood of Christ, Manaen was a minister of Christ.

*Saul.*—Saul of Tarsus, afterwards Paul, the great apostle. A young ex-Pharisee and clever lawyer, destined to become the apostolic statesman of Christianity.

The Church still needs such men of marked individuality to bear the burden of her consecrated enterprise.

Men like Simeon, saved at the cross; like Barnabas, so completely consecrated, that neither self nor property is too dearly loved to be withheld from Christ and the perishing souls of men; like Manaen, ministers of the grace they have received; like Lucius, evangelists; like Paul, serving Christ and the Church with real apostolic statesmanship.

How grand to have a Church famous for the good men in it. Men of individuality, broad views, wide sympathies and true missionary spirit.

II. *A Church influenced by the living personality of the Holy Ghost.*

The Church must have men, but it must have more than men. It must have men in whom lives the Holy Ghost.

A Church thus controlled, will hold in proper relations the vital problems of prestige, finance, prayer and ministering.

1. The Antiochian Church was without prestige and wide influence. Its membership was not large. They

owned no magnificent church building. They were a Gentile Church, and were forced to overcome the bitter Jewish prejudice of that day.

2. The membership of the Church was not well-to-do. We venture to say that the whole Church at Antioch was not worth \$100.00, and yet out of this "deep poverty" the Church of Christ has been enriched and the world blessed for over eighteen hundred years. A great missionary writer has said: "The Church has never received her best support from men of colossal fortunes, but has depended upon the masses, including the poor and persons of very moderate means."

3. They were a praying Church. They fasted and prayed. The text emphasizes the one and implies the other. The Church of to-day needs more of the spirit of earnest supplication. Consider also the way to pray. Our prayers should be intercessory first, and personal last.

4. They were a ministering Church. Prayer and ministry go hand in hand and are inseparable. We are glad for the record of ministry, and glad also for the record that every man ministered according to his ability, and as God prospered him.

III. *A Church moved to active missionary service for the perishing non-Christian peoples of the earth.*

(1) A Church having in it men of individuality and Christlikeness, who are moved by the living personal influence of the Holy Ghost, will be and must be a missionary Church.

(2) A Church filled with the spirit of missions will be found to have in it men noted for their individuality, as also for their spirituality.

(3) We are driven to a third conclusion. A Church having in it men who are ever criticising and finding fault with the purpose and hope of missionary effort, the management and expenditure of missionary funds, and are against missionary enterprise, and ever seeking and framing excuses so as not to give into the funds of world-wide evangelization, is a Church in which the Holy Ghost has neither place nor influence, and where the Spirit's voice is never heard saying, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." From such a Church none are sent forth blessed to bless.

1. Consider the need of the perishing non-Christian peoples of the earth. They are "without Christ," as Bishop Thoburn puts it in his "Christless Nations." It is estimated that there are ten hundred millions of human beings in the world who have never heard of a personal Saviour.

Consider the unutterable need of China, India, Africa, etc.

2. How is this need to be satisfied? Love is the answer. The world must be loved back to God. Love is everything in missions. Love gives. It is the property of love to give all it has. (1) Money; (2) prayer; (3) self. Love gives self, and self is best. God wants ourselves in answer to love.

3. The Antioch Church sent two of its own members. So ought our Christian Churches to do.