

The Folly of Earthly Wisdom

4th - 6th Grade
Lesson 5

Paul at Mars' Hill

We have been learning about the first Christians! There were many new Christians in a city called Antioch. The Bible tells us that the teachers and prophets that had received Christ were from many different places. Barnabas was from a place called Cyprus, and Saul was from Tarsus. Another teacher, named Simeon, was from Africa. People from different places were working in the church at Antioch. The church at Antioch was the first church to support missionaries like we do today! They loved God very much and wanted people all over the world to know about Jesus.

Missions Delivered

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

—Acts 11:26

The Bible tells us that the disciples were called “Christians.” The word *Christian* means “to be like Christ.” Jesus cared about people and so did the church at Antioch. So, they were called “Christians” because they were “like Christ.”

Although God wants churches to send missionaries, He also wants them to have a church that follows the Word of God. The Bible says that, “Christ is the head of the church” (Ephesians 5:23). The members of the church are supposed to follow their pastor. They should never criticize the pastor and his family.

Jesus told His disciples before He went to heaven that they should go tell everyone about Him. Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). We call this command from Jesus the Great Commission. God wants churches to try their best to accomplish this by giving people the gospel and giving money so that other people can take the gospel to the world.

We also learned in our last series how Jesus was full of compassion. God wants churches to be compassionate like Jesus was. He wants them to love people and try to help them (Philippians 4:15-17). Churches today should also be giving. Paul told the people that they needed to give to missionaries so that people could hear about Jesus. The first missionaries that were sent out were Paul and Barnabas. We can learn something about the first missionaries.

Saved

Paul and Barnabas had asked Jesus to be their Savior. The first thing we can learn from them is that they were saved. The most important thing that we need to do is to be saved. We need to ask Jesus to be our Savior!

Serving

Paul and Barnabas served Jesus after they got saved. They were faithful to God in what He wanted them to do. There are many ways that you can serve like Paul and Barnabas did. You can ask your Sunday school teacher if there is any way you can help. That is serving.

Separated

Paul and Barnabas were separated from the church for a specific task or job. God had a special plan for them, just like He has for you! They were serving in their local church, but God had something else planned. The first thing we need to do is get saved. Then, we need to serve in any way we can. Sometimes God “separates” people for a specific work. Sometimes He calls people to preach. Sometimes He calls them to be teachers. God has a different plan for everyone!

God separated Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries. But all Christians should be separated from the world. We should not behave like people in the world do. We shouldn’t listen to worldly music, watch bad things on TV, or go to bad places.

Opposition Defeated

The first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas took was to Barnabas’s home country, Cyprus. While they were there, they met a sorcerer. His name was Elymas. Do you remember reading about how Satan tries to stop revival? Satan was trying to use Elymas to stop the revival in Cyprus.

Paul told the sorcerer that he was wrong to try to lead people away from Jesus. After Paul told him this, the Lord caused him to become blind!

Superstitions Denounced

On the next missionary journey, Paul traveled with a man named Silas. They traveled to many different places telling people about Jesus. Paul made an amazing speech during this journey that is in the Bible. He was in the city of Athens. The people in Athens did not worship God. They served false gods. Paul went to a place called Areopagus. It was a very important court at the top of a place called Mars’ Hill. Mars’ Hill was dedicated to the Athenians’ god of war. Paul was invited to speak in the Areopagus. Those who lived in Athens often went there to hear different people speak. Paul spoke about Jesus! He told the people that they were worshipping the wrong god. Many of the people that heard his message got saved!

Conclusion

Paul was the very first missionary. He told many people about Jesus. Everywhere he went, many people accepted Jesus—but many people also rejected Jesus. If someone has ever told you how to go to heaven, and you did not accept Jesus as your Savior, then you have rejected Jesus. Someday, every person will stand before God. It would not be good to have to stand before God when you have rejected His Son Who died for you.

After we are saved, we need to tell others about Jesus. We also need to give money to support missionaries like this church at Antioch did, so that people we cannot tell personally can hear the gospel too!