



ONE GENERATION AWAY

*Week 3 | Reach | Teacher: Libin Abraham
Sermon Questions for 8.16.2026*

OPENER

Preaching in Pisidian Antioch, Paul said of King David that he “served God’s purpose in his own generation.” None of us chose when we were born or what challenges our generation would face, but every one of us gets to answer whether we will serve our own purpose or God’s purpose in the years we have been given. Bent Tree has spent two weeks remembering and renewing, and Libin reminds us that renewal was never meant to stop with us. God renews his people so that through his people he can reach a hurting world. Acts 13 shows us a church in Antioch that was once a mission field and became a sending force, because reached people reach people.

READ

Acts 13:1-3, 36-39, 47, 49 | Acts 11:20-21 | Acts 17:26-27

MAIN POINTS

1. A Reaching Church Worships

The leaders in Antioch came from different ethnic backgrounds, hometowns, and stories, yet they shared one Savior, one Spirit, and one mission, and their unity was itself evidence of the gospel. When the Spirit called out Barnabas and Saul, this church was not in a strategy meeting or studying market trends. They were worshiping the Lord and fasting. Before the church goes out, the church bows down, and as they turned their attention to God in worship, God turned their hearts to the world for mission. We cannot give the world a faith that is not alive in us, which is why we must renew before we can reach. The question is not simply what we would like to accomplish in the next fifty years, but “Holy Spirit, what are you saying to your church?”

2. A Reaching Church Releases

Barnabas and Saul were not peripheral people at Antioch. They were two of the church’s key leaders and teachers, exactly the kind of people you fight to keep if you are thinking only about your own attendance and programs. But when the Spirit said, “Set them apart for me,” Antioch opened its hands, laid hands on them, and sent them off. The Spirit sent them, but the church released them. Reaching people will always cost us something to release, whether comfort, time, resources, or gifted leaders, because you cannot reach if you are unwilling to release.

3. A Reaching Church Crosses Barriers

Acts 13 is filled with barrier crossing movement as Barnabas and Saul travel, sail, preach in synagogues, and share the gospel with a Roman official, crossing geographic, ethnic, religious, and social lines. We carry the most non-tribal message in an increasingly tribal world, good news for people in a different political tribe, of every race, ethnicity, and tax bracket, and for the highly religious and the highly secular alike. Crossing boundaries never means changing the message: Jesus died, Jesus rose, forgiveness is found in him, and everyone who believes is made right with God. We do not change the gospel to reach people. The gospel changes us so that we are willing to reach people.

4. The People We Are Called to Reach May Be Within Our Reach

In Athens, Paul said God determined the appointed times and the boundaries of where people live so that they might seek him and perhaps reach out and find him. The religious and cultural diversity filling our region is not a reason for fear but an opportunity for mission, and those moving in around us are not interruptions to our mission. They are our mission, people made in God's image whom he wants to rescue. Resistance will come, as it did in Acts where revival and riots often traveled together, but that opposition is evidence that we are on mission. The question Libin leaves with us is simple: who has God placed within your reach?

ENGAGE WITH GOD IN A GROUP

- Who is someone who served God's purpose in their generation by reaching you? Who prayed for you, invited you, taught you, or first told you about Jesus?
- Paul said David "served God's purpose in his own generation." What would it look like for that to be true of your life in this season, with the neighbors, family, and community God has actually placed around you?
- The church in Antioch listened to the Spirit in worship before they ever went out. What helps you actually pay attention to God rather than just stay busy for him?
- Antioch released two of its best leaders because the Spirit asked for them. What might God be asking you to release, whether comfort, time, resources, or control, in order to reach someone?
- Libin said we do not change the gospel to reach people, but the gospel changes us so that we are willing to reach people. Which barrier feels hardest for you to cross right now: cultural, generational, political, socioeconomic, or relational?
- Where have you felt resistance when you tried to share your faith? How does it change things to see that resistance as evidence you are on mission rather than a sign you got it wrong?
- Picture one person God has placed within your reach and say their name to the group. What is one step you will take this week to carry the love of Jesus toward them?

BOTTOM LINE

Reached people reach people, so a church renewed in worship will open its hands, cross every barrier, and serve God's purpose in its own generation.