



Open Door For Ministry

"Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch" (Acts 11:25,26).

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"Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. 23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. 27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 11:22-30).

Sometimes, great doors swing open slowly. Saul has been a Christian by this time for some years, and it appears nothing was happening in relation to the fulfilment of the heavenly vision he had on the road to Damascus about God's ministry for his life. All his skills, gifts and knowledge appears to be in abeyance. Suddenly, there was a spiritual need at Antioch, that he was brought in to fill. This opened the door that ultimately led to the fulfilment of his call. When it seems slow, remain faithful in the silent years till God opens the doors. Note the following:

- 1) In response to the tidings on the spread of the gospel in many regions, the apostles at Jerusalem sent Barnabas, a seasoned Christian leader full of the Holy Spirit, to see how things really were.
- 2) On seeing the grace of God on the believers, he exhorted them to cleave to God with purpose of heart.
- 3) Barnabas knew that the salvation of the souls and his exhortation were not enough to ensure the spiritual growth of these new believ-

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ers into spiritual maturity. They needed a teacher to teach and disciple them - a role that he knew was suitable for Saul, so, he went in search of him (vs 25).

- 4) God knows where the "Saul's" are and how to bring them to meet the need at 'Antioch'.
- 5) Paul willingly followed Barnabas to Antioch and spent a whole year teaching and discipling the believers (vs 26).
- 6) His ministry so effectively transformed the lives of these believers that they were first called Christians at Antioch (vs 26). Their internal belief were manifested in changes to character, attitudes and behaviours. Truly, a city set on an hill cannot be hidden.
- 7) His work there, made the Antioch church to become a centre of attention that attracted prophets from Jerusalem.
- 8) The ministry of the prophets revealed a famine that would occur (vs 28). And this provided the steer for the believers to organise a relief effort to the affected areas (vs 29).
- 9) Barnabas and Saul became partners in ministry for taking the relief to their destination (vs 30).

This text teaches us the importance of:

- 1) Keeping in touch with developments all around us;
- 2) Having spiritual discernment on the real needs of the moment;
- 3) Willingness to seek the help of others when needed;
- 4) Willingness to serve in small beginnings and making effective use of opportunities.