

January 10, 2010

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO ON
ACTS 12:25 - 13:1-5, 13

In verse 2, it was Barnabas and Saul, but in verse 13, it states, "Paul and his company." No one is sure why John Mark left the party, but Paul considered his an act of desertion. Whatever the reason for John Mark leaving, he did not go with them to the work – God's work.

1. This is an all too common occurrence in the church today for many excuses are given.
 2. Not going on to the work of God discourages fellow workers, and also hurts those who might become faithful workers.
 3. Not going on to do the work of God is a mistake, because those who lay down a good work can't always take it up again when or where they wish.
 4. Not going on to do the work of God is a loss of reward for those who grow weary in well doing.
 5. Not going on to do the work of God is a sin and God's judgment will come.
- I. BECAUSE THERE IS A CHOICE. If you don't go to the work, it won't be the same without you. No one else in this world can do what God has called you to do. It will be harder on the others if you let God down, if you let others down, and if you let yourself down.
- A. Paul and Barnabas were dependent on John Mark. God is depending on you. This church is depending on you. Your pastor is depending on you. A lost world is depending on you. Are you dependable?
 - B. John Mark let everyone down on this occasion. At a funeral service, the minister stated, "Brother So and So had been working off and on for the Lord for the last forty years." Some people are more off than on in serving God.
 1. You don't have to go on if you don't want to, but God's work will continue without you.
 2. You don't have to attend the services, but eventually the Wednesday night service goes, then the Sunday night service goes, and then Sunday School goes.
 3. You don't have to sing in the choir anymore.
 4. You don't have to teach a class anymore.
 5. You don't have to tithe anymore.

6. You don't have to go to Heaven either. It is left up to you to choose God's will or yours, and it is left up to you to face the consequences.
- II. THERE IS A CONSIDERATION – you will miss a great adventure if you don't go on.
 - A. There is a risk because serving God calls for sacrifice. “Let someone else sweat and bleed.” Jesus sweated blood for you, died for you, and saved you. We ought to be able to take the heat and pressure for Him. Jesus didn't quit or turn back; He stayed on the cross until the job was done.
 - B. There is a reward for being an active part of God's work. John Mark missed being a part of helping people to be saved. He missed the companionship of Paul and Barnabas. He missed out because he was out of the will of God.
 - III. THERE IS A CHANGE – that is possible. If you don't go on to God's work, God wants you to come back to obedience. John Mark quit in Acts 13:13, but came back in Acts 15:37-40.
 - A. There was a disagreement. Mark was repentant and sorry for his lack of commitment. He realized he had shifted his share of the work to the others. Have you shifted your responsibilities and God given opportunities to others in the church?
 - B. He was a delight to Paul instead of a bitter disappointment. Are you watching the Pauls and Barnabases of this world do the work and make the sacrifices and you want the glory? You too can come back to the work of God – no failure has to be final.

You don't have to go on, but the glory and the joy of the presence of God you share along the way is worth the effort of the journey. Keep on going and you will be eternally glad you did.