



"PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND
TEACHING THINGS ABOUT THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST WITH ALL OPENNESS,
UNHINDERED."
- ACTS 28:31

**AUG
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BOOK OF THE MONTH
2026

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Week 1 - "Sent by the Spirit" Acts 13:1-52

UNHINDERED: The Gospel on the Move

Sunday, August 2, 2026 · Cross Central

The Room Where It All Begins

Acts 13 opens in a room that changes everything.

Five people- Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, and Saul are worshipping and fasting together in Antioch. Luke's list of names is deliberate: these five people represent different and diverse worlds. Africa. Cyprus. The royal court of Herod. The Pharisaic tradition. All in one room, already a picture of what the gospel does to human division before the mission has officially begun.

And in the middle of their worship, not at the end of it, not as a reward for finishing it, the Holy Spirit speaks.

"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (v.2)

This is the moment Acts has been building toward. Not a strategy meeting. Not a committee decision. A voice in the middle of worship. The sending of the gospel to the ends of the earth begins here, in a community that was simply paying attention.

The first thing Acts 13 teaches us is this: the mission God initiates begins in worship, not in strategy. Worship doesn't compete with mission. Worship produces it.

The Spirit Who Sends Is the Spirit Who Goes

From Antioch they sail to Cyprus, where they encounter Elymas, a court sorcerer who tries to prevent the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus from hearing the gospel. Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, confronts him directly. Elymas is struck blind. Sergius Paulus, watching all of this, believes.

The pattern established here holds for the rest of Acts: the mission God initiates, God sustains. The Spirit who speaks in the worshipping room in Antioch is the same Spirit who goes before the missionaries into Cyprus. Opposition arises almost immediately, but opposition never has the final word over a mission the Spirit has set in motion.

A Sermon That Tells the Whole Story

In Pisidian Antioch, Paul stands in the synagogue and delivers the longest recorded speech in Acts so far. He doesn't begin with Jesus. He begins with Abraham. He traces Israel's whole history (Egypt, the wilderness, the judges, David) before landing it all on a single announcement:

"It is one of King David's descendants, Jesus, who is God's promised Saviour of Israel." (v.23)

History, Paul is saying, was never wandering. It was arriving. Every rescue, every king, every prophet was a signpost pointing forward to one person. And then the sermon reaches its pastoral heart:

"Everyone who believes in him is made right with God, something the law of Moses could never do." (v.39)

What the law could never do, the risen Christ has already done. The law could diagnose sin, name it and define it, but it could never remove the guilt of it. Sin highlights the debt without providing the means to remove it. The resurrection changes all of that. The forgiveness Paul announces is not earned or maintained. It is received.

The Response That Splits the Room

Almost the entire city turns out the following Sabbath. And the room splits. Joy on one side, jealousy on the other. Those who embrace the message rejoice; those who feel threatened by how far grace is reaching resist it. Paul quotes Isaiah 49:6 — "I have made

you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth" — and exposes the horizon to be wider than his opponents ever wanted it to go.

They expel Paul and Barnabas from the region. And Luke closes the chapter with a line worth carrying into our week:

"The believers were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." (v.52)

Driven out. And full of joy. Not eventually. Not when circumstances improved. Right then, in the middle of opposition, the new community in Pisidian Antioch is full of the same Spirit that sent the missionaries in the first place.

The Question We're Carrying Into the Series

This morning's sermon closed with a question that will sit underneath all nine weeks of UNHINDERED:

Are we consumers of church, or participants in God's mission?

The church in Antioch was not a perfect community. It was simply a community that was turned toward God, paying attention in worship and fasting, and willing to release what it loved most when the Spirit called it outward. Most of us won't be asked to sail to Cyprus. But all of us are being asked the same underlying question Antioch was asked: when the Spirit calls something out of our hands and into mission, will we hold on, or will we send?

This Week

The 61-day reading plan is underway. Days 1–7 take you through Acts 13:1 through 14:28, the full opening movement of the mission. The daily devotions are posted each morning at crosscentral.com.au/unhindered, along with the discussion questions from this morning's handout and a space to engage with what God is showing you through the text.

If you haven't found your Acts Triad yet, two people to read and discuss Acts with each week, this is the week to make that call or send that message. Ten minutes. Three questions. It's enough.