

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 6TH-7TH // BOOK OF ACTS

## THE ONE GOD RAISED UP (ACTS 13:26-37)

Paul is on his first missionary journey and is speaking to a synagogue in Pisidian Antioch.

- His audience includes Jewish worshippers and Gentile "God-fearers" who attended the synagogue (v. 26).
- These are people who already know the story of the Old Testament.
- So far, Paul has reviewed Israel's history from Abraham to King David.

Paul has been emphasizing God's faithfulness through Israel's history—God always made a way of salvation for His people.

- In verse 23, Paul introduced Jesus as the promised descendant of David (the Messiah).
- Paul will now use Old Testament scripture to prove Jesus is the promised Messiah, the resurrection is a fulfillment of God's promises, and Jesus is God's eternal King.

## THE REJECTED MESSIAH (VS. 26-29)

To hear and receive the word of God concerning Jesus is to receive salvation from God (v. 26).

- Some in life will not recognize Jesus as God's Messiah and will reject Him. This is exactly what the rulers and residents of Jerusalem did.
- Jesus (the innocent) was condemned to die.
- He was crucified, buried, and placed in a tomb, all according to God's plan.

## THE RISEN SAVIOR (VS. 30-31)

God's plan all along was to raise Jesus from the dead!

- After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to many witnesses.
- These witnesses (including Paul) were now testifying to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus.
- If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, what happened that explains the Christian movement?

## THE PROMISED KING (VS. 32-37)

God's promises of a Messiah were fulfilled fully in Jesus (vs. 32-33).

- Paul quotes Psalm 2 (v. 33), Isaiah 55 (v. 34), and Psalm 16 (vs. 35-37).
- Many Jews would have understood Psalm 16 to be about David, but Paul explains that David died and saw decay—Jesus didn't.

## SO, WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

Jesus is not just a good teacher to admire—He's the King of all Kings to follow and obey.

- The resurrection is the proof given by God to verify His identity.
- The resurrection demands a response: if God raised Jesus from the dead, His claims are true.
- Every person must decide what they will do with Jesus. Will you believe, follow, and obey?

## JUSTIFIED (ACTS 13:38-43)

### FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Our biggest problems in life are not economic, social, genetic, or physical.

- That means life's central problem cannot be solved through financial gain, achievement, relationships, therapy/mental health, physical pleasure, or health/well-being.
- We have a sin problem—this has fractured us to the core and separated us from God.

We have all sinned against God and broken His laws and commands.

- This is why our world is so broken and torn apart.
- It is not just that sin is an influence on the outside of us; sin is part of our very nature—our hearts want to sin.
- We all need forgiveness of sins. But how?
- Through Jesus, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to us (v. 38).

## JUSTIFIED THROUGH HIM

Everyone who believes in Jesus is justified through Him (v. 39).

- To justify means "to declare righteous."
- When we place our faith in Jesus, God pronounces us (even though we're sinners) righteous because of our faith in Jesus.
- We're forgiven and declared righteous because Jesus paid the full penalty of our sin debt.

## NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW OF MOSES

Some people (especially religious folks), in the secret place of their heart, refuse to embrace the pure message of salvation from Jesus because they want a salvation of their own making that they can brag about.

- They want to earn it—because if they can earn it, they can feel superior to all the folks who did not work as hard as they did to earn it.

Paul says you cannot be declared righteous by God through keeping the law (v. 39).

- Why? Because besides Jesus, no human on earth has ever been able to completely keep the law.
- Even if you could (which you cannot), you would feel arrogance, scorn, and contempt in your heart for those who cannot—which is sin.

## THE WARNING

The warning Paul issues is that if we do not embrace the person and work of Jesus with our whole hearts and lives, we are "scorners" who will perish (vs. 40-41; Hab. 1:5).

- A scoffer is an "armchair critic" who treats people, ideas, or morals as silly or stupid.
- They respond to things they disagree with with dismissive humor, sarcasm, or belittlement.

## ME? A SCOFFER?

You may say that you respect (or even believe in) the person and work of Jesus, but if you are not fully embracing Him with your whole heart and life, you are dismissing and belittling the work He did for you on the cross.

- You are mocking and ridiculing the work of Jesus on the cross for you by dismissing your need for it or acting like it is not important.

## GOOD NEWS

After Paul spoke this message, both Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue responded positively and wanted to hear more (vs. 42-43).

- Paul and Barnabas spoke with them and *urged* them to "continue in the grace of God." God's grace is not just the introduction to the Christian life; it is the very foundation upon which we are to build everything else.

## CONTINUING IN GRACE

Grace is God's favor, benevolence, and goodness toward the undeserving and unworthy (us).

- It is by grace that we are saved, not by works, so that none of us can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- It is by God's grace that we are given victory (James 4:6), and it is by God's grace that we grow to look more like Jesus (Phil. 2:13).
- Our job is to humbly seek and receive God's grace by yielding our lives to Jesus every day.

## MIXED RESULTS (ACTS 13:44-52)

The gospel was such good news to these people that almost the whole town showed up to hear it.

- We have to keep in mind that this was before social media, the internet, TV, radio, or any form of mass media—Paul and Barnabas were the only source of this new teaching.
- The crowds were there to hear "the word of the Lord" (v. 44): this was the primary power that attracted people, not novelty.

## JEALOUSY AND ENVY (V. 45)

Religion always peddles in the creation and advancement of platforms and personalities.

- What's more important to those shackled by dead religion is not God's Word being preached and hearts being changed, but rather a certain personality, tribe, movement, or pet doctrine advanced. The Jewish leaders were filled with jealousy and tried to sabotage the work of God.

## THE RESPONSE (VS. 46-48)

The gospel is intended for all people, but chronologically it was a message first revealed to the Jewish people before it was given to the Gentiles (this is what Paul is saying in verse 46).

- But since many of the Jews in this city were rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, Paul and Barnabas turned their focus to the Gentiles.

The rejection of Jesus by the Jewish people and the embrace by the Gentiles were in God's plan.

- God's plan was for Israel to be a light to the Gentile nations and to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.
- Through the Messiah of Israel (Jesus), all people from any tribe or tongue can be saved and know God! This was good news for the Gentiles, and many believed (v. 48).

Great blessing and great opposition usually go together (vs. 49-50).

- The Word of the Lord spread through the whole region. What a fruitful ministry!
- However, the greater the impact, the greater the pushback.
- The established religious and civic power structures (socially prominent women and politically influential men) did not like it.

## PUSHBACK AND PERSECUTION

These influential people stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from the region (v. 50).

- Sometimes a clear proclamation of the gospel will put you at odds with respected, influential voices (it is not good news to everybody).
- In other words, Christianity will not always win the culture war—and we've got to be OK with that.

## SHAKING THE DUST OFF (VS. 51-52)

If Jewish people had to go in or through a Gentile city, when leaving the city, they shook the dust off their feet as a gesture saying, "We don't want to take anything from this Gentile city with us."

- Paul and Barnabas were saying, "We don't want to take anything with us from you Jesus-rejecting religious people." These folks were opposing Jesus, not Paul and Barnabas.

## MOVING ON (VS. 51-52)

The rejection in Pisidian Antioch didn't cause Paul and Barnabas to want to give up—they simply moved on to another town (Iconium).

- Although the town at large (and its influential leaders) had rejected the gospel, the disciples in that place were still filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. Christianity can thrive even under less-than-ideal circumstances.
- 2 Corinthians 2:15-16

## SAME MESSAGE, DIFFERENT RESULTS

- The gospel (the good news of Jesus) doesn't change, but how it's received (and what's heard) will vary based on the condition of the heart.
- Some will hear of:
  - God's grace poured out richly and freely on the undeserving.
  - The sacrificial love of Christ.
  - The wonderful plan of God for our lives.
- Others will hear:
  - God is unloving in His assessment of me: I don't need saving; I'm good just the way I am!
  - God is tyrannical, unfair, and harsh in His condemnation against "sin."
  - God is unjust and intolerant in *only* offering Jesus as the path to salvation.
  - God is a control freak: I want to be in charge!

## OUR PROCLAMATION CANNOT CHANGE

- When we soften or try to adapt the gospel to make it less offensive or easier to accept, we remove the gospel's power (Romans 1:16).
- The gospel offends the moralist and religious because it tells us we cannot earn salvation, and even our good works are unrighteous.
- The gospel offends the rebel because it demands repentance and surrender.

## WE MUST CHANGE

- We must be willing to humble ourselves and admit our need for salvation and God's grace.
- We must be willing to humble ourselves and admit that we are not better than others and our righteousness is not earning us anything from God.
- "In order to be a Christian, we must repent of our righteousness" (George Whitfield).
- We must be willing to humble ourselves and admit that our life of sin and rebellion against God is the path to Hell.
- We must be willing to humble ourselves and be OK with being seen as "foolish" or not cool by the world and its prominent voices.
- Everyone who believes in Him is justified through Him. Is this true in your heart and life?