

## Acts 13.30-52

After Jesus had been put to death, he was taken down from the cross <sup>[g]</sup> and placed in a tomb. <sup>30</sup>But God raised him from death! <sup>31</sup>Then for many days Jesus appeared to his followers who had gone with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. Now they are telling our people about him. <sup>32</sup>God made a promise to our ancestors. And we are here to tell you the good news <sup>33</sup>that he has kept this promise to us. It is just as the second Psalm says about Jesus, "You are my son because today I have become your Father." <sup>34</sup>God raised Jesus from death and will never let his body decay. It is just as God said, "I will make to you the same holy promise that I made to David." <sup>35</sup>And in another psalm it says, "God will never let the body of his Holy One decay."

<sup>36</sup>When David was alive, he obeyed God. Then after he died, he was buried in the family grave, and his body decayed. <sup>37</sup>But God raised Jesus from death, and his body did not decay. <sup>38</sup>My friends, the message is that Jesus can forgive your sins! The Law of Moses could not set you free from all your sins. <sup>39</sup>But everyone who has faith in Jesus is set free. <sup>40</sup>Make sure that what the prophets have said doesn't happen to you. They said, <sup>41</sup>"Look, you people who make fun of God! Be amazed and disappear. I will do something today that you won't believe, even if someone tells you about it!"

<sup>42</sup>As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the meeting, the people begged them to say more about these same things on the next Sabbath. <sup>43</sup>After the service, many Jews and a lot of Gentiles who worshiped God went with them. Paul and Barnabas begged them all to remain faithful to God, who had been so kind to them.

<sup>44</sup>The next Sabbath almost everyone in town came to hear the message about the Lord. <sup>[h]</sup> <sup>45</sup>When the Jewish people saw the crowds, they were very jealous. They insulted Paul and spoke against everything he said. <sup>46</sup>But Paul and Barnabas bravely said: We had to tell God's message to you before we told it to anyone else. But you rejected the message! This proves that you don't deserve eternal life. Now we are going to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup>The Lord has given us this command, "I have placed you here as a light for the Gentiles. You are to take the saving power of God to people everywhere on earth."

<sup>48</sup>This message made the Gentiles glad, and they praised what they had heard about the Lord. Everyone who had been chosen for eternal life then put their faith in the Lord.

<sup>49</sup>The message about the Lord spread all over that region. <sup>50</sup>But the Jewish leaders went to some of the important men in the town and to some respected women who were religious. They turned them against Paul and Barnabas and started making trouble for them. They even chased them out of that part of the country.

<sup>51</sup>Paul and Barnabas shook the dust from that place off their feet <sup>[i]</sup> and went on to the city of Iconium. <sup>52</sup>But the Lord's followers in Antioch were very happy and were filled with the Holy Spirit.

### (30-37) Paul preaches the resurrected Jesus.

1. "But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings; that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption."
2. **But God! What glorious words! Man had done his best to fight against God - even to kill Him - but God was greater than man's sin and rebellion, and rose in triumph over sin and death.**
3. The fact is simply stated (But God raised Him from the dead). But evidence from eyewitnesses is offered (He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him). Then, Paul applies the truth of

resurrection. The resurrection means that Jesus truly is the unique Son of God (Psalm 2:7), and it proves He was utterly holy even in His work on the cross (Psalm 16:10).

**(38-41) With a promise and a warning, Paul applies the truth of who Jesus is and what He has done.**

4. "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 'Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, a work which you will by no means believe, though one were to declare it to you.'"
5. Through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins: The promise is that, because of who Jesus is and what He has done for us, forgiveness is offered to us freely in Jesus. We may be justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.
6. What's wrong with justifying ourselves before God? It assumes God grades on a curve; it gives us the glory for our own salvation - instead of simply saying *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9)
7. Some refuse to embrace the salvation of Jesus in the secret place of their heart, because they want a salvation of their *own* making. They want to be saved the old-fashioned way - they want to *earn* it.
8. In only a few months, Paul will be writing a letter to these churches in Galatia, dealing with these same themes of being justified by God's grace and not by keeping the law.
9. Everyone who believes is justified: Jesus does not only forgive us, but we are also justified by Him. **Forgiveness takes care of the debt of sin, but justification puts a "credit" on our account before God.**
10. Beware, therefore: The warning is that if we do not embrace the person and work of Jesus with our whole lives, we are despisers who will perish.
11. Some commentators have complained that Paul preaches too much like Peter did on Pentecost. But what is to complain about? It shows us that Peter and Paul preached the same gospel, and the same gospel was preached some fifteen years after Pentecost as was preached on that first day.
12. Others note similarities between Paul's sermon here and the sermon of Stephen in Acts 7. That was a sermon that Paul heard when he still hated the name of Jesus. Perhaps the sermon of the first martyr of the church was still ringing in the ears of the man who led his execution!

**The Response to the sermon at Pisidian Antioch: (42-43) Many people, both Jews and Gentiles, express interest in Paul's message.**

13. So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.
14. We should assume that many of these believed, because Paul and Barnabas persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. This means they had already started to trust in the grace of God.
15. *Continuing* in grace is as important as beginning in grace; we must never leave it as the basic principle of our relationship with God. Far too many only think of grace as the introduction to the Christian life, but God wants grace to remain as the foundation for our life with Him.

**(44-45) On the next Sabbath, envy creates opposition.**

16. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.
17. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God: The scene is easy to picture. The whole city is ready to hear the gospel from Paul on the next Sabbath, and this dramatic **response makes the leaders of the synagogue envious, because they aren't in charge any more!**
18. This is inevitable for those who are more concerned about being popular than serving God. When someone else is more popular, they get envious! We can't all be popular to the same degree, but we can all serve and please God to the same degree in Jesus Christ.
19. Contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul: Suddenly, Paul's preaching is opposed as if he were conducting a debate, his opponents contradicting him, and blaspheming God.
20. The blasphemy mentioned probably has to do with abusive and degrading language directed towards Jesus, whom Paul preached.
21. Why? Why would these religious people reject the Messiah they had waited for so long? One great reason was they wanted to keep the division between Jew and Gentile, and if Jesus was to be the Messiah of all men, they wanted no part of Him.
22. "They simply could not accept a teaching that opened such floodgates. For themselves and their adherents they could accept a message as God-sent and tolerate some change in their teaching and practice, but they could not endure that the Gentiles should be made equal with God's ancient people." (Williams)
23. "The Jews could not endure that the Gentiles should be equal to them, being as much concerned against the Gentiles being exalted, as against their own being depressed." (Poole)
24. Some people end up rejecting Jesus because of the way He changes our relationship with other people. Some would rather hold on to their bitterness and animosity towards others than turn to Jesus and be reconciled.

**(46-50) Paul and Barnabas respond to the Jewish opposition.**

25. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.
26. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold: Praise God for their zeal for the things of God! They wouldn't let this challenge go unanswered, because they really believed the truth about Jesus.
27. Since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles: They rebuke those who reject Jesus, letting the Jews know that it was a privilege that this message should come to them first, a privilege they are rejecting.
28. Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed: They respond with more evangelism to open hearts, now

directing their efforts to the Gentiles, in obedience to God's command (Romans 1:16) and in fulfillment of prophecy (the quotation from Isaiah 49:6).

29. The Gentiles respond to Paul's invitation with enthusiastic belief, learning with joy that God *does not* hate Gentiles, but offers them salvation in Jesus.
30. Paul shows wisdom in not spending all his time trying to persuade hardened hearts. We know that even after he made Gentiles the focus of his evangelistic efforts, he still prayed earnestly for the salvation of Israel (Romans 10:1), but he spent his missionary time ministering to more open hearts.
31. And the word of the Lord was being spread: It was being spread through the efforts of Paul and Barnabas, but especially through the lives of these people being brought to Jesus Christ.
32. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region: **Wherever there is revival, the second party to be revived is the Devil.** Jewish opposition was strong enough to force Paul and Barnabas to leave the area.

#### **(51-52) Paul and Barnabas react to their expulsion from the city of Pisidian Antioch.**

33. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.
34. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them: In doing this, Paul and Barnabas are treating the city as if they were a God-rejecting Gentile city.
35. If Jewish people had to go in or through a Gentile city, when leaving the city they would shake the dust off their feet as a gesture saying, "We don't want to take anything from this Gentile city with us." In this sense, Paul is saying "I don't want to take anything with me from you Jesus-rejecting religionists."
36. This rejection did not make Paul and Barnabas think there was anything wrong with *themselves*. They knew the problem is with their opposition, not themselves.
37. And came to Iconium: They carry on the work, going next to Iconium. All too often, rejection and opposition for the sake of the gospel makes us want to give up. But Paul and Barnabas respond with appropriate determination.
38. They were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Being filled with joy and being filled with the Holy Spirit go together, and they have a joy that contradicts their circumstances.
39. Paul is a great example of his own command to *be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit* (Ephesians 5:18).
40. **"The happiness of a genuine Christian lies far beyond the reach of earthly disturbances, and is not affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed. The martyrs were more happy in the flames than their persecutors could be on their beds of down."** (Clarke)

#### **APPLICATION**

- **What specifically was God saying to me to this evening?**
- **What specific adjustments will I make in my life as a result of God's Word to me?**