

The Aftermath of Gospel Preaching

(Acts 13:42-52)

5/6/20; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

Take your Bibles and turn to Acts 13:42..

I want to read the passage that we are going to examine tonight.

If you recall, Paul has just preached to a room full of Jews and a few Gentile converts to Judaism in a synagogue in Antioch Pisidian.

They are there on the first missionary trip in church history.

And Paul has just told these Jews that Jesus is their Messiah.

So let's see how the folks in the synagogue react..

42 As [w]Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these [x]things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing [y]prose-lytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking

to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

44 The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of [z]the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were [aa]blaspheming. 46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us,

'I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, That You may [ab]bring salvation to the end of the earth.'"

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of [ac]the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the [ad]devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their [ae]district. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray.

It is absolutely amazing to see the pictures of a town or city where a tornado or a hurricane has struck.

There will destruction unlike anything else in the world but often in the midst of destruction, there will be homes that were seemingly untouched by the winds.

Now some of that can be attributed to good building, but some of that is really hard to hard to explain.

Some of that we are simply left to marvel and wonder about.

I saw a picture a few weeks back from a Mississippi home that was hit by a tornado this April.

The roof was missing from the house.

The windows were broken by trees and boards, yet on the island in the kitchen was a pound cake in a glass cake dish that was virtually untouched or unmoved.

No one is quite sure who said it first, and I say it often but “the same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay.”

And you could even say that the same wind that collapses the house keeps the cake on the table.

The same is true for the word of God.

Whenever it is accurately and faithfully taught, it will drastically impact some lives and leave others completely unchanged.

And a great joy to see and understand this phenomenon are the final verses of Acts 13.

To review a bit, the book of Acts is the historical account of the early church.

Though God has his people in every age, the church is the people of God after the ascension of Jesus back to heaven.

In Acts 1 and 2, we saw the departure of the Son but the arrival of the Spirit.

And with the Spirit's arrival and indwelling of believers, the church was born in a small room in Jerusalem almost 2000 years ago.

And we have record of those humble beginnings and the exponential growth of the church in the book of Acts.

By the time, we get to Acts 13, the church has moved out of Jerusalem into all of Israel.

And it is beginning to spread all over the Mediterranean world.

In fact, Acts 13 is essentially the church's first mission trip attempt.

If you recall, the church in Antioch Syria sent Barnabas and Paul west to the island of Cyprus in the northeastern section of the Mediterranean Sea.

This was Barnabas' hometown and he and Paul and Mark began to cover the entire island in gospel preaching.

And though they faced satanic opposition from a man who claimed to be Jesus' son, they also saw fruit of salvation in the governor of the island.

From there, they went north to modern day Turkey.

They landed in Perga, crossed over the huge Tarsus mountain range and arrived in another Antioch.

This one known as Pisidian Antioch.

Immediately, they went to the Jewish synagogue and by God's providence, Paul was asked to speak to the Jews on their Sabbath.

And spoke he did.

From Acts 13:16-41, Paul summarized Israel's history as a nation and then tells that their Messiah has arrived in the person of Jesus Christ.

This was gospel preaching at its best.

This is Paul at his best, begging his people to come to Christ and warning them of the dangers of rejecting God's offer of salvation.

And now in verses 42-52, we get to the aftermath of gospel preaching.

And just like the aftermath of a tornado or hurricane, there are a variety of things to see.

So and some bad.

I simply want you to see 5 aftermaths of gospel preaching.

We begin with a good aftermath in verses 42.

The first good thing to note about gospel preaching is this..

I. Gospel Preaching Leads to Desire (42-44)

42 As [w]Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these [x]things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath.

Once Paul finishes preaching, they proceed to leave the synagogue, but they are stopped on the way out as the people beg them to come back next Saturday.

The verb tense suggests that the people were asking over and over again for Paul and Barnabas to come back and say more.

I mean this is the preacher's dream.

To have people asking you to come back and say more next time.

Furthermore, look at verse 43..

43 Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing [y]proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

The fact that Paul and Barnabas were urging these men to CONTINUE in the grace of God suggest that they had made professions of faith in Christ as a result of Paul's preaching.

Again, wonderful news, and certainly the preaching and teaching of the word transforms lives.

This is why we focus on explaining Scripture here at Pine Grove.

We do in Sunday School.

We do it at Vacation Bible School.

We do it twice on Sundays and once on Wednesdays every week.

And the point of that is to see sinners saved and saints sanctified.

WE preach the word knowing that God uses it to change lives.

And that happens when the Bible is accurately taught.

In that synagogue on that Saturday in Antioch of Pisidian, God had ordained the preaching of Paul to change lives for eternity.

On that day in that setting through that man named Paul, God changed hearts and lives of men and women through the preaching of his word.

I do want to point out something that I think we can learn from.

Notice the words that Paul and Barnabas use to respond to these folks.

Continue in the grace of God.

Look, Paul and Barnabas would have had no idea if these people were saved or not.

It certainly looks promising to see people interested and responding to the gospel, but only God knows which hearts had been truly changed.

Even the preacher has no idea who is genuine in their profession and how is not, so what do we do?

We urge people to continue in grace.

Look, it is very tempting to see people respond and offer immediate assurance to them.

In fact, I have seen preachers say.

If you just prayed that prayer or walked that aisle or raised that hand, then I can guarantee you will now have a place in heaven.

But what a dangerous thing to say.

Some people reposed out of emotion.

Some respond out of fear.

Some respond out of pressure.

The issue is never who starts well.

The issue is who will be there in the end.

And the preacher or the teacher simply doesn't know who is who, so we simply urge people who have made professions of faith to continue in grace.

Now that was an important phrase to the Jew who thought that the law was the way to heaven.

Instead, the gospel is a gospel of grace where God gifts salvation on the basis of faith alone in Christ alone.

And the need to continue in grace is just as important today as it was then.

Despite the fact that Paul and Barnabas could not discern who truly believed or not, it was very encouraging to see fruit from their ministry.

And even more encouraging was the next Sabbath day..

Look at verse 44..

44 The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of [z]the Lord.

This is an incredible turnout. It is likely that this had to be held outside since synagogues were usually nothing more than a small house.

But what a response to the preaching of the word.

Yet this is what God uses.

He doesn't use large building and fancy lights and gimmicks to draw people.

He uses the preaching of the word to draw a crowd, and people come because they have a God-given desire to hear more.

But its not all good news when the gospel is preached.

Verse 45..

Gospel preaching also leads to defiance.

II. Gospel Preaching Leads to Defiance (45)

45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were [aa]blaspheming.

Though Paul hasn't preached a word at this point, there is already trouble brewing.

Such crowds alarmed the Jews.

Isn't it ironic when the people of God are upset when others show up to hear the word of God?

Ever been upset to see people that you don't know come to church?

Ever been bothered when people unlike yourself come to church?

You shouldn't be, but many believers are bothered by that, and the Jews were bothered by it on this particular Saturday.

And why was that?

Sadly, the Jews were some of the most prejudiced people on the planet.

In their warped view of God, He was only pleased with them and their way of life.

And now here in their synagogue were Gentiles and others who didn't belong.

I know no one in this church would ever do this, but somebody was probably sitting in their seat in the synagogue.

So now it is time to put all this to an end, so they simply go on the attack against Paul.

But worse, they were blaspheming, which means to speak ill of God, and the clear implication is that they were attacking the deity of Christ.

They were saying that Jesus was not the Son of God, not the Savior of the Jews, not the Messiah.

Not only are the Jews rejecting the men of God who were sent to them, they begin attacking the Son of God.

So the preaching of the gospel lead defiance, which then leads to division.

Look at verse 46..

III. Gospel Preaching Leads to Division (46-47)

46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, ‘I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, That You may [ab]bring salvation to the end of the earth.’”

As we have said before, the gospel came to the Jew first.

Jesus preached and healed and ministered in Israel.

He was killed and resurrected in the land where the Jews lived.

And the point was to give them an unclosed look at their Messiah.

To give them an opportunity to repose to God’s plan to save.

But the Jews rejected Christ during his ministry.

They rejected him to the point of calling for his death.

They rejected the reports that he has been resurrected.

Man is responsible for repudiating Christ as the Son of God and the Savior from sin.

To reject the truth of the gospel is to reject the only source of eternal life in the world.

And Paul simply says..

You have shown yourself to be lost, so we are turning our ministry to the Gentiles.

No look, it pained Paul to say that.

Paul loved the Jewish people.

He will speak of his love for them many times in his letters.

But he will also realize that their rejection of Christ will open the door for Gentile acceptance of Him.

Paul will take the gospel to the rest of the world, and we are blessed by it even today.

Salvation in a Jewish Messiah has brought life to the Gentile world.

We were a people who walked in darkness, yet the light of Christ has come to us.

One thing to note is this.

The Jews are not forgotten.

Romans 9-11 make it clear that God will save the Jews in the future.

Yes, they rejected Christ, and his resurrection, and the preaching of the gospel and many Jews have died and will spend an eternity in hell because of that rejection.

But know that God will save a remnant of Jews during the tribulation period.

They will see that Jesus was indeed their Messiah.

They will see their ancestor's guilt in condemning him to death.

And they will repent of their sin and come to Him in faith alone that God will grant to them.

Paul is right.

God begins to take the gospel to the Gentile world, but that does not mean that He completely abandoned the Jews.

There have always been Jews in every generation who have had their hearts opened by God to the truth.

But the church age will be marked by an influx of Gentile salvations.

And Paul became the means for much Gentile salvation in the book of Acts.

Though Paul will always have a heart of compassion for the Jews.

Though Paul will continue to enter synagogues and preach to many Jews.

God will use him primarily as a light to Gentiles to bring salvation to the ends of the earth, which is direct quote from Isaiah 49 that you see at the end of verse 47.

Now as much as that angered and stirred up jealousy in the Jews, it brought immense joy to Gentiles.

Look at verses 48 and 49.

IV. Gospel Preaching Leads to Delight (48-49)

Verse 48..

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of [ac]the Lord;

There is no joy in the world like salvation joy.

We are happy to get married.

We are happy to have kids.

We are happy to have health.

But no happiness should compare to the happiness that salvation brings.

What joy to know your sins are forgiven.

What joy to know that you are going to heaven.

What joy to know that you will get a new body.

What joy to know that you will have unending fellowship with other believers for all eternity.

And ultimately, what joy to know that you are made right with your Creator and will offer worship to Him for all eternity without the distraction of sin.

When the Gentiles heard Paul reference that passage in Isaiah that predicted their salvation, they rejoiced.

And they should.

The verse says they glorified the word of the Lord.

Look, God's word is truth and God's word reveals who God is.

Though we would never worship the Word, we should find joy in it.

We should find comfort in it.

We should exalt it and memorize it and obey it.

The word of the Lord is a blessing to the Lord's people.

And the Gentiles gathered around Paul on this day in Antioch Pisidain were clearly grateful for the word of the Lord and glorifying the truth of it.

And then note the end of verse 48.

and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Debates rage in the church and have raged in the church over the nature of salvation.

Is man responsible for his salvation?

Is God responsible?

Who are the elect?

When were they elected?

Is salvation predetermined by God?

Or is salvation determined by man?

Well, the end of verse 48 offers insight.

As many as had been appointed for eternal life believed.

For all the arguments back and forth about election and God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, Acts 13:48 simply says that God appoints who is saved and man believes.

There is God's sovereignty and man's responsibility in one verse and clearly God is the one who acted first.

Though God used Paul's preaching of the word as the means to save, salvation was the result of God's appointment of some to salvation.

And though that insults our own view of ourselves and therefore creates tension in our mind, God is sovereign over everything and that includes who is saved.

We could spend more time here, but let's finish this up.

There is joy in those who believe, and believers cannot never keep their mouth shut about what happened to them.

So verse 49 says this.

49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.

As the words spread, salvation spreads and joy spreads because gospel preaching produces delight.

A final outcome of gospel preaching is found in verses 50-52.

V. Gospel Preaching Leads to Determination (50-52)

As we already seen, the joy of the Gentiles leads to the anger and jealousy of the Jews.

Verse 50.

50 But the Jews incited the [ad]devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their [ae]district.

It is interesting to note that the Jewish religious leaders in Antioch were cowards.

Therefore, they incited the women and the government leaders in Antioch to go after Paul and Barnabas.

And the women and politicians chase Paul and Barnabas out of town.

Reminds me of Jesus being chased out of town.

The unbelieving crowds see it as victory but the reality is that they have simply drove out the only source of truth in the world.

It's a sad day for any town, state, or nation that exchanges truth for lies.

Antioch had the truth of the word in their midst, but sent it on its way.

Verse 51.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

Whenever a Jew had to travel outside of the land of Israel, they would stop at the border on their return and shake the Gentile dirt off their feet.

It was a protest against the Gentiles, saying that the dirt of their lands was as defiled as they were.

But when Jesus arrived on the scene, he told the disciples this in Luke 10..

8 Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; 9 and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10 But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet [f]be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' 12 I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

And now in Acts 13, this verse has come to life.

Paul and Barnabas are leaving a town and shaking the dust off their feet in protest of them rejecting the truth.

Yet that sadness is balanced with the joy of those who have embraced the truth..

Verse 52.

52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

God is good and gracious.

He sends his saving truth in all directions.

Most send that truth out of their lives.

But some embrace it and it becomes a source of un-ending joy.

Conclusion

What do we learn here?

#1- Stay hungry.

The aim of preaching is not to accomplish but to invite.

If the preacher is faithful to deliver and you are faithful to listen, you should have more questions when the sermons is over.

This is one of the many benefits of biblical expository preaching.

It creates a curiosity in the listener.

It brings up more questions in their mind.

And the point is to drive the preacher and the hearer back to Scripture.

Because the answers to your questions are not found in man, but in the Word.

As much truth as you have gotten from Scripture, there is still more to be found.

And good preaching will lead to more desire to learn.

#2 - Stay faithful.

Remember the same winds of the tornado and the hurricane can rip a house apart but also leave mama's pound cake on the table.

Ultimately, we are not in control of what the Lord does with the preaching and teaching of His word.

For some, the word of God will destroy their lives in a good way, and they rebuild on gospel truth.

For others, the word of God will pass right over and they will literally sleep through it all.

The point is don't get caught up in trying to aim for certain people or certain situations.

Be faithful to preach and teach and live the truth, and God will determine the aftermath of your faithfulness.

Acts 13 makes it clear that he is fully in control over the outcome of the preaching of his word.

The issue for me and for you is not to determine the outcome of our ministry but to simply be faithful.

Let us pray.