

Let Light Shine Out of Darkness

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Acts 13: 42-52

Linda Thomas Matoian covered the role of the Antioch church in Syria, the church of the people who were persecuted. This new established church was active and alive. They saw a need in Jerusalem, and they sent financial aid. We read also that the Spirit of the Lord, **set apart** Paul and Barnabas to go out and bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the end of the world.

The Syrian-Antioch church, send missionaries to the world... (this is big, don't take this lightly).

Last week Badveli Kevin covered the sermon that Paul gave in the **Antioch of Pisidia**, which is another city in Asia Minor, Turkey nowadays.

The sermon challenged the Israelites and the Gentiles who worship God...

Also, Kevin who does not like to give applications of the sermons, reading from the sermon gave applications of repentance for forgiveness of sins for those who accept Christ or judgment for the ones who will reject God's invitation.

Let us start from verse 42:

As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.⁴³ When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. (Acts 13:42-43 NIV11)

Don't you love this phenomenon?

People were interested to know further about Jesus. Paul and Barnabas got an invitation to stay another week, another Sabbath.

Don't you love to find seekers...? They were searching.

Many of the Antioch congregation were following them that week. And Luke says Paul and Barnabas **urged them to continue in the grace of God**.

-“They followed”: the expression can mean many things.

- It could be some were converted and that is why they are following;

- It could be some had more questions and they are following to inquire further about this. *“Maybe’ they had become open to the grace of God working in their hearts, and they were now being urged to continue along that path.”¹*

-Let me remind you. Jews were waiting for the Messiah. And when they heard about Jesus is the one who was promised, they were full of joy.

-I will ask you this morning as we approach the Table: **remember your conversion**, remember when you accepted Christ as your Savior. Remember who Jesus is in your life.

“I urge you to continue in the grace of God.”

-Yet, the next Sabbath things changed:

⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him. (Acts 13:44,45 NIV11) *began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.*** (ESV) հայհոյութիւն ըրիւ**

As you see more people were gathered in the synagogue. Unfortunately, when God’s Word is preached, **opposition** rises as too.

Once I heard a preacher saying: “Satan will not stop you from doing the right thing. But Satan will interfere to stop you from finishing it.”

Remain in the grace...continue in the grace...

-When the Jewish leaders saw their synagogue overrun with Gentiles, **they were filled with jealousy**.

Of course, they heard a tough sermon last Sabbath: “**God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.**”

They could not swallow such a statement from Paul.

Also, they were not happy about gentile crowd becoming followers of Jesus.

-How in the world would this happen?

“Gentiles are not clean”. Israelites are the chosen people. There are requirements to be followers of God. How come **by faith** someone can become a follower of the Messiah.

⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

“I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 13:46-47 NIV11)

Paul and Barnabas respond to this by stating what became a feature of their ministry and of Paul's theology:

They preach to the Jews first, but if their response is unworthy of eternal life, they go to the Gentiles (v. 46).

But please notice, Paul and Barnabas spoke from the Scriptures (v. 47); They quoted from Isaiah 49:6 (**light to the nations**).

Paul was concerned about his people who were called to be light to the nations, and who are now rejecting the LIGHT.

While he would have spoken with confidence on this occasion, this phenomenon of Jewish rejection of the gospel hurts him deeply and inflames his desire to yearn and pray for their salvation (Rom. 9:1–3; 10:1).²

Read Romans 9-11; it is an exploration and implication of reasons for this rejection.

Opposition on one hand, joy and acceptance on the other hand:

⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. (Acts 13:48-49 NIV11)

-Let us examine where this is happening. It is in **the Antioch of Pisidia. Gentiles worshiped their emperor.** There was a temple of **Augustus** in the center as the city's most prominent building, and this cult dominated the city's daily life and annual calendar.³

-Those gentiles who once were worshiping the emperor have now found the truth.

That brought joy to them:

They were glad and honored the word of the Lord.

Which means "that they gave glory to the Lord for the word that they had heard".⁴

Whenever I see people respond to God's call, I'll say there is a miracle. There is joy and peace in receiving what Christ did for us. it is a miracle. It is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says:

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).

My friend Brian Morgan says: “The fact that these Gentiles were chosen, places them on equal footing with Israel. However, for those who refuse to believe, they do so by free choice and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.”

-How sad is this...how sad that Jews knew about the light, but they did not see it... How sad that even today, people can come to church and know about the light but cannot see the light. They don't have the JOY.

Illustration: On Monday I met with YFC leader of Lebanon, Maher. He was telling me how Muslim refugees in Lebanon are open to the gospel. And once they see the light, there is joy in their hearts. Even though they will be persecuted by their families, they don't care; they've found the JOY.

I want to challenge you this morning. Maybe you never asked the Joy of Jesus to be in your heart. Maybe you never asked Jesus to be your LORD and Savior. Or you did once upon a time, but you did not continue in grace.

Or maybe you are facing some tough situations and you need His Joy and Peace. Please can you approach the Table of the Lord and ask God to fill you with His Joy and Peace?

Next

⁵⁰ But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. ⁵¹ So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:50-52 NIV11)

Opposition was so much that Paul and Barnabas decided to leave **Pisidian-Antioch**. They also shook dust off from their feet. That is exactly what Jesus said to them to do if the gospel is rejected. (Luke 9:5; 10:11)

How ironic is this picture. Did you know that the Israelites did the same when they arrived in Jerusalem, dusting off their feet. It was a symbolic action entering the Holy Land. Now what Paul and Barnabas is doing is against the Jews who did not believe in the true light. How ironic is this! The people who knew about the light, are in the darkness....

“We need to thank God that he has not yet shaken the dust off his feet.” (RC Sproul)⁶

That is so true. God is giving the humanity chance to repent turn to HIM.

It made me so sad while I was in Armenia to see so much Christian heritage and churches ... a history of Christianity. Yet, many are in darkness of ignorance about who God is, who Jesus is... tragic.

Opposition, rejection, instead of cursing them we read:

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

Please notice the attitude of the disciples, opposition, rejection, **YET, But with GOD** we will be filled JOY, with Holy Spirit.

This is true joy, that comes from God. It is not based on outside circumstances. It is a JOY that the Holy Spirit can give us.

Jesus himself 'rejoiced' in the Spirit in Luke 10:21 over the Father revealing his truth to infants rather than the wise;

²¹ At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. (Luke 10:21 NIV11)

Application:

1. Saul's name is Paul

In chapter 13 Luke changes Saul's name to Paul, which in Greek his name means **humble, small**.

God is teaching to Paul to be humble. Oh yes, read Paul's letters and Act and see all kind of evidence how God was shaping him. Paul and Barnabas were beaten many times. The Joy of the Lord was in them.

2. Barnabas took the second chair.

Barnabas on the other hand is playing second violin.

Someone said:

It takes more grace than I can tell

To play the second fiddle well.⁵

He was most likely older than Paul. He was also older in faith. He was the one who introduced Paul to the apostles in Jerusalem. He was the one who brought Paul to the Syrian-Antioch from Tarsus;

Yet Barnabas, son of encourager, gave the first chair to Paul.

It is not easy to give the leadership to another person.

He was also probably more distinguished looking, for later the people of Lystra called Barnabas Zeus, the chief Greek god, and Paul Hermes, the spokesman of the god (14:12)

3. Evangelism through the Word of God

We often talk about experience. It is good to have a personal experience with God, but it should be based on HIS WORD. Paul and Peter and all other apostles and disciples used the **word of God** to bring the truth about Jesus. Let us use the same when we share the Good News.

4. Joy that comes from Holy Spirit

I love application of the Bible in these passages. When God touches someone, there is JOY. Opposition came and tried to disturb God's plan. It could not stop God's plan.

I pray that whatever is bothering you, you bring it and put it on the altar of God. The Table is prepared by our Lord Jesus. He did prepare the Table to save us from sin and damnation.

I urge you to open your mind and heart to God...

Come to the Table.

1. Ajith Fernando, *The NIV Application Commentary*, Acts P 389
2. Ajith Fernando, *The NIV Application Commentary*, Acts P 389
3. Hansen, "Galatia," 394–9,. from *The NIV Application Commentary*, Acts P 389
4. Barrett, *Acts*, 658, from *The NIV Application Commentary*, Acts P 389
5. Bruce, *Circle*, 19. from *The NIV Application Commentary*, Acts NIV 392
6. R.C. Sproul, *You Will Be My Witness to the End of the Earth* Acts P214