

5-23-21 What is the Message?

Acts 13:13-52.

Last week we looked at **Acts 13:1-12**. The scripture centered around the who; Barnabas, Paul, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Sergius Paulus, and Bar-Jesus. Paul was sharing God's word and truth to Sergius Paulus and Bar Jesus was getting in the way.

This week we are going to look at What is the message, there will still be some who but most of this message will be covering what, what the message is and what do we do with it. What was the message that was shared?

Setting the stage: Look at the map of Paul's 1st Mission's journey.

Read Acts 13:13-15.

Notice John Mark left the trip and headed back to Jerusalem where his mom lived. I Don't know why he left the trip, but in **Acts 15:36-39** leads us to speculate that Paul wasn't happy about it. Or felt it wasn't for a good reason.

They come to Antioch in Pisidia and sat down in the synagogue, the priest would quote the Shema "Hear O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one." They would have done it in Hebrew; there would have been a reading from the Law and from the prophets. And normally the custom was that someone would give a sermon or an exegesis of part of the text.

Reread verse 15, "Do you have something to say?"

Today we will look at what the message is... the gospel and how Paul shared it. And see some application points.

I. Be on the lookout for opportunities.

- The Bible Knowledge Commentary says that Paul seized the opportunity.
- **Read verses 16.** Paul includes the people in the back of the room as well. The dogs, the gentiles, half breed, anyone the fear/reverence God. Anyone pondering of or about God, listen up.
- A. Seize opportunities to reach all people.
 - He seizes the opportunity & he's going to make the most of it. He wants everyone present to know the message is intended for them.

Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

II. Some opportunities need to be planned/some will happen, so be ready.

- Think about all that Paul had already done just to create this opportunity. He'd traveled hundreds of miles by foot, then by boat, and then by foot again across rugged, mountainous terrain to get to Antioch of Pisidia. It took planning, effort, prayer, sacrifice, it took money out of his own pocket and it took a willing heart. There was some planning that took place.

- What are somethings we plan for? If we plan for it, normally it will happen. Vacations, retirement, birthday parties, anniversaries, we should figure in some opportunities to testify of God and witness.
- Ponder for a moment, what does your calendar/agenda look like this week? Could there be some opportunities to reach people for God? Be an encouragement? Say, God Bless? Bless someone that needs it? Stop and pray with someone?

B. Seize opportunities to find (common ground) points of agreement. (Read verse 17)

- Paul starts at a point of agreement by taking them through the major elements of Israel's history; he does this intentionally. He recounts their history for them with the destination already in mind – the destination is Jesus.
- Paul knows his audience and is purposeful in his delivery. (similar to Stephan's approach back in **Acts 7**)
- Finding common ground is tough, points of agreement. What could be some areas of common ground?

C. Seize opportunities to share God cares. (Read verses 18-23)

- God puts up with our ways...He puts up with us!
- God provided Israel with land.
- He gave the nation of Israel Judges to protect them and even a King when they asked for it. Raising up Israel's best King, David.
- God loves mankind so much He used the lineage of David for His son Jesus.
- People need hope, it is ok to give them some. Encouragement is welcoming and will attract people. We can tell them about God's judgment, but we can also share about how much He cares and loves them.

D. Seize the opportunities to share about Jesus and God's plan for mankind's salvation!

- **Read verses 24-36.**
- God's plan was and still is for **"the baptism of repentance to all the people Israel."**
- And to **"those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent."**
- God sent His perfect, incorruptible (without sin) Son Jesus to save us.
- If you're a believer in Jesus, you understand that God is sovereign and that he is orchestrating all the events on the planet up to the coming of Jesus.

- All of history culminates, ends, climax is Jesus Christ.
- If we approach life as if there's no divine plan, as if there's no point in all of this, then we'll find a point. And do you know what the point of life will be? Me. I become the center of the universe; I become the point of human existence. Everything all of a sudden begins to revolve around me - my wants, my desires, my interests, my goals, my success - and all of a sudden it becomes a very selfish world. Mmmm - sounds kind of like the world we live it, doesn't it?
- This world needs a whole lot of Jesus!

E. Seize the opportunities to share that God provided for mankind's greatest need. (forgiveness and salvation)

- **Read verses 37-41.**
- The Law cannot justify the sinner; it only condemns.
- Jesus exposes our deepest need.
- If forgiveness of sin is our deepest need, then, how can we have our sins forgiven? Paul tells them in **verse 39: "and by Him everyone who believes is justified (freed) from all things from which you could not be justified (freed) by the law of Moses."**
- Everyone who believes is freed. And that freedom comes by Him, by Jesus. The only way to receive forgiveness of sins is by Jesus. And who is it available to? Everyone – every person.
- Twice Paul made distinctions between the Jews who were gathered and the God-fearing Gentiles. He addressed both groups. But here, there is no distinction between people groups. Everyone can be forgiven.
- You ask any lost person, "Why do you think you would be allowed into heaven?" They'll respond 99% of the time, "Because I'm a good person."
- Then he puts up a warning sign for them; he hammers a beware sign up. I know there's going to be a natural tendency for you to respond to this message of grace: **read verses 40-41.**
- He's quoting the OT prophet Habakkuk here. Habakkuk prophesied that the Babylonians were going to come in and take the Jewish people. And do you know what the Jewish people did in response to that message of Habakkuk? They scoffed and laughed. Some of you, you'll hear this message, and you're laughing, you're scoffing. Beware! Don't turn your back on Jesus.
- When we tell people about Jesus, we must summon a response, we must tell people what they must do with the message, how they should respond. Stop trusting in yourself and trust in Jesus; stop believing in your own acts of righteousness to make you acceptable to God, trust in Jesus.

F. Seize the opportunities to surrender all results.

- Are we responsible to make people accept Jesus Christ? No, we are not responsible for that. God is responsible for that.
- We have got to surrender the results to God. We need to rest in God's sovereignty and let him do whatever he's going to do in people's lives. We present Jesus and let Him do His work.
- Be FAITHFUL to do your part, TRUST God to do His part.
- **Read verses 42-44.** The Gentiles begged for them to come back next week. As they walked with them, they encouraged them to continue in the grace of God. And isn't it awesome that the work of salvation in these people's lives is referred to as grace. It's all of grace.
- **Read verses 45-47.** When someone goes on mission to share Jesus, opposition will come. It's a given. When there's opposition, you don't stop, you just keep proclaiming the message and surrender the results to God. The Jewish leaders there rejected the message, but the Gentiles received it.
- **Read verse 48.** Here you have two great truths that run parallel to one another. The truth of human responsibility, everyone who believes. You've got a responsibility to respond to the gospel message, you've got to exercise your will and believe in Jesus. But the other great truth is Divine sovereignty, **"as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed."**
- The text ends by concluding that the truth continued to be shared, and opposition continued to arise. That's how it has always been and that's how it will always be.
- **Read verses 49-52.**
- What a contrast between Paul and Barnabas and the Jews. In **verse 45** Luke tells us the Jews **"were filled with envy"** (jealousy). In **verse 52** he says Paul and Barnabas were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. What a contrast.
- Even though they incited violence against them; even though they drove them out of the region, even though not everyone received the message, they were filled with Joy and the Holy Spirit. Why? Because they knew they had been faithful to do their part and God had been faithful to do His part.

Conclusion

What is the greatest need for mankind? Forgiveness, restoration with God, and only Jesus can do it.

How can mankind get forgiveness? Restoration with God? Through Jesus.

You must believe that Jesus is the way to God, the only way, place your blind faith in the work Jesus did in your behalf. And that God accepted Jesus' work by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

This will result in the Holy Spirit indwelling inside of you, challenging you to repent, change directions. Follow God's ways, desiring to please Him.

Christians, we must seize every opportunity to share the gospel. Through gospel actions, and conversations.