

CP - 2/26/23

Acts 13: 4-12- "First Stop: Cyprus"

Sermon Outline:

I. The Holy Spirit sends them to Cyprus (4)

- * God is doing the sending
- * Cyprus
 - * Home of Barnabas (Acts 4:36)
 - * 3rd largest island in the Mediterranean
 - * 90-100 miles wide
 - * Settled in 18th Century BC
 - * Under Roman jurisdiction in 57 bc
 - * 22 BC organized as a senatorial province administered by a proconsul/governor
 - * Major cities: Salamis- port* and Paphos- capitol
 - * Paganism and gross idolatry
 - * Not only was Paphos the seat of the Roman governor but the center for the worship of the great goddess Aphrodite or Venus
 - * Aphrodite- goddess of sexual love, beauty, pleasure, and procreation
 - * The worship of Venus was grossly immoral
 - * She was said to be born from the sea at that very spot
 - * The foul religion dominated life at Paphos
 - * Every woman was expected to submit herself at least once to religious prostitution in the temple of Aphrodite
 - * And the money earned had to be offered to the goddess
 - * Here is the picture of this pagan world.. gross, vile, lust
- * God send the gospel to all people
- * God does not just send the gospel to those who are looking for him
- * This is the backdrop of the where God sent them

II. They preach in the Jewish synagogues in Salamis (5)

- * This is a pattern that we will see
 - * "To the Jew first"
 - * People who knew the book
 - * Common ground
- * John-Mark was with them
- * This is a great place for us to start as well
 - * Find people with a common ground
 - * We all know people who are close to the things of God but not saved
 - * Who are these people in your life?

III. The audience and adversary in Paphos (6-10)

- * Audience- Sergius Paulus - Proconsul
 - * Intelligent man
 - * Summoned to hear the word
 - * They had no power now they're sitting with the most powerful man on the island
 - * Here we have a pagan who wants to hear the word
- * Adversary- Bar-Jesus
 - * "Son of the savior"
 - * Magician/wise man made his money by staying close to those in power
 - * Opposed them seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith

- * Peter, full of the Holy Spirit ***
 - * “Son of the devil”-I as opposed to what his name says
 - * “Enemy of all righteousness” *enemy of God
 - * “Making crooked the straight paths of the Lord”
- * turn away- make crooked
- * The faith- straight paths of the Lord
 - * You make crooked the straight paths by trying to turn people away from the faith
 - * God had a straight path for the proconsul
 - * He sent missionaries from 200 plus miles away to preach to him
 - * We will always have this
- * But notice that Paul, knows that Elymas is just in the hands of the devil
- * Here is the point of the text though
 - * Being led by the Spirit is both speaking in truth and love..
 - * God will clear the way from those who are trying to make it crooked
 - * He doesn’t just send the missionaries, he accompanies them with His power

IV. God blinds Elymas and saves Sergius Paulus (11-12)

- * The same God who sends and saves is the same God who judges
- * Blinds Elymas
- * Saves the proconsul
 - * Believed
 - * Astonished- shaken to the core
- * We see the success of the first stop in the journey
 - * God took nobodies and saved the most powerful man on the island
- * Stay faithful in the midst of opposition and trust God to do what He does

Application:

- 1. We are sent by God**
- 2. God has made straight paths to the faith**
- 3. Not everyone will believe**
- 4. We will always face opposition**
- 5. God is with you and always wins**

**Who is the “proconsul” in your life?
Do you have an “Elymas”?**

Small Group Discussion:

- 1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you in the Scripture and sermon Sunday?**
- 2. Why is it important to remember it is God sending Saul and Barnabas? What makes Christianity unique? How is it different than other religions? (God seeks us. He is on mission)**
- 3. How are we guilty of making crooked the straight paths of the Lord to the faith? Why did Bar-Jesus try to turn the proconsul away from the faith? Do we still face this struggle today? What can we learn from this passage?**
- 4. What does it mean to you that God not only sends missionaries but accompanies them? Do you see yourself as a missionary? How can this passage help us when we face opposition?**
- 5. Spend time in prayer for one another. Pray that we will see ourselves as missionaries where we live and work. Pray for the Spirit to work in the lives of people around us and use us to reach them. Pray that God will light a fire within us to share the good news of Jesus. Ask God to place people on your heart.**