

CP - 3/19/23

## Acts 13:44–52 - “The Word Rejected, Accepted, And Spread”

### Sermon Outline:

The “Word” is central to this text: (13:44, 46, 48, 49)

- The Gospel fractures things (Matthew 10:34)
- The Gospel does in fact unite, but it first divides.
  - The Word divides the individual man (Hebrews 4:12)
- But the Gospel also divides groups: those who believe and those who reject
  - There will be some who reject it, and there will be some who believe it
  - There is no middle ground between the two groups.
- The gospel is offensive and doesn't just gather us to a lovey-dovey, hand holding.
- God uses those who believe to spread it, and those who reject work foolishly trying to stop it

\*Tension of God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility beautifully balanced in harmony here

\*Verse 44 - sets the stage

### I. Negative Response - Rejection and Contradiction (13:45–46)

- but... change in thought and mood
  - When the Jews saw the crowds they were filled with jealousy (compare to Jesus seeing crowds)
  - Began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him (blaspheming)
- How did things turn so quickly?
  - “Almost the whole city” = Gentiles
  - v. 38–39 - everyone who believes means everyone
  - v. 42–43 - many Jews followed Paul and Barnabas
    - He urged them to continue in the grace of God - not the law
      - Test of perseverance (1 John 2:19)
      - No one knows a man's heart
      - Continuing to abide is the fruit of true belief (John 8:31, Col. 1:21–23)
- A week earlier, they were following Paul and Barnabas and being urged to continue in the grace of God which indicates a profession.
- A week later, they are furious, contradicting Paul, and blaspheming
- Why?
  - They were prejudice, they hated Gentiles
  - They didn't want to give up their pride and prejudice
- This is the reason for people rejecting today still
  - People do not want to sacrifice their ego or give up their sin
  - From sexual sin to prejudice and everything in between and underneath
  - Men do not want to give up their sin when they reject Jesus
    - It may come in many forms of reasons, but ultimately it's because they do not want to give up on a lifestyle that they serve themselves ultimately
    - This is why the Gospel is divisive.
      - It calls man to die to themselves and trust and serve the Lord
      - It calls man to live life in a holy manner and to sacrifice the desires of the flesh

- v. 46 - Paul and Barnabas speaking loudly
  - Thrust it aside - pridefully rejecting it
  - Judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life
    - Doctrine of human responsibility
    - Man will be help responsible for what they do with Jesus (John 3:18, 5:39–40, 8:24) - Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.
    - Damnation is the result of rejecting Jesus
    - Mona Lisa is not on trial, the viewer is
    - Jesus is not on trial anymore, the viewer is
    - Just like the Jews in this text, man judges himself unfit for eternal life by their rejection of the Messiah
    - The very one they had longed for... the promises they had trusted in... and they rejected Him.

## **II. Positive Response - Belief and Spreading (13:47–49)**

- v. 47 - uses prophet Isaiah
- When Gentiles heard this
  - They rejoiced
  - Glorified the word of the Lord (Not Paul or Barnabas)
  - As many as were appointed to eternal life believed
    - Doctrine of God's sovereignty in election/salvation
    - v.46 - Man's responsibility
    - v.48 - God's sovereignty
    - The Bible is clear that in salvation God chooses man.
    - *"The matter of human will and divine election is so inscrutable, so incomprehensible to our minds, as to demand that we believe both without being able to comprehend how they fit together in God's mind."* - John MacArthur
  - Appointed = to inscribe or to enroll
    - All who were inscribed or enrolled?
    - In what?
      - Before... were - past event with present effects
      - wait... God appointed or chose men before the foundation of the world?
      - Wait... in v.46 you said that man was responsible for their choosing or rejection Jesus... YES
      - How do those fit together? YES
      - Antinomy - a contradiction between two beliefs or conclusions that are in themselves reasonable
      - *"The particular antinomy which concerns us here is the apparent opposition between divine sovereignty and human responsibility or between what God does as King and what He does as Judge. Scripture teaches that, as King, He orders and controls all things, human actions among them, in accordance with His own eternal purpose. Scripture also teaches that, as Judge, He holds every man responsible for*

*the choices he makes and courses of action he pursues. Thus, hearers of the gospel are responsible for their reaction; if they reject the good news, they are guilty of unbelief. Man without Christ is a guilty sinner, answerable to God for breaking His law. That is why he needs the gospel. When he hears the gospel, he is responsible for the decision he makes about it. It sets before him a choice between life and death, the most momentous choice that any man can ever face... When we preach the promises and invitations of the gospel, and offer Christ to sinful men and women, it is part of our last to emphasize and re-emphasize they they are responsible to God for the way in which they react to the good news of His grace.”*  
- J.I. Packer, “Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God”

#### **Take Home:**

- Appointment to eternal life is the cause of belief not the result of it
- My faith is owing to God's grace
- We were rescued from our own destruction
- We offer the gospel to everyone
  - We rest in the face God does the saving
  - We are urgent because man is responsible

v.49 - they spread the word throughout the whole region

#### **III. Result of the Responses - Persecution and Joy (13:50-52)**

- Women of high standing often turned to Judaism because it's importance on family
  - They used this to get leaders to persecute them
    - 2 Timothy 3:11- mentions persecutions in Antioch
    - 2 Corinthians 11:24-25 - beaten with rods and whips
- Shook the dust off of their sandals
  - Symbolism
    - Luke 10:10-12
    - Jews regarded as pagans because of their rejection
- The disciples remained joyful

#### **Small Group Discussion:**

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Bible passage and sermon Sunday?
2. How is the Gospel both divisive and unifying?
3. Why do you think the Jews had such a hard time in trusting in Jesus?
4. How do God's sovereignty and man's responsibility co-exist in harmony? What struggles do you have with these two truths?

5. What is our response to this text? How does the truth that God appoints men to salvation leave no room for pride? How does it impact the way we share the truth with others knowing that it is God who saves but that man will be responsible for his own actions?

6. Pray for one another that we won't rest in knowing facts about God but that we will have a passion to share this good news with others.