

30—Acts 13.1-12—How Beautiful Are The Feet Of Those Who Preach Good News

- I. Introduction
 - a. The Acts of the Risen Christ, the Acts of the Holy Spirit, the Acts of the Apostles and the Acts of the Church is the unfolding story of ch. 1 verse 8 on how the gospel spread from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.
 - b. At this point in the story, the gospel has not spread to the ends of the earth. In fact, in some way that's continuing even now. There are many people groups in the world who have yet to hear the gospel. We pray for those unreached people groups every Wednesday night. May the Lord raise up labors to go into the harvest.
 - c. So, what are we encountering here in Acts 13? On a grand scale, we are seeing a major event in history. As a result of God sending His Son in the world to save sinners through the life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ, we now see the good news of what God has accomplished in His Son going out to the ends of the earth.
 - d. As we have seen thus far, there have been many obstacles outside the church and inside the church. The one we encounter today is that of sending missionaries out! Yes, going is an obstacle.
- II. Main Point
 - a. God sent his Son into the world to save sinners. The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit into the world to convict humanity of sin. The Holy Spirit of God sends out the gospel message for sinners by way of the church.
- III. Outline
 - a. The Holy Spirit *and* the Church Send
 - b. Those Sent Share the Gospel
 - c. The Triune God Saves the Lost
- IV. Exposition
 - a. Barnabus and Saul complete their service in Jerusalem and return to the Church in Antioch. There they are among the leadership. Let's take a look at the obstacles of sending out missionaries and the work of the Holy Spirit and the Church to send out the gospel.
 - i. Like an edict sent out by the King, the message of the gospel needs curriers. It is a message signed and sealed by the signet ring of Jesus in his blood!
 - ii. The unchangeable verdict has gone out that sin brings death and judgment to everyone because all sin. Therefore, every soul is headed for eternal condemnation apart from hearing the gospel and responding with repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. There's NO other way!
 1. Do you believe that the good news of Jesus Christ is the only means by which one must be saved? This was the claim of Jesus—I am the way, the truth and the life and no comes to the Father apart from me.
 - a. How serious is this? I'm afraid one barrier to missions and sharing the gospel is the fact that many Christians do not seem to have a functional belief that if people do not hear the gospel and believe they will be in hell forever!
 - i. "Surely God will not do that"
 - ii. "Surely there are other ways"
 - iii. "Surely if they have most of it right God will overlook that"
 1. Yeah...it's that serious.
 - iii. Now that we feel the importance, how did there come to be a church in Antioch?
 1. The work of Christ in the going...sharing the gospel...making disciples...and fruit-bearing faith precede everything we see here.
 - a. The result is the gathering of disciples of Jesus together who are being taught and therefore maturing in the faith.
 - b. To be discipled is to be taught to be like Jesus...to be godly.

- i. To be like Jesus is to make disciples.
 - ii. As I've quoted before from Pastor Mark Dever, "If you are not growing and helping others grow in their faith, I don't know what you mean when you say you are a Christian."
 - c. Healthy churches are disciple-making churches among other things.
 - 2. We see that the church in Antioch had five leaders.
 - a. It's interesting to notice they are all from different places.
 - i. Barnabus is from Cyprus.
 - ii. Simeon is likely from North Africa from his additional name, Niger.
 - iii. Lucius is from Cyrene
 - iv. Manaen likely grew up in the home of Herod Antipas which would have been in several places throughout the Roman empire. Though probably more like a foster situation, he would have still been a man of high standing.
 - v. And finally, Saul who was from Cilicia
 - b. They are described as prophets and teachers.
 - i. Prophet is used rarely in the NT. It eventually becomes forthtelling instead of foretelling which makes this much like teaching the prophetic word of God. I think the rolls are closely linked.
 - ii. We aren't told which of them do what but we've already observed Barnabus and Saul teaching the new disciples in Antioch back in ch. 11 for a whole year.
- iv. We recently talked about what a church does. We concluded that we worship and serve the Lord.
 - 1. These two cannot be separated. That which you worship is that which you serve. That which you serve is that which you worship.
 - 2. In verse 2, they (which must be the church and her five leaders) were worshiping/serving the Lord and fasting.
 - a. While this is going on, the Holy Spirit of God commanded, "Set apart, now to me, Barnabus and Saul."
 - i. This is command; not a suggestion. This is the work of God. This is His will. This is church worshiping and serving and longing for the Lord to act for the glory of His Name.
 - ii. The task is...to which I have called them. So, this is God's plan and God's calling to do missions.
 - 1. We might recall Jesus' words to Saul earlier when he was converted: (Acts 9:15) the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel."
 - 3. There's not much way to know exactly what this worship looked like.
 - a. I want to assume it's not too much different than what we do and have always done in Christian worship.
 - b. But something we may be less familiar with is fasting.
 - i. Most of us have to do this ever so often for tests or surgery or procedures. It is the abstaining from food and water.
 - ii. But what does this have to do with worship?
 - 1. One of the places it seems much clearer is in Isaiah 58.

- a. It's always coupled with prayer. It is a diligent search to know God's will. They want the Lord to hear their prayers. It is a serious posture of humility before God.
 - b. In Isaiah 58, the Lord goes on to say what fasting is not.
 - i. It was clear that while they were fasting, they would seek their own pleasures and oppress all their workers. They would quarrel and fight.
 - ii. God said to them, "Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high."
- iii. Let's take this fasting in the church of Antioch as humbling themselves before God and seeking his will that he might hear their prayers and act for the glory of his name.
 - 1. In other words, they hunger and thirst for the living God. It's like they are in the desert longing for him to give them streams of water...that water for which they will never thirst again.
 - 2. When God takes notice of their seriousness, he commands that two of their leaders (maybe their best leaders) be set apart now for the work/service to which he has called them.
- 4. So, while they were worshiping and seeking the Lord, the Holy Spirit made known the will and mission of God to set apart these two to be sent out with the gospel.
- v. How does the church respond to the Holy Spirit's command?
 - 1. V. 3 says, then after fasting and praying they laid hand on them and sent them off.
 - a. I want to ask a question. In my outline, I said the Holy Spirit and the church sent. What role does the church have in this process?
 - i. Let's say Barnabus and Saul stand up in the church and announce that the Holy Spirit wants them to go to the mission field but they never share the gospel...they still have a lot of work to do on understanding the doctrines of the church...and they have some character issues that would greatly hinder the work.
 - 1. How should the church respond?
 - a. Here's how I saw the church respond throughout my life...go do whatever the Lord is leading you to do.
 - b. If I were answering this question right now with the scenario that I described I would say, "Okay but not yet." Calling does not qualify.
 - c. However, Barnabus and Saul are ready. The church should see evidence of this calling. In fact, you might say, "Lord why are you sending out our best disciple makers?"
 - d. The church has always had the responsibility to affirm the calling.
 - e. And the church has always had the responsibility to be making disciples that can be affirmed and sent out by the Holy Spirit.
 - f. These two are not at odds with one another.
- b. That's gets us to the second point. Those sent share the gospel. This is the primary task. Yet, there are many obstacles to navigate to do what seem so simple.

- i. Notice there in v.4—So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there sailed to Cyprus.
 1. Obstacles to making disciples of all nations comes when the church stops sharing the gospel and making disciples who can be sent out. It's not the job of our seminaries to do all the work. We must change that.
 - a. William Cary, the first British Baptist missionary, did not go to school beyond the age of 12 when he became a cobbler's apprentice. The church can make disciples that are ready for the mission field.
 - b. I received an invitation in the mail to attend the TBC evangelism conference. On that card it says that over 4 million people in Tennessee are lost.
 - c. The population of Goodlettsville is around 18,000. There are plenty of people who need to hear the gospel here and abroad.
 - d. 3.2 billion people in the world are unreached which means they have no access to the gospel. (Radical.com)
 - i. Yet, only 1% of missions giving and 3% of missionaries work among the unreached. (Radical.com)
 2. Other obstacles involve available funds. The boat rides Barnabus and Saul traveled on were not free.
 - a. They must eat. They will have lots of needs each day. Many may never go but we sure can make the funds available for those who will. That's what our cooperative program does.
 - b. On the first leg of their trip, Barnabus and Saul travel the entire island of Cyprus.
 - c. Obviously, Barnabus is from there and would be a great advantage to the travel but it they will have many needs and dangers along the way.
 - d. But the task for which the Spirit of God has sent them was proclaiming the Word of God.
 - i. They began in the synagogues of the Jews. This will be their pattern. Go to the Jews first then to the Gentiles.
 - ii. We also learn from v. 5 that John Mark has come along to assist them.
 3. Another obstacle is opposition.
 - a. After traveling the entire island, they encounter a magician who is described as a Jewish false prophet.
 - i. We've encountered a magician already. This is not the kind we think of that use slight of hand or trickery.
 - ii. This is like those in Egypt who did many of the same things God did through Moses. They turned a staff into a serpent too. This is the power of darkness.
 - iii. This man's name is Bar-Jesus which means son of Jesus or son of salvation.
 - b. There in Paphos, this magician was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus.
 - i. Sergius was a man of intelligence. He summoned Barnabus and Saul to hear the word of the God.
 1. But Elymas, the magician (Bar-Jesus—same guy) was opposing Barnabus and Saul and sought to turn Sergius away from the faith.
 - a. A few weeks ago, a group of people came by our house going through the neighborhood who speak of a

- different Jesus. They were spreading a false gospel that does not save.
- b. One of them laughed at the fact that Jesus is God of very God, equal with the Father in nature. Only God can save us from God!
- c. Paul says in Galatians that if an angel from heaven comes and preaches to you a gospel different than the gospel then let that angel be accursed.
- 2. BUT Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit opposed the opposition.
 - a. When this man begins to turn Sergius from the faith, Paul takes actions. God is on mission to saves sinners. The devil is on a mission to destroy sinners.
 - b. Paul sees this work and calls it what it is. He is a son of the devil. He is an enemy of all righteousness.
 - i. What are the tactics of enemy?
 - ii. He uses deceit which is an interesting word because it is the word used for bait when fishing.
 - iii. Villainy is really simply taking life too lightly. When eternal matters are at stake, those who oppose will say you are taking this too seriously. Lighten up.
 - iv. Like a potter, the enemy like to misshape the clay. Paul and Barnabus describe the straight paths of the Lord but the enemy comes along and makes them crooked.
- 3. Again, we see the good vs. evil. The hand of the Lord reveals his power and authority upon the enemy.
 - a. The one who was attempting to lead the blind into a pit finds himself blind and in need of someone to lead him.
 - c. I don't think we take opposition to the faith like this too seriously.
 - i. We take other things pretty seriously.
 - ii. I honestly don't know what to say here. It's not often the big obvious things but the small eroding kind that eventually turn into a grand canyon.
 - iii. And if you point them out it's like you are taking things too seriously.
- c. What's at stake? That gets us to the last point. The Triune God Saves. This is God's mission and God's calling. It is God's accomplishments through the sending of the Son to save sinners by his life, death, burial and resurrection. It is the Spirit of God who convicts man of sin. It is the Spirit of God who opposes the work of the devil. It is the Spirit of God who gives boldness to his messengers to speak the gospel. It is the grace of God that saves the lost.
 - i. There in v. 12, Luke says the proconsul believed when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord!
 - 1. The gospel is spreading again! Sinners are being saved. God is acting for the glory of his name.
 - 2. God's plan: send out disciple making disciples. They go in the power of the Spirit to speak the gospel. God saves lost sinners.

3. It seems to be a simple plan and it is but there are numerous obstacles and enemies against it. Yet, God will prevail.
 - a. Christ is building his church and the gates of hell will not prevail.
- ii. I'm sure you all want to see people saved but we must be about sharing the gospel, making disciples and growing disciples to have fruit bearing faith. This is God's call for all of us.

V. Response

- a. How shall we respond, Church?
 - i. We should gather to worship and serve the Lord. This is the most basic and necessary response.
 1. We should consider fasting as the church did here. We should take seriously the desire to know God's will. We should be hungry for God as we abstain from these things to be devoted to prayer.
 - ii. We should be sharing the gospel. Making disciples: helping others grow and growing in our faith too.
 - iii. The church has a responsibility and a privilege to follow the Lord's mission to save sinners in the world.
 1. Let's pray. Let's raise up leaders. Let's send. Let's give. Let's go.
 - iv. We should be ready to oppose the darkness. That means we need to know the truth so that we will know what is false. We should take this seriously.
 - v. We should trust the Lord. We need to trust his plan and his ways. We trust the Lord to do the work and do it through these clay pots that he might receive all the glory.
- b. If you are an unbeliever gathered with us this morning, we are glad you are here.
 - i. But I would call you to repent of your sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and to be counted righteous with the righteousness of Christ.