

Rising to the Occasion

Acts 13: 38-46

In this passage we find Paul and Barnabas ministering in the city of Antioch. As was typical with Paul, he has just delivered a message unto all that would listen. He has rehearsed the history of Israel with them, sharing the prophecy of old concerning the coming Messiah. Paul declares that Jesus was the Christ, the One who was crucified, buried, and risen. He has shared the gospel and now challenges the people to receive it.

The preaching and sharing of the gospel has been heavy upon my heart as of late. It is the only hope for this lost and dying world. It is the message of truth, the good news of Christ that yields salvation.

I want to consider the ministry of Paul in Antioch and the gospel that he presented. The [elements](#) of the gospel have not changed. Let's look at these verses as I preach on: [Rising to the Occasion](#).

I. The Presentation of the Gospel (38-41)

A. Its Clarity (38) – [Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins](#): Clearly Paul is referring to none other than Christ the Lord. This was not some fable or new found movement. Paul was sharing the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, Savior of the world. He was not speaking of second hand knowledge or simple rumors. Paul had met the Lord; he had trusted Him in salvation.

- Aren't you glad that we have something that is real? We are not serving a dead idol. Ours is not a hope so salvation. This isn't just a dream or fairy tale. We know the King of glory. He is the means of our salvation!

B. Its Purity (39) – [And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses](#). Paul was dealing with those who sought to continue the law. They looked unto the law for their justification, but justification could never be obtained through the law. Justification is received through Jesus Christ alone.

- The word [justified](#) means "*to be declared just or righteous.*" Those who have believed in Christ have been given His righteousness. Because of the cleansing of His blood, God doesn't see the sins we've committed; He only sees the righteousness of the Son.

C. Its Accountability (40-41) – [Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you](#). Paul knew that he

was dealing with some who would not receive the gospel. He knew that many would reject it and remain in sin, but it would only result in their condemnation. They had heard the gospel message and Paul revealed their obligation to it.

- We have the responsibility to share the gospel with the world and they then become accountable to the gospel. It is the only means of salvation.

I. The Presentation of the Gospel (38-41)

II. The Power of the Gospel (42-44)

A. The Hunger (42) – *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.* Many of the Jews had rejected the message, but the Gentiles wanted to learn more of Jesus. The gospel created a hunger within them.

- Our world is filled with those who are hungry and seeking for something. They have tried the world and all it offers, only to be left empty and wanting.
- We have the good news of Jesus Christ. We have what they long to receive. We must do our part to feed the world's hunger!

B. The Humility (43) – *Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.* Not all that were present that day rejected the words of Paul. Some believed and were convinced that the gospel was profound and needful in the hearts of men. They didn't want Paul and Barnabas to be discouraged and move on before their work was finished. They encouraged them in the faith.

- We as a people need to get behind the work of the church. God has placed us here to reach the world around us. The gospel message needs to be shared and we have the blessed opportunity to do so. Rather than being complacent and even critical at times, we need to encourage each other in the faith and press on together for the glory of God!

C. The Hope (44) – *And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.* Did you get that? Let me read that again! Word got out during the course of the week that something unusual was going on at the house of God. People began to talk of the Lord and invited others to come. No doubt there were those who came just out of curiosity, but I am convinced many came expecting to receive something. Almost the whole city showed up to hear the Word of God preached!

- If it could happen in Antioch, it could happen in Mount Airy as well. Why are folks not coming to the house of God? I believe it is simple: we are not sharing the good news of Christ. We are not living as if we have anything that they need or desire. If we would begin to live for the Lord and talk of His goodness and grace, they might realize that He could meet their needs too.
- Our world is filled with those who are in need. We all know those who stand in need of the Lord. Let's do our part to reach them. Let's commit to sharing the good news and encouraging others to come and hear of Jesus!

I. The Presentation of the Gospel (38-41)

II. The Power of the Gospel (42-44)

III. The Persuasion of the Gospel (45-46)

A. The Opposition of the Rebellious (45) – *But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.* The self-righteous Jews were unhappy with Paul and his message of salvation. The unattainable demands of the law kept the people in subjection to their authority and they viewed Paul and his message as a threat to their control.

- *They were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.* This reveals a strong reaction on behalf of the Jews. The word *envy* has the idea of “*contentious rivalry; jealousy; and fierce indignation.*” Clearly the Jews wanted to stop Paul and the spread of the gospel.
- There is a great lesson to be learned. Serving the Lord and sharing the gospel will never come without opposition. We face a determined adversary that will pull out all the stops in an effort to defeat our witness. We might as well go ahead and be prepared. I certainly do not welcome the attack of the enemy, but I do hope that we are doing enough that he would notice.

B. The Determination of the Redeemed (46) – *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* Paul and Barnabas were *bold*; they were confident in the gospel and had full assurance in the Lord. If the Jews were determined to reject the gospel, then Paul knew that he had no choice but to take the message to the Gentiles, those who would believe. They determined not to be hindered or defeated by those who would not believe.

- We need that same determination. Everyone that we witness to will not accept Christ. Everyone that we invite to church will not come. Every time we meet at the house of God, we will not see someone saved, but these are not reasons to abandon the work of God. We have been called to bear witness of our blessed Lord. We have the good news that this lost and dying world needs to hear. Someone didn't give up on us and we can't give up on the world!

I trust you have been reminded of the power and preciousness of the Gospel. We have been entrusted with a message that has the ability to change humanity. It has the power to transform their lives and secure their eternity. Are we committed as individuals and a church to take this message to the world?

Is there a need in your life tonight? Do you need more boldness for the Lord? Maybe you have heard the Gospel, but have never responded to it. Why not come and seek the Lord and begin life in Him?