

Acts 13: 38 – 39

38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

I never thought we would have spent 3 weeks in Acts 13, but here we are.

In Acts 13:16 we come to the first recorded sermon by Paul. It is broken up into 3 sections. Of course everyone knows that all sermons must have 3 points. God will not forgive a preacher if he only has 2 points or worse if he has 4. That is obvious...AMEN?

The three parts of Paul's sermon are:

1. Preparation vv. 16-25
2. Declaration vv. 26-37
3. Application vv. 38-52

Those of you who teach will recognize this pedagogical process. It is simple and effective. Let's read the sermon. Would someone read for us Paul's preparation section beginning in verse 16?

16 And Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand, he said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: 17 "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. 18 "And for a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. 19 "And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance — all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. 20 "And after these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. 21 "And then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 "And after He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.' 23 "From the offspring of

this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, 24 after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 "And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

The first technique in teaching is going from the known to the unknown. In this section, Paul reviews the history of the Jews and reminds the listeners that they were not always faithful to God. Every Jew knew that the Messiah would come from David's family and that a prophet would announce his coming.

John the Baptist was well known to this group. Next to Jesus, John the Baptizer was probably the most well know person of his time. And Paul uses his name and quotes him.

Next Paul moves from what they knew, to what they didn't know.

Would some read for us the Declaration section of the sermon beginning in verse 26?

26 Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the word of this salvation is sent out. 27 For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. 28 And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. 29 And when they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. 30 But God raised Him from the dead; 31 and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. 32 And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, 33 that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee.' 34 And as for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' 35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm, 'Thou wilt not allow Thy Holy One to undergo

decay.' 36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay; 37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.

Did you notice that Paul's pronoun changed from "they" to "you?" Verse 26 to 31 uses "they." In verse 32, Paul switches to "you."

Why do you think he did that?

In verse 30 he tells them that God raised Jesus from the dead. In verse 31 he tells them that Jesus' resurrection was witnessed by many. In verse 37 he tells them Jesus' body did not decay.

Around Easter time of every year it seems that someone gets their name in the paper for some fascinating discovery about Jesus. A few weeks ago there was a story in the papers that Jesus' bones had been discovered in a cave in Jerusalem.

It's interesting to note that the boxes which supposedly had Jesus' bones in them were found in 1980 and only now in 2007 are making the massive "contribution" to biblical knowledge. The boxes contained some kind of human remains and most had inscriptions in Aramaic on the outside.

The interest is interesting to me. While many people have doubted and denied the very existence of Jesus at all, those same persons now are jumping on the belief that Jesus was real, but that He was only human and did not rise bodily from the grave. I believe the only thing that the discovery of these boxes proves is that there were many persons named Jesus during first-century Israeli history.

Could it be that people are always looking for an opportunity to disregard and to deny biblical truth? Why is this so?

What should our response be to this kind of story?

Why would believers dismiss this story completely?

Paul quotes Isaiah 55:3 referring to the covenant that God made with David. God had promised David that from him the Messiah would come. If Jesus is the Messiah and He died and remained dead, this covenant could never be fulfilled. Therefore, Jesus had to be raised from the dead or the covenant would prove false.

The final section of the sermon is the Application.

38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

Notice the clear message here.

V 38: Through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. – We have been rescued by Grace.

V 39: Everyone who believes is freed from all things. – It is only by Faith.

V39: You could not be freed through the Law of Moses. – Not by Works.

Paul wrote in Eph 2:8-9: For by Grace are you saved through Faith. And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, lest any man should boast.

Salvation: Grace through Faith, Not by Works.

Paul continues in verse 40.

40 Take heed therefore, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you: 41'Behold, you scoffers, and marvel, and perish; For I am accomplishing a work in your days, a work which you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you.' "

Paul had declared the Good News to them and now all that remained was to make the personal application. He told them that through faith in Jesus Christ, they could have two blessings that the Law could never provide: forgiveness of their sins and justification before the throne of God.

Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous. It is “Just if I’d” never sinned. The Law showed them their need for a savior but could not cover their sin.

Notice the reaction of the people following Paul’s sermon. Verse 42.

42 And as Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath.

43 Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

They wanted more. Christianity should be infectious. Learning about God and His word should make us want more and more.

Just remember that where there is a vibrant ministry; there will be blessings and opposition. We saw it last week with the Jewish sorcerer and we will continue to see it going forward. Look at verse 44.

44 And the next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the Word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For thus the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth.'

So if the Jews didn’t want to hear them, they turned to the Gentiles. Notice the reaction they got from them. Verse 48.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the Word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the Word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jews aroused the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated

a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

In chapter 13 we see that at each point, Paul and Barnabas experienced the positive response of those who experienced new life in Christ. At the same time, at each point, they encountered opposition.

I wonder this morning where your opposition is coming from. If you are sharing your faith with others there is no doubt that Satan will put opposition to your actions.

Some of you are under attack even as we speak. It might be through circumstances surrounding your family, it might be at your places of employment, it might even be in a ministry you are leading. I wonder this morning if we might spend a few minutes in prayer for each other that God would put His hedge of protection around those of us in this room and protect us from the attacks of the evil one.

If you feel lead this morning, would you stand and pray for those in this room under attack? Pray as you are led and I will close.