

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 30 April 2023
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: Saved by grace (Acts 10-28)
Passage: Acts 13
Title: When people want to hear the Word of God

Outline:

1. The work of God...
2. Through the word of God...

- If you're a believer here this morning, it's due to the work of **God...** through the **word** of God //
- In the life of the early church – as we've been exploring it these past couple of weeks, there came this great awakening... that the Good news of Jesus was not just for **Jews...** but amazing and wonderfully for **Gentiles** too – for people like you and me!!
- and **how** did it come about? As the Gentiles **heard** the **word of God...**!
- So this morning in **Acts 13** we are going to chase those twin themes through – **God's work** and **God's word...**
- And rather than working through those two points sequentially, we'll explore them **together...** //
- We didn't read the **beginning** of the chapter... but if you'll turn there with me... I want you to notice that we find ourselves reading about the first ever **missionaries** on the first ever missionary **journey...**
- v2 look with me – while the church at Antioch *were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them". So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.*
- **Whose** work? **God's** work! **His** calling. **His** choice. **His** sending out – and v4 *The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit... sailed to Cyprus.* //
- They travelled through the whole island until they came to **Paphos...** //
- A roman ruler (v7) sent for Barnabas and Saul because *he wanted to hear the Word of God*
- **He wanted to hear the Word of God!**
- Now, **the evil one** was at work to **prevent** that from happening... An **attendant** of the roman ruler was a **sorcerer** and **opposed** Barnabas and Saul and tried to put the Roman ruler **off...**
- But neither God's **work**, nor **God's word** can be **stopped...**
- And **Saul**, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks **powerfully** to the sorcerer and he ends up temporarily **blinded...**
- But v12 – *when the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.*
- the official was **amazed** – not because of his attendant's temporary **blindness...** but **because of the teaching about the Lord...**
- The **work** of God, through the **word** of God! //
- And it's exactly what we see in the **second** episode in this chapter... which we did read... from v 13
- From **Paphos**, they sailed to **Perga** and then by land to **Pisidian Antioch** (as opposed to the Antioch

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

from where they first left).

- On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue, and the synagogue rulers, after the Scripture readings, ask Paul, *“if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak”*.
- and we see here recorded for the first time, one of **Paul’s** sermons...
- and **Paul’s** message is entirely consistent with **Peter’s** sermons recorded earlier – namely – that the man Jesus Christ is the **fulfilment** of all the **Old Testament prophecies and promises... // -**
- **he sets out to show that Jesus** is sent from **God**.
 - He starts with **Israel** in **Egypt...**
 - Israel **prospered** in Egypt
 - **Rescued** from **Egypt**
 - **Desert wandering**
 - **Promised land**
 - **Judges**
 - **Kings**
 - **Saul >> David**
 - Jesus descended from **David**
- He then proceeds to tell the story of **Jesus...**
- That the people of Jerusalem did not **recognise** him... that they **condemned** him just as the prophets had foretold...
- ... that even though there was **no grounds** for a death sentence they convince Pilate to have him **executed...**
- that his body was taken from the **tree** and laid in a **tomb**
- ...BUT that God **raised** him from the dead and he was **seen** by those had been with him from the beginning... who now witness to this amazing event...
- so – here is his point – v38 – the **take home** of Paul’s message – *I want you to know that through **Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him, everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses...***
- through **Jesus**, the forgiveness of sins is **proclaimed** to you... that’s the **word** of God – the word of God telling of the **WORK** of God...
- namely – that everyone who believes is **justified** [inference – by **God**] from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses...
- ...that those who believe in **Jesus** – who **entrust** their lives into Jesus’ **hands** – **CAN** be **justified** – put **right** with **God // BY God!! //**
- now let me ask you – have you ever tried to justify yourself when you’ve mucked something **up** or done something **wrong?**
- ...well I was only trying to help
- ...well my intentions were good...
- well – I was distracted...

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- ...well the devil tempted me...
- ...well I couldn't help it... it was like a power over came me...
- In the end – such **Self**-justification doesn't work... and we're left without **excuse**. //
- And if **unforgiven**... // we will **be** without excuse when we stand before **Jesus** as **Judge**... //
- But if we believe in **Jesus** – ...we're no longer left trying to justify **ourselves** with our **pathetic excuses**...
- because **Jesus' justifies us**...!!
- instead of **us** speaking on our own behalf and trying to get something out to justify **ourselves** // **Jesus speaks up for us** and says – **Mark Calder is OK – I died for him**...
...his **sin** is **covered**... his **debt** his **cancelled**... his **slate** is **clean**... he's **good to go**!! //
- That's the entirely **work** of God
- ... and we **know** it and take hold of it by the **word** of God. //
- now when God is at work through his word, you know what happens?
- **...people want to hear more....!**
- Have a look with me at v42 *As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak **further** about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the **grace of God**. On the next Sabbath almost the **whole city** gathered to hear the word of the Lord... !*
- Population of **Psidian Antioch**? Something in the order of **50,000**
- Now it could have been a general statement like – “the whole of **Bathurst** was at the **Anzac** service last week” - not literally accurate.... but indicative that there were a **lot of people** there...
- But you will have noted that there was a **divided reaction**...
- **Some** of the **Jews** on the one hand – were filled with **jealousy** at the attention Paul was getting... but Paul said we **had** to go to you Jews first... Jesus is in fulfilment of promises made right throughout your history to you!! – you **deserved** to hear **first**!! /
- But now – if you don't **want** this news... then **now** / we will go to the **Gentiles**...!
- And the **Gentiles**?? – v48 *they were **glad** and **honoured** the **word** of the **Lord**...*
- *AND all who were appointed for eternal life, **believed**!*
- God's **work** – by his **word**!!
- ...and v49 *the **word** of the **Lord** spread through the whole region...*
- good news **spreads**... and the news of **forgiveness** / **spread** all over the place... ////
- but the good news of Jesus also **divides**... and we see that the Jews incited **persecution** - so much so that Paul and Barnabas were expelled from the region and so they shook the dust off their feet in protest and went to Iconium... ///
- now - how did that leave them feeling?
- **Depressed? Distressed?**

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- Ready to give it **away**?
- **No** – v52 *and the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit*
-because the Gentiles' **joy** at receiving the word of God was ever so much more significant than the **persecution** suffered at the hands of the **Jews**. //]
- now – what's all this mean for us??
- Well two things – one for each one of us personally and one for us as a church

1. Personal

- Are you a **believer** here?
- You have been justified from everything you could **not** be **justified** from by the law of **Moses**....!
- Now – most here **are** Gentiles and we in fact were never **under** the law of **Moses**....
-but friends we too often think about where we stand with God on the basis of our **performance**...
- it's like episodes of **MasterChef** playing over and over again in our head where we think – I just don't know whether I've done **enough** not to be sent home... I **hope** so – I **hope** so – I **hope** I've done **enough**...
- if you're here this morning **hoping** you've done **enough** to get to heaven... I have **bad news** and **good news**...
- I can tell you the answer that you're wondering about...
- Have you **done** enough? Cooked enough? Cleaned enough? Sung enough? Served enough? Helped enough? Given enough? Prayed enough? Taken communion enough? Turned up enough? Read my Bible enough? Told others about Jesus enough? Loved my family enough?
- Stop wondering...
- The answer is **NO!** //
- You can **never** do enough.
- Or perhaps you're wondering if you can ever **make up** for that time you wandered right away from the Lord and all that that entailed; perhaps you're wondering if you can make up for that **affair**; or that **sex** outside of **marriage**; or that **cheating** on your **tax**; or your **thought-life** or **envy** or out of control **temper**... //
- **Stop wondering**...
- The answer is **NO** //
- you can never '**make up**' for anything you've done... you **cannot** justify yourself for any of your failures...
- That's the **bad** news. The **sobering reality**. //
- But the **good** news is of course **very** good!
- The good news is that the **complete** and utter, **total** forgiveness of sins is available through **Jesus**...
- And that **through** him... everyone who believes is justified from everything they could not be justified from by **rules** and **regulations**... !
- And **you** need to – I need to – to **revel** in that and allow that to **release** us from the **burden** of **guilt** we

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

often feel... // and we need to rest **again** (or perhaps for the **first** time) in the **finished** work of **Christ**...
/

- It's **his** work... **God's** work... and we **know** that and embrace that through his **word**.
- So that's the **first** take home today and it's very **real** and it's very **wonderful**...
- And the second is this...

2. FOR US AS CHURCH

That God is still at work in the world by his word!

- We can – we must – have **confidence** that the **work** we are involved in is **God's work**...
- we are his **co-workers** – what a **privilege** – but it is **his** work... **he calls, he equips** us with various gifts, **he sends out**... and he **draws people to himself**... **all** who are appointed to **eternal life**...
- yes – he **knows** who are his... and he will call them out in **Bathurst** and **Bourke**... In **Cowra** and **Coonabarabran** –
- ...and he will **soften hearts**.... he will make the **blind see**... he will **convince** the **sceptic** – he will **touch** the **cynic** – he will give the gift of **repentance**... and he will **save** those who are **his**!!
- How will he do that?
- Through his **word**!
- ...as we **read** the word; **love** his word; grow in our **knowledge** of his word; sit under the **teaching** of his word; **share** his word, **proclaim** his word, **spread** his word!!
- that's why it's no mistake that we place a high priority on the importance of clear **Bible teaching** in our churches...
- Because we know that **this** is how the Lord **works**...
- That's how he **teaches** and **corrects** us **individually** and how he **equips** and **shapes** and **moulds** us a **church**!
- As I've seen people come to know Jesus here – it's been through growing in **confidence** in and in **knowledge** of God's **word**
- When I've seen people grow in their **understanding** of the **grace** of God – it's been as they grow in their understanding of God's **word**...
- As I've seen people grow to **maturity** – become keep and equipped to serve – it's been as they've **deepened** their **understanding** of God's **word**
- As I've seen people grow in their **assurance** of salvation and in their **joy** in the Lord – it's as they've **wrestled** with God's **word**
- As I've seen people develop a deeper **trust** in God even in **difficult circumstances** and an **abiding peace** in the face of **death** – it's been as they've **understood** God's **word**!
- God is at **work** in the world... by his **word**....
- And as we **immerse ourselves** as a church in God's **word**... so will **God** be at **work** – both **in** and **through** us – to his glory!