

Refuge City Church — July 3, 2022
Acts: “The Proof is in the Pudding” [Acts 13:13-52]

Introduction

- **Last time:** Through prayer & fasting, Paul, Barnabas, and Mark began their 1st missionary journey; starting on the island of Cyprus, bringing the hope of salvation to many, plus a Roman official. But not without opposition.
- **Today:** That journey continues onto the mainland, with one of the few recorded sermons by Paul.
- **Sunday Meeting Conversation:** *“What is the meaning of life?”*
 - **QUOTE:** “I was just thinking...that here we sit, all of us, acting and drinking to preserve our precious existence, and really there is nothing, nothing, absolutely no reason for existing.”
[Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, 1938]

Verses 13-15

- The journey continues. Mark heads back to Jerusalem.
 - We’re not told specifically why, but Paul and Barnabas land in Asia Minor [modern day Turkey]; ending up in Antioch in Pisidia, they attend synagogue.

Verses 16-25

“So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: “Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. The God of this people Israel **chose our fathers** and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm **he led them out** of it. And for about forty years **he put up with them** [carried them; suffered their manners] in the wilderness. And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, **he gave them their land** as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years. And after that **he gave them judges** until Samuel the prophet. 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. And when he had removed him, **he raised up David** to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will **do all my will.**’ Of this man’s offspring **God has brought to Israel a Savior**, Jesus, as he promised. Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’”

- Paul provides a short history lesson/reminder of the sovereignty and faithfulness of God; this brief lesson has a purpose.
 - In covering Israel’s history from Abraham, Moses and Egypt, the wilderness wandering, promised land occupation, the various Judges and their leadership, to king’s Saul and David [vs. 22; son of Jesse, giving indication to the genealogy of Jesus], He leads up to the fulfillment of God’s plan & purpose for all.
 - **Isaiah 11:1**, “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
- To speak to John the Baptist showed that he played a significant role in the prophetic and sovereign relationship of God and Israel.

- So much so that he is mentioned in OT prophesy.
 - **Isaiah 40:3**, “A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”
 - **Luke 7:28**, “I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John...”
- John had his own sect of disciples, some of which may have never followed Jesus.
- So Paul makes it clear that John was *not* the Messiah.
 - **Vs. 25**: “And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’” [John 1:27; Mark 1:1-8]
- **POINT**: Let us remember that we serve a God who is in control of all things. It is His plan that matters! It is His will that we align ourselves to.
 - **Isaiah 55:9**, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
 - **Psalms 103:17**, “But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children,”

Verses 26-41 [“The proof is in the pudding”]

“Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent **the message** of this salvation. For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the **utterances** of the prophets, which are **read every Sabbath**, fulfilled them by condemning him. And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. And when they had carried out all that **was written of him**, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. **But God raised** him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the **good news** that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by **raising** Jesus, as also it is **written** in the second Psalm, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’ And as for the fact that he **raised** him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’ Therefore he says also in another psalm, ‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God **raised** up did not see corruption. Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man **forgiveness of sins** is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is **freed from everything** from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: ‘Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.’”

- All of history boils down to the rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:3-5**, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins **in accordance with the Scriptures**, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day **in accordance with the Scriptures**, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”
- After providing a synopsis of what happened, Paul then uses what they *do* have to support what they did not witness... the Word of God.

1. Psalm 2:7, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”

- David's words of God establishing him as king, and also a prophetic word of Christ's resurrection.
 - "Raised" [vs. 30, 33, 34, 37] = both in establishing David as king, and as raising Jesus from the dead.
 - **QUOTE:** "The 'virgin tomb' (John 19:41, "in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.") was like a 'womb' that gave birth to Jesus Christ in resurrection glory." [Warren Wiersbe]
 - **Romans 8:11**, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."
 - **John 5:2**, "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will."
- 2. Isaiah 55:3, "...and I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David."... "and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David."**
- Key word: *everlasting*
 - Eternal blessings [righteousness, faithfulness, eternal life] from the line of David would come through Jesus! [new covenant]
 - **1 John 2:25**, "And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life."
 - **John 5:24**, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."
- 3. Psalm 16:10, "For you will not...let your holy one see corruption."**
- David died, was buried, and is in decay.
 - Proof through hundreds of eye witnesses that Jesus raised from the dead.
 - Proof He is the promised Messiah.
 - **Romans 10:9**, "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
 - Because Jesus did not see death & decay, neither will we.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 55**, "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'"
 - Even Jesus would proclaim, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me," **[John 5:39]**
 - If we come to faith [justification and sanctification] in Jesus through God's Word, we need not miss what is said to us! [warning of vs. 41; Habakkuk 1:5]
 - **Hebrews 2:1-3**, "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."
 - This is crux of the message!
 - They had been attending synagogue as faithful Jews and God-fearing Gentiles to listen to the Word of God, through the reading of the law and the prophets.
 - They were being constantly reminded of the laws and warnings written to them regarding the attainment of righteousness before God.

- They had not known anything different, and here comes Paul with the most amazing message of salvation!
 - **Verses 38, 39:** “Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.”
- Providing proof, through historical, prophetic, and eye-witness accounts that their Messiah, Jesus Christ had indeed come, died, and rose again for their justification... not by religious law-keeping, but by the free gift of grace.
 - **Galatians 5:1,** “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”
- The biblical narrative is the story of God’s redemption of mankind. It’s a beautiful story of what he did for us through His Son Jesus Christ.
 - Yet this is a story broken down into ‘acceptance’ and ‘rejection’.
 - As Paul began by laying out the history of God’s people [those who accepted and rejected Him], he ends his time in Antioch by being rejected by the very people God desired to save; yet we see many accept His grace with joy.

Verses 42-52 [Conclusion]

- Look at the reaction to this Good News!
 - **Vs. 44:** “The next Sabbath almost the whole city **gathered to hear the word of the Lord.**”
 - **Vs. 46:** “It was **necessary that the word of God be spoken** first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.”
 - **Vs. 48:** “they began rejoicing and **glorifying the word of the Lord**, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”
 - **Vs. 49:** “And **the word of the Lord was spreading** throughout the whole region.”
- Law vs. Grace
 - This was Paul’s message to those in that synagogue. If you continue to listen to the extreme legalism of rule-keeping, there is no release.
 - **Galatians 3:10,** “For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.’”
 - The law exists to reveal our sinful nature [Romans 7:7].
 - But the beautiful promise we can accept is freedom in Jesus name!
 - **Galatians 3:13,** “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us —for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’”
 - So accept the freedom He freely offers, and walk in the joy of His grace!