

# Acts 13:44-52

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Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[ 0 : 00 ] If you will please take out your copy of God's Word, I hope you have it here with you today. and turn or swipe your way to Acts chapter 13. Our text for today is Acts chapter 13, verses 44 through 52.

And while you're getting there, thank the band for leading us well in music. This morning, Liz, you may or may not have noticed, I hope you've noticed, she's very pregnant, seven months. And she was dizzy, and she said, I don't know if I can sing this morning. And I said, please sing that song particularly. I don't know if I had anything to do with her getting up and singing or not, but she decided to sit on a stool, which I'm really, really thankful for.

And I'm thankful that Wes, in giving leadership to the band, sees his ministry not as separate from ministry of preaching the Word, but he sees it as the same, and that is that he ministers to us the Word of God in song.

It's a wonderful thing that we should treasure together. So Acts chapter 13, but before we get to this week's text, I want to remind you what happened in last week's text.

[ 1 : 10 ] After proclaiming the gospel on the island of Cyprus, Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark sailed northwest back to the mainland. At this point, John Mark leaves his companions and returns to Jerusalem.

We don't know exactly why, but it was probably because the danger of the journey that was ahead of them and the likelihood of further persecution. Paul and Barnabas then go from the coast and travel 100 miles north through the Taurus Mountains to Antioch in Pisidia, which is not to be confused with the Antioch that they were originally commissioned from.

There's lots of Antiochs in the area that's now modern Turkey in that day. In Antioch in Pisidia, they attend the synagogue on the Sabbath where they are asked to speak, probably because Paul was an understudy of the well-known rabbi Gamaliel.

So they likely knew who he was or he had told them who he had studied underneath, and he's asked to speak to address the congregation on that day. Next, we observe the first and longest of Paul's sermons in which Paul preaches Jesus Christ.

Let me clarify that statement, the recorded of his sermons. Luke records it here for us. Paul preaches Christ as the culmination of human history, as the fulfillment of prophecy, and as the justifier of the sinner.

[ 2 : 36 ] And he calls his listeners to believe in this message, the gospel that he is preaching to them. Verse 42 and 43 of Acts 13 reads, was kind of the summary of last week's text.

As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. So we see a favorable response to the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and they've asked him to come back the following week. Would have been a Saturday to preach more.

And this brings us to our text today, beginning in verse 44 and through the end of the chapter. The next Sabbath, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, 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.

[ 3 : 51 ] Behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

But the Jews, inside of the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their district.

But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Beloved, this is God's word to us.

It was written for his glory and for our good. We would all do well to listen to it this morning in order to believe its promises and to obey its commands.

[ 4 : 53 ] So we see Paul and Barnabas return to the synagogue on the next Sabbath, verse 44. And this amazing thing that almost, Luke records for us, the whole city gathered to hear.

Isn't this a wonderful work of God that almost the whole city gathered? There were no flyers mailed out. There's no promise of entertainment whatsoever.

But simply to hear the word of the Lord. What a work of God to bring together a city in this way. Not to be entertained, but to hear the gospel preached.

Luke does not record for us what was said by Paul. But we do know that Paul speaks. We know this because verse 45 tells us that Paul spoke. The Jews were responding to what he had said.

And I think it's proper to presume that he spoke as he did the week before. I am sure that Paul spoke to them of the crucified and resurrected Christ.

[ 5 : 59 ] I am sure now having an audience gathered that is both Jew and Gentile. He spoke to them of a sovereign ruler of heaven and earth who created all things.

Who set up a standard in the garden. A single rule that Adam transgressed and brought sin to all of mankind. I am sure that he spoke to them of the law.

Which laid out for them a standard by which God would be pleased. And then expressed our complete and utter inability to keep that law. I am sure that he told them of the great separation that existed between them and God.

Because of their sinfulness. Which would have pressed upon him the necessity of preaching good news. After telling them the bad news.

The good news of Christ. Come to earth. Taking the form of a man. Fully God. Fully man. Living a perfect life.

[ 7 : 05 ] Obtaining the righteousness of God that the law requires. So that by faith in him we could have that righteousness. But not just that. Dying the death of a sinner on the cross.

Bearing in his body the wrath that was due them and us for their sin. Then in there Jesus was resurrected.

And is seated with the Father now. Was mentioned earlier. Making intercession for us. Because he's alive we can have life.

I'm sure that Paul proclaimed the gospel once again. It was his call. As it is ours. To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 9. Verse 16. Paul says. For if I preach the gospel. That gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me.

[ 8 : 04 ] Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. I believe that Luke does not record for us the specifics of what Paul said.

Because he intends for us to focus on the characters of this account. And their responses to Paul's gospel proclamation. So for the sake of your soul today.

I want to draw your attention by making five observations of the text today. And I'll try to move through them quickly. I'm going to listen for you real quick. I'll readdress them. Because you won't be able to get these out.

In pen. In the time I say them. So. They are. Number one. The persecution that accompanies gospel proclamation. Number two. The responsibility of mankind to respond to the gospel.

Number three. The sovereignty of God and the salvation of his people. Number four. The evangelistic fervor of God's people.

[ 9 : 01 ] And number five. The unwavering commitment of Paul toward the Gentiles. So number one. First observation.

The persecution that accompanies gospel proclamation. I hear you, Silas. He's saying data. I just want to point that out. The persecution that accompanies gospel proclamation.

So the week before. They're very pleased. The Jews are. They're very pleased to have Paul proclaim the gospel to them. But when the Jews see the crowds. When it's no longer this elitist thing for them alone to hear this gospel proclamation. But almost an entire city is gathered now to hear what it is that Paul has to say. When they see the popularity of the message of Jesus Christ. They're filled with jealousy. Because it would seem that their elitist mindset.

[10:05] That they have been God's people for all of ages. Their special in some way was getting destroyed. And it made them jealous. Seeking the applause of men.

They failed to seek the approval of God. And they begin to contradict what was spoken by Paul. They revile him. In the Greek, they blaspheme.

They slander. They malign. They defame Paul. It's not just an emotion that they're feeling toward him. It's an action that's taking place. It's as the crowd is gathered.

And as he's proclaiming the gospel. They're trying to discredit him at every turn. Verse 50 goes on and expands upon what goes beyond just this meeting.

The Jews incited devout women and leading men. And they stirred up a persecution. We don't know the exact nature of it. But likely they wanted to cause them physical harm.

[11:06] And so Paul and Barnabas are driven out of the district. I will not grow tired of saying to this generation in this place where we live.

Us in this place. Gospel proclamation and persecution are mutually inclusive. We're going to see this time and time and time again in the book of Acts.

They are mutually inclusive, beloved. And persecution is going to take different shapes in different places. A couple of weeks ago we spent some devoted time praying for the persecuted church.

And when we said that we meant the persecuted church abroad that's persecuted physically.

Imprisoned. Beaten. Killed. For their faith. We don't want to belittle that.

We don't want to make small the sacrifice of many believers around the world. But we are deluded if we think that we are devoid of such a thing because we're Americans.

[12:06] The world does not like the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if we are proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, we will experience pushback from it.

Gospel proclamation and persecution are mutually inclusive. Jesus, our Lord, was crucified. He says in John chapter 15, verses 18 through 21, If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you were not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Verse 18 is conditional. Verse 19 is not. I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you.

A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

[13:17] But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. What Jesus spoke to the apostles was already proving true.

In Acts chapter 3, Peter and John are arrested for preaching Christ. They stand trial in chapter 4 and are charged to speak no more to anyone in the name of Jesus.

In chapter 6, a deacon named Stephen is falsely accused, arrested. And in chapter 7, serves the kingdom of God as the first Christian martyr when he is stoned to death. We can read of a great persecution that arises in Jerusalem in chapter 8, which causes the church to scatter and the gospel message with them.

In chapter 12, the apostle James is killed by Herod, and Peter is imprisoned, then miraculously set free. At the beginning of chapter 13, Paul and Barnabas are opposed by a magician named Elimus on the island of Cyprus.

And now, at the end of chapter 13, the theme remains, and it will continue on. Gospel proclamation and persecution are mutually inclusive.

[14:34] If you do not suffer in the name of Christ, then you are not following him. If someone is not offended, if someone doesn't call you names, if someone doesn't want to spend time with you, if you don't lose a job or are passed over for a promotion, if your grade suffers in a particular class, then you're not following Christ.

It's going to take many shapes and forms. I don't want you to make anything I just said absolute, and I certainly don't want you to go seek it. But if you are proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, some people will treasure that, some people will listen to the words that you say, and some will hate you for it.

Verse 19, John chapter 15, If you are of the world, the world will love you as its own. Beloved, if you are in Christ, and you are living as the world lives, the world will love you.

But if you don't live as the world lives, but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, the world will hate you. Secondly, the responsibility of mankind to respond to the gospel. The responsibility of mankind to respond to the gospel. People are accountable to their decisions to accept or reject the gospel message.

[16:07] You'll note in our text today that the crowd is divided along ethnic lines. I find that fascinating. Who's to know if there's not some mixture here, I suppose?

Acts 13, we see Jews and converts to Judaism, known as proselytes. Last week I said proselytites seven times, and Wes pointed it out to me afterwards.

Proselytes, converts to Judaism. Seem to be favorably following the encouragement in verse 43, is that they would continue in the grace of God.

But Luke makes the record here, the Jews hated the gospel message, and the Gentiles responded favorably to it. One group accepted, the other group rejected.

Luke simply records the Jews were jealous in verse 45, and that the Gentiles were rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. Note what Paul and Barnabas say to their Jewish listeners.

[17:12] Verse 46, Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying it was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first. Since you thrust aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

Paul and Barnabas say to the Jews that they are condemning themselves by judging themselves unworthy by rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ. If men are damned, it will only be because of their rejection of God and His ways.

John 3, verse 18, Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

John 5, verse 40, Jesus says, You refuse to come to me that you may have life. If you do not know Jesus Christ this morning, do not respond as the Jews did, thinking that they were pleasers of God, but being condemned for their rejection of Jesus.

Be like the Gentiles. Rejoice and glorify God, for this can be the day of your salvation. Verse 48, When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord.

[18:37] The gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Let's bring us to our third observation.

So, second observation, mankind is responsible for their response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. But thirdly, the sovereignty of God in the salvation of His people.

Oh, this is a good one. And we could talk a long time about this. And as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

Now, the Greek word for appointed means to inscribe or to enroll. To inscribe or to enroll.

To write down a name. Psalm 69, verse 28. The psalmist says, Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.

[19:39] Let them not be enrolled among the righteous. Revelation 13, 8. All who dwell on earth will worship the beast.

Everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. So, there's an unrolling happening.

And there's an unrolling that's happening before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1, 4. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

That we should be holy and blameless before Him. Now, many will take this phrase, As many as were appointed to eternal life believed, and try to flip it around on us.

They would say, rather, As many as believed were appointed to eternal life. They'll give us some complex explanation of God and the way that God exists outside of time, which I certainly agree with.

[20:41] However, we don't simply look at the plain meaning of the text. The Greek does not allow us just to take it and flop it around.

Right? Luke recorded, in this way, As many as were appointed to eternal life believed. There's a cause, and there's an effect.

They were appointed, therefore, they believed. Beware of those who want to use exegetical tricks to do exegetical somersaults with a text to suit their purpose.

There's an apparent paradox, right, presented here. I was going to read you a long J.I. Packer quote, but I forgot the book downstairs that it was in, so I'm not going to. If you know who J.I. Packer is, he's a contemporary theologian.

When you're in good company, if the paradox tears at your mind a bit, ask me later, I'll read the quote to you. This apparent paradox is apparent contradiction, although it's not one at all, but the apparent one of man's responsibility and God's sovereignty.

[ 21 : 54 ] We can see here Paul and Barnabas saying to the Jews, right, you've rejected, you've dismissed, you've counted yourselves unworthy. But then Luke records for us that as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

The Scripture teaches both things, beloved. Man is ultimately responsible and God is fully sovereign. If you have a problem with the doctrine of election, your problem is not with me or with a denomination or a historical figure.

The problem is with the Scripture and therefore the God of the Scripture. If you have a problem with the doctrine of election, I want to very humbly and lovingly encourage you not to.

It will benefit your soul to take up the promises of the Bible and they are sure because of God's sure purpose.

The doctrine of election is always taught in the Scripture to give us a pillow to rest our heads upon. That is why it is taught, right, to those who are in Christ to know that we did nothing to find ourselves in Him and therefore we can do nothing to find ourselves outside of Him.

[ 23 : 22 ] He saves. He has worked. We're the recipients of this grand blessing. This is why it's taught a pillow to rest our heads upon and I like to say and never a rock to bash somebody over the head with.

I believe here that Luke means to help us understand the broad rejection and the broad acceptance of Paul's gospel message by making this statement.

Why? What is going on in redemptive history that Paul is preaching this gospel message and it seems a whole ethnicity rejects it and a whole ethnicity in this city receives it?

What is happening here? And Luke simply says, and as many were appointed to eternal life, believed. God is at work. God is sovereignly making His plans come to pass.

As God's people, we should treasure such doctrine. It is precious to us in so many ways. I want to take you to a place and show you just some of why I love the doctrine of election and I want you to turn there with me to Romans chapter 8.

[ 24 : 33 ] Romans chapter 8 is a grand chapter of the scripture.

If you're not familiar, when I say turn to Romans chapter 8 and your mind doesn't start racing with wonderful things from Romans chapter 8, you need to study this chapter. Your assignment this week is to read Romans chapter 8 every day this week and just consider all that is given to us in Christ.

I'll give you a couple of examples. It starts out, chapter 8 verse 1, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

No condemnation for us. We don't have to bear the guilt of sin any longer. We've been set free from it because we are in Christ. Praise God. Verse 15, for you do not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry Abba, Father. We have God as our Father because we've been adopted as sons. Ladies, that's for you too. That's a promise for you with all of the privileges that came for sonship in this day.

[ 25 : 57 ] All of the blessing that comes with being the son of a father. We've been adopted as sons. Verse 18, for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not even worthy to compare with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Right? Precious. Precious promises. Down to verse 28. Familiar to you, I hope. And we're going to read through the end of the chapter because I can't not at this point. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

What a promise that is. Right? All things, everything we're walking through in this life, all of the troubles of this life are aimed and are good for those who are called according to His purpose.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined, He also called.

And those whom He called, He also justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified. Paul gives to us here in brief kind of what's called an *ordo salutis*.

[ 27 : 03 ] Right? The order of salvation. How did this all come to pass? And he's anchoring us in this reality that we have been chosen in Christ. Why?

What do we do with this? Right? I'm making the point to you that this is a pillow to rest our heads on. Right? Rest easy, beloved. Verse 21. What then shall we say to these things?

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies who is to condemn. Christ Jesus is the one who died more than that who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, for your sake we are being killed all the day long.

[ 28 : 06 ] We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation and put yourself in that category as well and you will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It's beautiful, right? all of the goodness of God to us in Christ. And what happens at this point in Paul's letter? Remember that the chapter break is not inspired.

He goes on to lament that there are those that are of His flesh, right? The Jews that do not believe. He goes right on to say, right, in light of God's elective purposes there are people who will not respond favorably to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He is broken over that. He wishes that He Himself could be accursed, cut off from Christ for the sake of them. That's verse 3. So in the midst of all of this speaking about election, Paul is not cold about it.

Right? At all. Right? He's broken over it. He wants His brethren to know Christ. Verses 16-18.

[ 29 : 31 ] So that depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, for this very purpose I have raised you up that I might show my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

So then He has mercy on whomever He wills and He hardens whomever He wills. Beloved, this is difficult stuff to understand. Right? My mind is too little to entirely comprehend the great chasm that seems to exist but seeing the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God.

How do we reconcile these two things? I don't know that we actually can, but the Scripture teaches us to it for our benefit. You cannot have Romans chapter 8 without Romans chapter 9.

You just can't do it. You can't claim all of the promises of God to you in Christ without grasping hold of rightly the doctrine of election.

So humbly and lovingly work through it, wrestle with it, study the Scripture, ask hard questions, and then embrace it.

[ 30 : 41 ] It's a glorious, glorious truth and it's meant to give us rest as God's people. Note fourthly, and I love that Luke did this, the evangelistic fervor of God's people in verse 49.

Right after saying this, stating this massive elective truth, all who were appointed to eternal life believed.

And then what happens? If the doctrine of election has ever slowed the advance of the Gospel is because it wasn't understood. I would argue historically that it never has, but if it ever has, it just wasn't rightly understood.

Understanding God's purpose for His people in the world has historically driven people out to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I've shared this with you before, but you may not have heard it.

When speaking of election, many people think of the name John Calvin. And for some people that name is a dirty word. Calvin, when he was in Geneva, pastored a church and he led, was the overseer of a seminary.

[ 32 : 02 ] And his seminary became known as the School of Death because as he gave pastors that were fleeing persecution from all over Europe that came to Geneva to learn more about God, as he taught them the doctrine of election and many other doctrines, not just this one, but many other doctrines, they were driven by a passion for God's glorious purpose with their people to go back home and most of them were martyred.

It became known as Calvin's School of Death. Properly understanding God's purpose in the world drives evangelism. So note the evangelistic fervor of God's people, verse 49, and the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

Right? Different words have been used in this text. District, they're driven out of the district the word of God was spreading throughout the whole region. This is a much broader place. The region is much bigger than the district.

So the gospel's going forth far and wide. Paul and Barnabas have not been driven out of the district yet. Right? It's safe to say that they're still in this place and maybe that they're part of the spread of it to the whole region.

But it would be wrong to assume that they were the only proponents of that spread. They have come to a new place, a place that has not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ yet. They preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 33 : 24 ] People are converted. Right? Gentiles in large numbers embrace the truth of Christ. And we see that the word of the Lord spreads throughout the whole region. Right?

Far and wide. The gospel is being proclaimed. Right? Being a follower of Jesus Christ necessitates that we be gospel preachers. Jesus made a promise in Acts 1.8.

He said to the apostles, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria. And here's where we find ourselves in the story and to the end of the earth.

The gospel proclamation has now gone outside of the borders of Samaria. It's gone beyond that place and they're filling in the gaps all along as newcomers to Jesus Christ or sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with those that they know.

But it has now gone beyond that in the work of Paul and Barnabas. Right? That promise was being fulfilled and it is still now being fulfilled.

[ 34 : 29 ] We are followers of Christ. We are Gentiles saved by grace. I don't know that there's anybody in here of Jewish descent. If you are, you're also saved by grace.

I'm a Gentile. Right? Saved by grace. Praise God. And understanding rightly that salvation drives evangelistic effort.

Fifth thing I want you to notice and in closing we'll go through this really quick. The unwavering commitment of Paul toward the Gentiles. The unwavering commitment of Paul toward the Gentiles. You have to remember as we consider Paul's ministry that he was of Jewish descent. He prized highly that. We see in the book of Galatians oh my gosh my brain Philippians he tears down counts things as rubbish that he once treasured.

He had studied to be a Jew a zealous Jew a Jew among Jews right? And here he is going to his people and they are wholeheartedly almost rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 35 : 36 ] and he has set his attention now to a people that by his upbringing would have been inferior in every way. The Jews were very proud.

This nationalism even as they had been scattered and recollected and scattered again a very very proud people a minority in most places trying to stand firm against the oppression of Rome and the dissolving of their culture.

and this is who God calls Paul to reach a people that in his mind would have been and ceased to be inferior.

He sees these as people desperately needing the gospel of Christ. Verse 46 we've touched on it a few times it was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of return behold we are turning to the Gentiles in the verse 47 for so the Lord has commanded us saying I have made you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

Now you might scratch your head there and say but wait a second is there a record of God saying to Paul I have made you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the earth. No not directly not explicitly to Paul but what Paul is doing is citing Isaiah 49 6 chapter 49 verse 6 which

says it is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel I will make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

[ 37 : 20 ] Paul is interpreting for us Old Testament promises that God's people would take the good news of Jesus Christ now understood to the ends of the earth.

In many places in scripture God speaks of his global intention for his glory to be made known. I'll just give you one other example this morning for the sake of time. Psalm 96 3 the psalmist commands declare his glory among the nations his marvelous works among all the peoples. The notion that God was not for the nations was a sentiment unique to the Jews of this time. They had developed as I said a superiority complex as God's people. They looked down their noses at everyone else. The Jews of Paul's day this is the severity of it the Jews of Paul's day took great pains not to carry Gentile dust into the borders of Israel. Catch this little important detail for some of the rest of our text. They took great pains as they traveled through Gentile lands before they entered Israel to clean up to get all of the dust off because it was seen as defiled because Gentiles lived there.

[ 38 : 36 ] This was their disdain for the Gentiles. But the widespread rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the Jews served as a catalyst for that gospel to go to the nations.

And note what Paul and Barnabas do in response to being driven out of Antioch and Pisidia by the Jews. Verse 51, but they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. There's the significance of this, right? This was to suggest that the Jews in Antioch and Pisidia were no better than pagans.

And Paul and Barnabas didn't want to take their unbelief with them. That's symbolic, shaking the dust off. The only thing that matters in the end, beloved, is whether or not we are in Christ. Our ethnic descent matters not at all. And the question to ask you primarily, I know there's some exceptions, I praise God for the exceptions in this room, but primarily white, middle class Americans in this room.

[ 39 : 49 ] Is there any ethnicity that we consider outside the grace of God? Is there any people that you would think, oh, but not to them? I'd suggest that's the very people you should carry the gospel message to.

Have it rend your heart. You would see that people are all in the same position apart from Christ, damned eternally in desperate need of a Savior.

And so we can observe the persecution that accompanies gospel proclamation in this text, the responsibility of mankind to respond to the gospel, the sovereignty of God in the salvation of his people, the evangelistic fervor of God's people, the unwavering commitment of Paul toward the Gentiles, all in these few verses.

What a text. And note finally the result of these observations. Verse 52, and the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together.