

Two Reactions to the Good News

(Acts 13:13-52)

Pre-Session Warm Up

God had promised to send the Messiah to the people of Israel. The Jewish people prayed for the day when He would come. However, when Jesus got here some people didn't recognize who He was. Many people believed He was the Messiah, but some people were not so easily convinced.

Today we're going to find out that the Holy Spirit gave Paul and Barnabas the boldness to preach the message of salvation whether people received their message or not.

Opening Prayer

Lord, it must have been awfully hard for Paul and Barnabas to continue to tell people about Your offer of salvation when so many rejected it. Yet they faced the rejection and persecution and continued to obediently share the gospel with everyone they could. Help us to learn to trust the Holy Spirit like they did. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. (Ephesians 6:19 NLT)

Lesson

Last week we learned about how Paul and Barnabas shared the Good News with the governor of Paphos on the island of Cyprus. [Show on map.] If you remember, Bar-Jesus, a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet who was empowered by the evil one, tried to keep the people from believing in Jesus.

Whenever the Good News is being shared, Satan tries hard to keep people from believing in Jesus. Fortunately, the governor heard the message of salvation and believed in Jesus.

When we share the Good News, some will believe and some will not. It can be discouraging when people refuse to believe. Even so, Jesus commanded us to go into all the world and make disciples.

Mark 16:15-16

And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. (16) Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned."

Whether people believe us or not, we are to keep on spreading the word about the great gift that Jesus has given us. He died on the cross in our place so that we can have eternal life with Him in heaven.

Paul and Barnabas continued to travel. They left Paphos on the island of Cyprus and went to a town called Antioch in the region of Pisidian. [Show on map.] This is not the same Antioch that Paul was in before. It is a different town with the same name.

When they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue, as usual. There Paul was invited to share a message of encouragement.

Acts 13:14-16

But Paul and Barnabas traveled inland to Antioch of Pisidia. On the Sabbath they went to the synagogue for the services. (15) After the usual readings from the books of Moses and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them this message: "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, come and give it." (16) So Paul stood, lifted his hand to quiet them, and started speaking. "Men of Israel," he said, "and you God-fearing Gentiles, listen to me."

Paul reminds the people that ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God had promised to send a Messiah, the Savior of mankind, and then Paul explained that God kept this promise by sending Jesus.

Paul told the people that God promised that the Messiah would have to suffer and die, but then He would rise from the dead.

Acts 13:30-32

But God raised him from the dead! (31) And over a period of many days he appeared to those who had gone with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people of Israel. (32) "And now we are here to bring you this Good News. The promise was made to our ancestors,

The Holy Spirit enabled Paul to preach the Good News to the people. He goes on in verse 38...

Acts 13:38-39

"Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. (39) Everyone who believes in him is made right in God's sight—something the law of Moses could never do.

Paul message had a great impact on the lives of many people listening that day.

Acts 13:42-44

As Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue that day, the people begged them to speak about these things again the next week. (43) Many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, and the two men urged them to continue to rely on the grace of God. (44) The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear them preach the word of the Lord.

Many people received Paul's message of salvation and believed in Jesus. Unfortunately, there were some people who refused to believe.

Acts 13:45

But when some of the Jews saw the crowds, they were jealous; so they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said.

Paul and Barnabas explained that they shared the message of the Good News with them first because they are Jews. You see, the Jews had been waiting for the Messiah since the beginning of time.

And Jesus came as the fulfillment of that promise; He was the fulfillment of their scriptures. But, since these Jews rejected the message of Jesus, Paul and Barnabas told them that they were now going to take the Good News to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:46-47

Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, "It was necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles. (47) For the Lord gave us this command when he said, 'I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.'"

The same message that angered the unbelieving Jews caused a completely different reaction in the Gentiles.

Acts 13:48-49

When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked the Lord for his message; and all who were chosen for eternal life became believers. (49) So the Lord's message spread throughout that region.

God's word spread throughout the area and this caused the unbelieving Jews to stir up more trouble for Paul and Barnabas and forced them to leave Pisidian Antioch. In fact, they ran out of town!

Acts 13:50

*Then the Jews stirred up the influential religious women and the leaders of the city, and they incited a mob against Paul and Barnabas and **ran them out of town.***

As they left, they did something that seems odd to us.

Acts 13:51

So they shook the dust from their feet as a sign of rejection and went to the town of Iconium.

To better understand why they did this, turn to Mark 6:11. This is Jesus speaking...

Mark 6:11

But if any place refuses to welcome you or listen to you, shake its dust from your feet as you leave to show that you have abandoned those people to their fate.”

Have you ever heard anyone say, “*I wash my hands of this*”? When you have done all you can to convince a person that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, but they refuse to believe, then you have to leave it up to the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those you are trying to convince.

Paul and Barnabas did not let the response of the unbelieving Jews discourage them from continuing their missionary journey. They left Pisidian Antioch and traveled next to Iconium. As they traveled, they were filled with Joy.

Acts 13:52

And the believers were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The next place they went was Iconium. [Show on map.]

Acts 14:1-4

*The same thing happened in Iconium. Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue and preached with such power that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. (2) Some of the Jews, however, spurned God’s message and poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas. (3) But the apostles stayed there a long time, preaching boldly about the grace of the Lord. And **the Lord proved their message was true by giving them power to do miraculous signs and wonders.** (4) But the people of the town were divided in their opinion about them. Some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles.*

Next week we will pick up the story right here and learn more about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Holy Spirit enabled Paul and Barnabas to do that proved their message about Jesus was true.

Sometimes when we share the Good News with others, there will be people who reject the message and may even be unkind to us. But, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have the Holy Spirit living in you and He will help you to continue to share the message of salvation with joy and boldness. He will give you the right words to say to everyone that you talk to about Jesus.

People have different reactions to Jesus. They either accept Him as God and welcome Him into their lives; or they reject Him and refuse to believe the truth.

What about you? Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, strengthen our faith in You so that we might be willing to stand up for You even when others don’t believe what we’re telling them. Give us compassion in our hearts to reach out to others and to keep on loving them, just like You did, no matter if they believe in You or not. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Use the following questions in a game or discussion.

1. Show me the two towns called Antioch on the map.
2. Where did Paul and Barnabas go on the Sabbath in every town they visited? (The Synagogue)
3. What is the Good News? (Jesus died and rose again so that we can have forgiveness of our sins.)
4. Why did Paul and Barnabas share the Good News with the Jews first? (They were God’s chosen people who had been waiting for

the promised Messiah since the beginning of time. Jesus came as the fulfillment of that promise; He was the fulfillment of their scriptures.)

5. Whenever the Good News is being shared, who tries hard to keep people from believing in Jesus? (Satan)
6. How did some of the Jews react when they saw the crowd gathered to hear Paul? (They were filled with jealousy and spoke abusive words to Paul and Barnabas.)
7. How did the Gentiles respond when they heard the Good News? (They were glad and honored the Word of God.)
8. What forced Paul and Barnabas to run for their lives out of Antioch of Pisidian? (God's word spread throughout the area and this caused the unbelieving Jews to stir up more trouble for Paul and Barnabas and forced them to leave Pisidian Antioch.)
9. Why did Paul and Barnabas shake the dust off their feet when they left Pisidian Antioch? (To show that they had abandoned those people to their fate.)