

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for February 1, 2015

God's Faithfulness in Redemption
Acts 13:38-43

After explaining the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul concluded his message to the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch with the significance of Christ's work – after he addressed the “what” he concluded with the “so what.”

1. The promise of freedom (13:38-39)

This promise of freedom is for “everyone.”

The word translated “freed” actually means “justified” (DIKAIWTHENAI). The reason this word is translated as “freed” is due to the context of our deliverance from sin.

Justification is the act of God where He declares a person righteous. Freedom through Christ is built upon Christ's work of declaring us righteous, and “freed” is in the passive voice, which shows that justification is not something that we can do for ourselves.

In verse 38 and verse 39, the phrase “through Him” is emphasized. Being forgiven includes being declared righteous by God and this happens “through Him,” Jesus Christ. We are more than forgiven of sin; we have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Paul repeated this teaching that no man can be justified by the Law of Moses when he wrote to the church in this same region of Galatia (Galatians 2:16). It was impossible for sacrifices to bring freedom from sin (Hebrews 10:4).

If God's Law is unable to make us free, how much more so is any man-made moral code unable to make us free?

2. The prophetic forewarning (13:40-41)

Paul concluded his message with a stern command to “take heed” and quoted the Greek translation of Habakkuk 1:5, which warned Judea of judgment from the Gentiles if they did not listen.

There is an added emphasis on “work” in this quote, with the reference being God's work through the mission of the gospel (cf. Acts 13:2) and the corresponding judgment for failing to listen just like their ancestors.

As with Paul's message to the Gentiles in Athens (Acts 17:31), the fact of God's coming judgment concluded the message. Any explanation of the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ should include "whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

3. The people follow (13:42-43)

The people who spoke to Paul and Barnabas after the meeting were identified as the Jews and the proselytes, who were full converts to Judaism. Similar to the time of Jesus, common Jews were initially interested in the teaching of Christ, only later to be manipulated by the Jewish leaders to oppose Him. The danger of falling back into Judaism was real (cf. Hebrews 6).

Those responding to the message were not pressed to make a decision but urged to continue in the grace of God, meaning to continue to be a "learner." Our commission to make disciples (Matthew 28:19) is done by urging people to continue to learn about Jesus.

May we be faithful to take the initiative to speak of the good news of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, leaving the results to God.