



Early Christians

Promise fulfilled

Paul's Sermon at Antioch

Acts 13:14-43

Teaching Aim

To show that, when we are saved, we must tell others about Jesus.

Setting the scene

After Saul's conversion, he preached at Damascus before having to flee to Jerusalem because the Jews in Damascus were trying to kill him. In Jerusalem he also preached but once again they tried to kill him so the apostles sent him to Tarsus. (See Basic lesson opposite.) The Holy Spirit started to move in the hearts of Gentiles and, when the apostles saw this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch to investigate. When Barnabas saw what was happening, he went to Tarsus to bring back Saul who is also called Paul. In Antioch they preached for a year.

Paul and Barnabas sent off

Read Acts 13:1-3. The Holy Spirit spoke to the believers who were fasting in Antioch to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work that He had prepared for them, so they were sent off on a missionary journey. They went first to Cyprus where the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, was converted. It was after this that Saul became known as Paul (See Acts 13:6-12).

Paul and Barnabas departed and eventually came to another Antioch in Pisidia. Read Acts 13:13-15. This is a different Antioch from the Syrian Antioch where Paul and Barnabas had spent a year. They went into the synagogue and, after the law and the prophets had been read, the rulers of the synagogue asked them if they had anything to say to the people.

Paul preaches

Read Acts 13:16-22. In verse 16 Paul addressed the people in the synagogue. Who did Paul preach to in the synagogue? - There were two classes of people in the synagogue - Jews and Gentiles who had accepted the God of Israel as their God.

Paul addressed both by tracing out some of Israel's history and God's promise, and then showed how, in a marvellous way, that promise was fulfilled.

He explained to them how graciously God treated His people Israel! In spite of all their failures and murmurings against Him, He provided bread from heaven and water out of the smitten rock and, at last, brought them into the land of promise.

Israel failed. We have failed even more inasmuch as our privileges are greater than theirs. We can all look back over years and see how we failed the Lord, but He has never failed us. What a gracious God

we have!

The Jews at Antioch would be thoroughly familiar with all that Paul was saying because they knew the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul went on to speak of David in verse 22 and state that the Saviour that God promised was Jesus.

Paul preaches Christ risen

Read Acts 13:28-41. The Christian faith is unique. We do not have a grave where we go to worship a dead prophet: our Saviour is risen. When Paul made the statement about the risen Christ, there were still many witnesses who had actually seen Christ in His resurrection glory. Through this same Jesus the forgiveness of sin is offered to all. In verse 41 the apostle warned them not to scoff at this great event and perish. Today, many scoff at what Christ has done and are heading for a lost eternity. Be like Paul and accept the salvation so freely offered in Christ and then go and tell others the good news.

What was the result of Paul's preaching (Acts 13:42-43)? - There was a real awakening. They believed the gospel and were saved.

Summing up

Paul preached wherever he went about Christ and the need for salvation. Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins? Have you asked Him to be your Saviour? If not, why not do it today -... "now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation" 2 Cor 6:2. If you are already a Christian, go and tell others the good news.

Resources

Discussion

- If Paul was alive and in our country today, how do you think he would preach to:
 - (i) People shopping in the High Street on Christmas Eve?
 - (ii) Fans praising their favourite footballer or Pop Star?
 - (ii) The farmer or businessman who has no time to go to church?
- Paul preached in the synagogue by referring to the Old Testament and then preaching Christ. Why would it be dangerous for us to use this method today?

Prayer Points

Thank God that:

- Jesus came to die for sinners.
- Missionaries known to you are witnessing at this present time.

Pray for:

- The strength to go out and tell others about Jesus.
- Your friends and family who are still not saved.