

4/3/16

Acts 13:13-52

Hope Driven Believer

Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem,¹⁴ but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down.¹⁵ After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it."¹⁶ So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said:

"Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness.¹⁹ And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance.²⁰ All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.²¹ 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.²² 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.'²³ Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.²⁴ Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.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.'

²⁶ "Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation.²⁷ 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.²⁸ And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed.²⁹ 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.³⁰ But God raised him from the dead,³¹ 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.³² And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers,³³ 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.’

³⁴ 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.’

³⁵ Therefore he says also in another psalm,

“‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’

³⁶ 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,³⁷ but he whom God raised up did not see corruption.³⁸ Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,³⁹ and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.⁴⁰ Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

⁴¹ “‘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.’”

⁴² As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath.⁴³ 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.

⁴⁴ The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.⁴⁶ 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, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 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.”*

⁴⁸ 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. ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited 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. ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

(Pastor Prays)

We live in a superficial age, a God-disregarding age, a time when being theologically astute and Biblically literate puts you outside of the main stream, a time when people are sworn into office with their hand on a Bible they've never read and certainly don't believe.

We live in a time when society at-large has become *unmoored*, *untethered* to anything that has a ring of truth in it, and part of our job as Christians —and my job as a preacher— is to speak truth in love, live truth in grace and pray truth in hope. That means that we are not overcome with worry, we overcome worry with the Gospel of Jesus.

Now if you are here this morning and you believe in God but you're not sure beyond that, I want you to pay particular attention to this story. In fact, if I were you, I would go back later and just read it.

Let me give you some back ground and context. We've been dropped into the first missionary journey of the Apostle Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas was originally the leader, but somewhere along the way, Paul has gained the upper hand. They have a young intern with them named John Mark. He is Barnabas' cousin. He will later write the Gospel of Mark.

In the text, the troupe has traveled about 100 miles and climbed more than 300 feet to get to their destination. In Chapter 13, we have the first and longest sermon of the greatest preacher of all time. And it really does give us a blueprint for preaching. His message presents Jesus as the culmination of history, the fulfillment of prophecy and the justifier of sinners. His message was about God the Father reaching down to man through Jesus the Son. That was Paul's life. That was his message, and that is our hope. Because here's the truth...

A Christless World Needs Hope Driven Believers

How do we do that? Driven Believers – driven by hope.

Get Through The Setbacks

Let me show you where I get this in the story. You miss it if you are not careful. V. 13
Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem

John (John Mark) just left. Luke doesn't tell us anything. He just left. He was their protégé. He was Barnabas' cousin. He was there to help them. His mother's name was Mary and, in Acts 12:12, it was his Mom's house where the disciples were praying when Peter was let out of jail by the angel.

John Mark was an insider. His sudden change of mind threw a wrench in their plans, so much so that later in Chapter 15 when Barnabas wanted to give John Mark a second chance, Paul wouldn't have it. But thankfully later they obviously reconciled. And Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy that Mark was very useful, so they obviously dealt with it. I want try to get at this from both angles. First from Paul and Barnabas' angle.

Paul and Barnabas invested in John Mark, helped him and probably disciplined him. And he flat out deserted them, and it stung Paul as we see in Chapter 15; but he had to forgive and keep loving. Honestly, that's the word some of you need to hear. You've been wronged by a Christian but you as a Christian have been purchased by the blood of Christ. You are forgiven by God's grace through the cross and because of that great forgiveness you have received, you are obligated to forgive.

Isn't that what Paul said in Ephesians 4:32: *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* Or in Colossians 3:13: *bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

The tighter you hold bitterness; the looser you have Christ. Genuine forgiveness is the mark of *real* Christianity. That's the Paul and Barnabas side – the guys who have been wronged or offended. But what if you are John Mark? What if you are the one that committed the offense? As a believer, you are not entitled to carry guilt around.

Guilt serves its purpose when it brings you to confession, repentance, and reconciliation. Guilt is a servant, not a master. And once guilt has taken you to the cross, the cross turns guilt into humility. Guilt is stifling; humility is God-honoring. At the cross, God transforms guilt into Godliness. Once that happens, you are empowered to be useful to the Kingdom of God and the Gospel.

John Mark is a great example of that. Barnabas would use him in missions. Paul would speak of his usefulness, and John Mark would write the Gospel of Mark. A man who wrote part of the Bible had a history of bad decisions, yet Christ made him clean. We have to be able to deal with and get through the setbacks. A Christless world need hope-driven believers, and hope-driven believers get through setbacks.

Get a Bigger View of God

Let's take a look at just a little bit of Paul's sermon and, as we do, note what he is doing. He's calling attention to the grandeur of God, the sweeping movement of history as being the handmaiden of an all-controlling God. Luke sets the stage for us. Paul and Barnabas go to a synagogue on the Sabbath and sit down. In V. 15, after the scripture was read, the leaders of the synagogue invited Paul to give a word of encouragement. In v. 16, Paul stood up and motioned with his hand – Men of Israel (Jews) and you who fear God (Gentiles) – now let me quickly step you through the absolute God-centeredness of the sermon. You follow in your Bible or on the screen:

v. 17 – God chose Israel

v. 17 – God made the people great

v. 17 – God led them out of Egypt

- v. 18 – God put up with them in the wilderness
- v. 19 – God destroyed the 7 nations in the Land of Canaan
- v. 19 – God gave them their land as an inheritance
- v. 20 – God gave them the judges and Samuel
- v. 21 – God gave them Saul (they wanted a king)
- v. 22 – God removed Saul

Don't forget what Daniel says of God in Daniel 2:21

He changes times and seasons;

he removes kings and sets up kings;

he gives wisdom to the wise

and knowledge to those who have understanding;

- v. 22 – God raised up David, a man after His own heart
- v. 23 – God brings a Savior: He promised a Savior, He planned a Savior, He provided a Savior
- v. 28-30 – Jesus was crucified, killed in the place of sinners. God raised Him from the dead.

What we need to see is that Paul is pointing out the Great and Glorious God. He is the explanation and the meaning for everything. All of history serves Him. This is God's world – not your world— and history moves not to create *your* destiny but to honor the living *God*. We live in a superficial, God-disregarding age, an age when people are confused and hurt, let down and bewildered because they've always felt, even if secretly, the world revolved around them – around you. It's a Christ-less world and a Christ-less world needs hope-driven believers who get through setbacks and get a bigger view of God.

Get a Clearer Picture of the Gospel

After speaking of the life and the crucifixion of Jesus, notice what Paul says. Let me read it; then we will talk about it. V. 38 *Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through this man, Jesus, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you at the cross of Jesus. (If you are not a Christian, now is the time to listen.) At the cross, the penalty of your sin has been applied to Christ. That's called mercy – not getting what you deserve. Our God is a God of mercy. That mercy is given to all who believe at the cross you'll find forgiveness for sin.*

There's more: *V. 39 and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.* By him – by Jesus – everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed from the Law of Moses. *V. 38* is mercy – don't get punished. *V. 39* is grace – Jesus Christ kept the law for love. He didn't break it. He kept it and in so doing fulfilled the righteousness of God.

And at the cross, when you believe, the great transformation happens. Christ takes your punishment (mercy) and gives you His righteousness (grace) so that when you stand before God, you are not only forgiven for your sin, you are covered with the righteousness of Christ. There is the glory of the Christian Gospel. That only comes through faith, through believing.

Here's what I'm asking you to believe: God is holy. You are a sinner. Christ is your substitute if you repent and believe.

(Pastor Prays)