



Sermon Text: Acts 13:13-43

Sermon Date: April 22, 2018

Rarely do our plans for God unfold as we imagine they should. As Paul and Barnabas continue their missionary journey, they are rocked with difficulties, which culminate in their assistant John Mark deserting them in Perga. Nevertheless, they press on in their mission and commitment to the gospel, arriving in Pisidian Antioch where Paul has an opportunity to preach in the synagogue. His gospel-saturated sermon has four parts.

GOD'S PAST SAVING WORKS (16-22)

Paul begins recounting God's past saving works—from Abraham up through King David. He emphasizes that it is God who has worked for the salvation of His people throughout Israel's history. God is the subject of nearly every verb in this section. John Piper says, "This text is utterly saturated with God. Sixteen times Paul presses home the truth that God is the central actor in history." When Paul reaches David, every Jew and God-fearer in the audience would have felt with longing God's promise to David that one of his offspring would rule forever.

GODS ULTIMATE SAVING WORK (23-32)

Having stirred the echoes of God's promises to David, Paul transitions to declare that those promises have been fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus is the Son of David whose kingdom will never end. Tragically, however, the Jewish leaders failed to grasp the Scriptures even though they read them every Sabbath, and in their failure they fulfilled all that was written about Him. Although he was innocent, they killed the Promised King—the long-awaited Messiah was murdered! "But God raised him from the dead," Paul declares and through his perfect life, sacrificial death, and resurrection the promises of God have been fulfilled.

BIBLICAL PROOF (33-37)

Paul then uses three Old Testament passages to prove that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises. Jesus is the true Son of God (Psalm 2:7), who inherits the holy and eternal blessings of David (Isaiah 55:3). This is because Jesus, God's Holy One, did not see corruption, but was raised by God to undying life (Psalm 16:10).

A CLEAR INVITATION (38-41)

Paul ends by calling upon everyone in the audience to believe in Jesus, and in so doing to be forgiven and "freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses." Tony Merida says, "God has provided only one solution for the problem of guilt: we must trust in Christ alone. We must trust in the One who bore our curse on the cross, setting us free from condemnation. Jesus says to repentant sinners, "You are forgiven. You are free from condemnation." This is the good news. Yet, Paul concludes by warning the audience not to scoff at Christ's offer of forgiveness, for if they do they will suffer the astounding fury of God's judgment.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Why must we set aside our romanticized notions of Christian service and grasp that faithful service requires spiritual grit? What are some examples of ways your grand plans for God did not unfold as you imagined they would?
3. What about Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch most resonates with you?