

How do we Measure Success?

Acts 13:13-52

September 6, 2020

Acts Series: Taking the Message of Jesus' Kingdom Everywhere

Acts 13 ¹³ From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵ After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak."
¹⁶ Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me!...

²⁴ Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel...

³² "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus...

³⁴ God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay...

³⁸ "Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses...

⁴² As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. ⁴³ When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him...

⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

⁴⁹ The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. ⁵⁰ But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. ⁵¹ So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. ¹

¹ The New International Version. (2011): Zondervan.

1. Message

Acts 13:13-41

*Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said:
"Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me!"* Verse 16

A. The next stop

Acts 13:13-15

Following a pattern (Acts 1:8), employing a method (synagogues)

B. The Sermon

Acts 13:16-39

1. My fellow Israelites and Gentiles

Acts 13:16-25

What has God been doing to provide salvation?

- A. God **is** the God of Israel Verse 17
- B. God **chose** Israel's ancestors Verse 17
- C. God **endured** poor conduct Verse 18
- D. God **gave** them an inheritance of land Verse 19
- E. God **gave** judges, prophets and a king Verses 20, 21
- F. God **raised** David as king Verse 22
- F. God **promised** the messiah (Jesus) Verse 23
- G. God **sent** the message (**repentance**) Verse 24

2. Children of Abraham and God fearing Gentiles

Acts 13:26-37

What have we been doing in light of salvation?

- A. People did not recognize Jesus Verses 27-29
Condemned, executed, buried
- B. God **raised** Jesus publicly Verses 30, 31
- C. God **fulfilled** his messiah promise Verses 32, 33
- D. Jesus was **raised** not suffering decay from death Verses 34-37

3. Therefore My Friends (Jews and Gentiles)

Acts 13:38-41

What will be your response be to such a glorious salvation?

- A. **God forgives sins** through faith in Jesus Verse 38
- B. **We receive Justification** Verse 39
(made righteous to God by Jesus, not Moses)
- C. Don't waste this chance Repentance, Faith in Jesus Verse 40
- D. Resurrection implied? (13:48 appointed for eternal life)

Raised ἐγείρω (*egeirō*) A Greek verb used regularly in the NT. (143 times, 83x in the gospels (healing, wake-up call and resurrection), 12x in Acts (healing, wake-up call and resurrection) and 20x in I Corinthians (primarily resurrection). It has a range of meaning from cause to stand up, stand up, wake up, heal and raise - especially in God's raising Jesus to life.
Acts 13:22 NIV, Made; ESV, NASB, NKJV, KJV, Raised; NLT, Replaced
Acts 13:30 NIV, ESV, NASB, NLT, NKJV, KJV, God **Raised** him from the dead
Acts 13:37 NIV, ESV, NASB, NLT, NKJV, KJV, the one whom God **Raised**:

C. The Challenge

Acts 13:40, 41

Listen well, Choose well, Make sure you get it

2. Responses

Acts 13:42-52

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. Verse 48

A. The Synagogue

Acts 13:42, 43

Some wanted to hear more (intrigued not yet convinced)

Many followed Paul and Barnabas

Choice is valued (verses 46 & 48)

B. The City

Acts 13:44-48

Conflict based on jealousy (loss of influence, faith, power, etc)

God had always intended on including all people Verse 47

People believed because they knew their need

Appointed τάσσω (*tassō*) A Greek verb used rarely in the NT (8x in total and 4 of those in Acts). It has a wide variety of meaning from assign a task (Acts 13:48; 15:2; 22:10), to be under authority (Luke 7:8; Romans 13:1) to command (Matthew 28:16) or propose (Acts 28:23) or be devoted to (1Corinthians 16:15) Translated: NIV, ESV, NASB, NKJV, Appointed; NLT Chosen, KJV, Ordained

C. The Believers

Acts 13:49-52

The main item of importance in the acceptance of the message

Opposition is becoming typical

The disciples are filled with joy and the Holy Spirit

How do we measure ministry success?

Delivery of content?

Successful acceptance of a message?

The visible work of the Holy Spirit?

Filled with Joy?

How do we measure success in ministry?

Faith, Obedience, Endurance, Joy

Study Questions

For your personal study or with family, a friend, mentor or Life Group

Beginning:

1. What insight, idea, question or principle from Sunday's message did you find most helpful, eye opening or troubling?
2. How do most people measure and define success?

Exploring

3. John Mark has been introduced by Luke, Check Acts 12:12; 25, 13:5. Keep an eye open for him later in Acts. There is some debate whether John Mark was a relative of Barnabas but there is not clear evidence of that.
4. Compare the tone of Stephen's Sermon in Acts 7:1-53 and the tone of Paul's first point in Acts 13:16-25. If you would boil down each message to one word what would that be? It is almost certain Paul heard Stephen's sermon.
5. Read Romans 3:21-26 and list the shortcomings of the 'law' and the success of Jesus. Re-read Paul's third point in Acts 13:38-41 and think of your own response to Jesus to listen well and choose well.
6. What does 'those appointed to eternal life believed' mean?
 - a. Does God have 'reserved boarding' so no one else is eligible?
 - b. Are only some appointed?
 - c. Is it possible to rebook or cancel?
 - d. Are the un-appointed afforded later appointments?
 - e. God knew who would respond, 'my work here now is done'Which of these is most likely?
How would you know who is appointed? How did Paul and Barnabas know?
7. How did Paul and Barnabas know when it was time to leave?

Applying:

8. How does a person truly demonstrate they have received the message to become a follower of Jesus?
9. What fills you with Joy? How do you experience the filling of the Holy Spirit?
10. What are the best measures of ministry or discipleship success? Where are you experience those 'successes'?

Praying:

11. Pray for others to begin to develop a genuine hunger and thirst for salvation.
12. Pray for those you know who may be struggling with the challenges of Covid. How might you be a blessing or even an answer to their prayers?

Mentoring and personal reflection: Relate a time when you were challenged to endure some adversity and were able to do so knowing God was guiding you through it. Perhaps there is something going on right now that you need God's guidance for. Pray together and find ways to be an encouragement.