



Sermon Notes, 18 October 2020

Term Autumn 2020

Series Acts: manual for a scattered church

Gatherings 11.00 & 6.00

Title Acts 12 – 14, Owing our discipleship: evangelism

Preacher Paul Langham

Reading – Acts 13:1-3 & 14:1-7 (but looking over Acts 12 – 14)

It's really important to acknowledge that, when the word 'evangelism' is mentioned, many of us experience feelings of guilt or failure. I used an image at the 6 of an arm sweeping a desk-top clear of clutter: the clutter represents what's been put on us in terms of external 'this is how you must evangelise' stuff. So in all that follows, invite the Holy Spirit to place on your desk only what he knows is a fit for you.

Some questions out of these chapters

1. What does Acts 13:1-3 teach us about being more effectively led by the Holy Spirit? We saw that importance of seeking to learn from those who hear the Spirit's voice clearly; the significance of placing ourselves within a context of worship and fasting; of discerning and testing what we hear

2. What do chapters 13 & 14 teach us about the early Christians' evangelism? As you read through these reminders, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you

- They spent time with people who didn't know Jesus!
- They had a strategy that worked for them (Paul always started in the synagogue): what's yours? I suggested it is most likely something about the way God has designed you (kindness, a servant heart, a gift for sport). Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you and how you can use that to point people to Jesus
- They were willing to adapt their message to their audience: compare 13:14-52 (a Jewish audience) with 14:8-17 (a Greek audience). The latter shows how to open up a conversation without using Christian jargon
- *Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.* (Acts 14:3 ... see also v. 8)
Beseech the Lord to restore signs and wonders to his church today
- They accepted the inevitable: there are always 2 responses to the good news – reception and rejection. Their response was to continue, boldly (which doesn't mean rudely!) See 13:49-52, 14:4,5
- They journeyed with those who came to faith (14:21, 22), encouraging the new believers
- They released new believers into ministry and leadership (14:23)
- They shared testimony: on their return to Antioch, Paul & Barnabas gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Acts 13:2

It's not just clergy or staff who are set apart. If you have put your faith in Jesus, his Spirit has set you apart in a way that is just as significant and special as those called into ordained or paid roles within the life of the church. Do you know what you are set apart for? Do you know the work to which Jesus has called you? If not, ask him. Ask members of your small community or other Christian friends to pray for you. Ask not just for revelation but the grace and empowering to follow what you hear.