

Men and Brethren, Say On – Acts 13:14-44

I. Introduction:

- A. I trust everyone is aware that we are having a service on Friday night which includes a visiting speaker.
1. We have extended a invitation to Bro. Scott Silvers to come and preach for us.
 2. And of course, he will be with us Friday and then again on Sunday.
 3. Bro. Austin will also be speaking Friday, and after leading the singing, I will sit back and enjoy.
 4. But I thought that perhaps this evening I might be able to participate with a preparatory message.
- B. We have read this entire passage, because I want you to understand **from where I am coming**.
1. But now let me paraphrase the first part of our text to show you **where I am going**.
 2. Look again at **verse 14** – *“When the Silvers family departed from Oklahoma, they came to Post Falls in Idaho, and went into the Lord’s church, and sat down.*
 3. *And after a couple hymns and a message from God’s word by Bro. Fulton, the pastor of the church invited Bro. Silvers to the pulpit saying, unto him, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.*
 4. *Then he stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Lord, and ye that fear God, listen up.”*
- C. Paul and Barnabas were only months into their first missionary journey.
1. When they first reached Salamis, Cyprus, they preached the word in the synagogues of the Jews.
 2. Later in the capital city of Paphos, they had do deal with a false prophet named Elymas before they could share the gospel with the governor, Sergius Paulus.
 3. After that they traveled north to Perga in Pamphylia, a coastal city of Turkey, and from there they moved inland to the metropolis of Antioch, Pisidia.
- D. I wonder whether or not news had reached the synagogue in Antioch about the two evangelists?
1. **We** have already met our speaker, but had the people of Antioch heard about Paul and Barnabas?
 2. Why did the rulers of the synagogue reach out to these strangers, asking them to preach?
 3. Obviously, the Holy Spirit opened the door and the hearts of those rulers.
 4. But what tools did the Lord use to do that?
 5. Did they hear reports of what happened to Elymas the sorcerer or Sergius Paulus?
 6. Was it the dress and demeanor of the visitors that enticed the leadership to give them this opportunity?
 7. Maybe it was their big, well-used Textus Receptus Bibles.
- E. **Our** Bible simply says, Paul and Barnabas *“went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and sat down.”*
1. They didn’t push themselves on the people or their leaders.
 - a. They didn’t start preaching before being asked.
 - b. They didn’t begin peppering the congregants with questions, provoking and probing.
 - c. They didn’t cause any kind of stir.
 2. They simply and humbly came in and sat down awaiting the leadership of the Lord.
- F. When I was preparing to return to Canada as a missionary, it was necessary for me to contact churches and pastors for permission to preach and to ask for support.
1. Some missionaries come from churches so well connected that preaching opportunities are created automatically.
 2. I didn’t have that blessing, and so it fell upon me to make contacts and appointments – often cold turkey.
 3. I didn’t like that part of deputation one bit.
 4. I would much rather have gone into the synagogue on the sabbath day sat down and received an invitation to speak. But that never happened.
 5. In our case this week, it was Austin and I who invited the Silvers – not the other way around.
- G. *“Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”*
1. The Greek behind *“exhortation”* is *“par-ak’-lay-sis.”*
 2. It is a common word which is translated *“exhortation”* 8 times but *“comfort”* and *“consolation”* 20 times.

3. If I had to guess, what the rulers of the synagogue were hoping for was something which confirmed and encouraged the membership.
 4. Maybe – probably – they were looking for something with which to stir their people to greater service.
 5. They certainly weren't expecting to hear anything new – new revelation or new doctrine.
- H. I can not set myself up as a paragon of missionaries on deputation – or of preachers in general.
1. But it is a principle with me that when I am invited to speak in another church, I seek to preach some basic Bible truth.
 2. I try to present it in such a way that I might maintain the congregation's attention.
 3. But I don't intend to shock anyone.
 4. I try to preach Christ or the Gospel, or something of which I am absolutely sure is taught by the pastor of that church, leaving the door open for the direction and blessing of the Holy Spirit.
- I. The elders said, *"Ye men & brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation (& consolation) for the people, say on."*
1. *"But if you are here to cause trouble then we are going to withdraw our invitation."*
 2. Of course Paul had a message of both – trouble and the ultimate consolation.
 3. And he wasn't offered the same invitation on the second sabbath.
- J. *"Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience."*
1. The phrase *"ye that fear God"* doesn't imply that some of the men of Israel present that day did not fear God
 2. *"Ye that fear God"* was a colloquialism which described proselytes to the Jewish faith.
 - a. The *"men of Israel"* were Jews by birth and upbringing.
 - b. *"Ye that fear God"* were gentiles whom the Lord was drawing to Himself – like Cornelius.
 3. This detail is enhanced a little in **verse 43** – *"Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."*
 4. When Paul said to those Jews and proselytes, *"give audience"* he simply was saying, *"Please listen; hear what I have to say."*
- K. Paul's sermon is an example of what we should expect when a visiting speaker comes to our synagogue.
1. The message should begin with the Word of God, but not just as an initial scripture reference.
 2. I have been in services where the preacher read from a great passage of God's Word, but then as the message developed, he never returned to it again – He never explained it, taught it or applied it.
 3. Paul began with the Jew's history as described in the Old Testament.
 4. His hearers were very familiar with it, and from what I have recently learned, they reveled in it; they loved it.
 5. But Paul didn't recite that history to please them; he made applications out of that Bible history.
- L. In reading the **Book of Acts**, we see this kind of message over and over from Paul, Peter, Stephen and others.
1. After a little history lesson, Stephen said, *"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye."*
 2. Peter did the same before saying, *"Brethren I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those thing which God BEFORE had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted."*
 3. Here Paul says, *"Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;*
 - a. *Behold ye despisers and wonder, and perish;*
 - b. *for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."*
 4. The preaching of God's Word is almost **impotent** if the preacher doesn't follow the Biblical example in making a proper application of the Word.

- M. In other words, Friday during this special opportunity, and Sunday – any and every Lord’s Day – we should come in anticipation of exhortation, comfort and consolation from the Word of God.
1. Ours is not a formalistic religion where we are only watching a priest carrying out spiritual ablations for us.
 2. And despite the accent and colloquialisms you’ll hear this week, I hope you don’t attend merely for the entertainment.
 3. *“Ye men and brethren, if ye have any (Biblical) word of exhortation for the people, say on.”*
- N. As far as I am concerned, as a guest in the pulpit of another synagogue, that application must include the Christ and the gospel.
1. Unless I am in a missions or Bible conference where other themes may have precedence...
 2. When I am in another pulpit on a Sunday morning, my message will be Christ and His gospel.
 3. In **verse 32** Paul makes reference to the gospel, the *“good news.”*
 - a. *“And we declare unto you **GLAD TIDINGS**, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,*
 - b. *God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.”*
 4. **Verse 27** – *“They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*
 - a. *And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.*
 - b. *And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead.”*
- O. When you come in on Friday at 7:00 you should come expecting a message from the Word of God.
1. Since it will be a special service on an *“off night,”* it will probably not be about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, but that isn’t to say that it won’t be.
 2. On the other hand, if the two messages that night are not taken from the Word of the Lord, then you can be sure that our Paul and Barnabas will not be speaking here again.
 3. If their texts come from psychology books, self-help books or motivational materials, then our meeting will have been spent in vain.
 4. Anything less than the Word of God is a waste of time as far as a church service is concerned.
 5. *“Ye men and brethren, if ye have any (**BIBLICAL**) word of exhortation for the people, say on.”*
- P. Notice **verses 42** and **43** –
1. *“And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.*
 2. *Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.”*
 3. It appears to me that many of those who were **born Jews** and whose national history had been explained, didn’t like Paul’s application and lesson.
 4. But the **religious proselytes**, who are described merely as *“Gentiles”* in **verse 42**, along with some of the Jews wanted to hear more.
 5. And, don’t you see them hanging around for a while, asking questions, or listening to the questions and answers between the preachers and others?
 6. In essence, after the message was preached, Paul and Barnabas in conversation encouraged those people to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Q. The first service in which Paul was asked to speak – our Friday night – was used by the Spirit to whet the appetite of those the Lord was drawing to Himself.
1. And then on the following sabbath, they and many others were ready to hear more of Christ and God’s gracious salvation.
 2. Notice that *“the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them **the NEXT sabbath**”* helping us to understand that they were mostly proselytes – people who usually came together on the sabbath.

3. But of course, the empty-hearted religionists were envious at the good response and respect which were given to Paul and Barnabas.
4. *“When the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.”*

R. I wonder... where were the *“rulers of the synagogue”* when the dust settled?

1. Were the men who invited the message following Paul and Barnabas.
2. Or were they the people filled with envy, speaking against the message of Paul?
3. Did they regret the invitation, or did they rejoice to be a part of Lord's plan for that day?

S. This weekend we have the privilege of a guest speaker.

1. It doesn't happen very often up here in our corner of the nation.
2. He and his family are coming over 1,500 miles to be with us, and then returning the same distance.
3. We are reasonably sure that he will share with us the Word of God, as Paul did with the Antiochians.
4. But the next question is: *“Will we make the most of what we hear?”*
5. Let's purpose in our hearts tonight to come hungry and to feast and grow out of this precious opportunity.