



Continue In The Grace of God

"And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God" (Acts 13:44).

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"And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 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. 44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:42-52).

Paul and Barnabas' missionary journey were not without challenges, but they continued in the grace of God and accomplished much to the glory of God. One of the popular songs captures the message so well along the lines of "If you will preach it, if you will say, if you will tell it every where to everyone, some will believe it, and you will be rewarded someday". This was their experience in the service of God. Their preaching at Antioch in Pisidia has gained some followers to whom Paul and Barnabas persuaded to "continue in the grace of God" (vs 42-43). Note the following:

- 1) The word of God is living and produces results. "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God" (vs 44).

"And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:52).

- 2) Progress attracts Satanic opposition "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming" (vs 45).
- 3) Let courage rise with danger and strength to strength oppose "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said" (vs 46).
- 4) When one door closes, God opens a better one, that leads towards the achievement of divine destiny. The rejection by the Jews led them to preach to Gentiles, the original goal God had in mind for Paul "... and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (vs 46). Truly, all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).
- 5) God's plan of salvation is for all "... I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (vs 47).
- 6) Gospel truth angered the unbelieving Jews (vs 50), but this simply moved the missionaries on to their next stop - Iconium (vs 51).
- 7) The gentiles received the word with gladness (vs 48) "and the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (vs 52). "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). The joys of heaven overflows unto earth for believers "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

These encourages us to continue in the faith.