

The Gospel of Grace that Paul Preached

Acts 13:13-41

Halifax: 26 August 2012

Introduction

In our sermon series, we are presently looking at the first of Paul's missionary journeys.

- The work was one in which, for the first time, a deliberate effort would be made to reach the Gentiles.
 - It was a work that had long been prophesied, all the way back to Abram.
 - We have seen how the Lord prepared the church for this work, teaching them through Peter and the conversion of Cornelius that Gentiles could be baptised directly into the church without first becoming Jews.
 - We have seen how the Lord prepared Paul and Barnabas for this work.
 - We have seen how the Lord prepared the church at Antioch (or Syria) to be the presbytery that would send them.
 - And how by prophecy the Lord had called them to send these men out which they had done with prayer and fasting.
 - This was a new and unprecedented thing—to deliberately minister to the Gentiles!
 - From this point in history, the church's mission would never again be the same!
- Of course it was God's will for them to go to the Jew first, and we will see them doing that all along the way.
 - It was only right that the covenant people should be the first to be told that their Messiah had come!
 - But as there were always Gentiles around the synagogues, many of them God-fearing Gentiles,
 - they would also hear the good news that Israel's Messiah had come, and many of them were much more ready for Him than the Jews themselves.
 - And so it happens over and over that Paul goes into the synagogue with the result that a few Jews and numbers of Gentiles receive the grace of God...
 - And usually they are kicked out the synagogue and form a new congregation.
 - This is a pattern that we have already seen begun and that will continue as Paul continues his missionary work.
 - But we will find that very often we are told very little about the message that was preached in these synagogues...
 - We are only told that Paul and his companions went to this synagogue or that synagogue and preached the gospel to them.

- But we do not need to be left to wonder what they preached.
 - In our text today,
 - Luke, the master historian, gives us a full account of the sermon that Paul preached at Pisidian Antioch (in Southern Galatia, not to be confused with Antioch of Syria where the sending church was).
 - Luke weaves this in to his history as an example of the messages that Paul preached in all the synagogues.
 - So whenever we are told that the gospel was preached in this or that synagogue,
 - we need to think of this message as a typical example.
 - It is a message that is full of grace from start to finish.
 - It is a message about what God has done to save, issuing a call of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

And of course much more importantly than learning a history lesson,

- In looking at this message,
 - we need to make sure that we have responded to it ourselves, and are not among those despisers who marvel and perish.
 - And if we *have* believed the gospel,
 - then we need to be filled with gratitude to our God every time we hear of the gospel,
 - and every time we think of all that God has done...
 - And we ought to think of it a lot!
 - The road to idolatry begins with knowing God,
 - but not wanting to retain Him in your thoughts and with not being thankful.
 - Our Psalm of Focus reminds us that we and the whole world ought to be praising God for raising up in Israel a horn of salvation!
 - Once we are no longer thankful for this, we are only a generation away from apostasy, even if we boast of a rigorous orthodoxy.
 - Orthodoxy without heartfelt gratitude is orthodoxy without a soul, and a body without a soul is dead—no matter how perfect it may be.

So let's look at the wonderful grace that Paul preaches at Pisidian Antioch as it is recorded for us in Acts 13:13-41.

- But before we even get to Paul's sermon, I want you to notice what comes first in this text...It is also about grace...

I. Consider that it was God's grace brought the gospel to Pisidian Antioch in the first place.

- A. This was not a very inviting place to go.
1. It was about 160 kilometers and it was all uphill.
 - Pisidian Antioch was also about whole kilometer higher in elevation than Perga where they were starting out,
 - And the road to it was treacherous...
 - not only as a physical road, but also because there were many bandits on it.
 - This is one the places where Paul would have been in perils of robbers.
 2. But Antioch was, in some ways, an important place to go.
 - It was a city of about 100,000, and once they got there, they would have access to the other cities in Galatia...
 - And from these cities, the gospel was able to spread to other surrounding regions.
 - But there were certainly a lot of other places that were just as strategic and a whole lot easier to get to.
 3. We are not told why they choose to go there...
 - but we can be certain that the Lord guided them there because He had purposed to bring the gospel to these people at this time.
 - It appears that He led them there, not by direct prophecy, but by the outworking of His providence...
 - But however it was, it was on account of His grace.
 - We are given a clue in Paul's letter to the Galatians that the fact that he preached there had something to do with an infirmity he had...
 - In Gal 4:13, he says:
 - **Gal 4:13: You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.**
 - Did Paul need to get to this cooler mountain region to convalesce?
 - It is hard to say, but somehow his physical infirmity caused him to preach the gospel there...
 - And what a difference it made to the Galatians that he did!
 - It is the grace of God that brought the gospel to this place.
 - It is the grace of God that brings the gospel to *every* place that it has ever gone.
- B. Moreover, the men who brought the gospel were sinners who were only able to bring it by God's grace.
- They were sinners like the rest of us and sin had the potential to cause the whole mission to be aborted—but for the grace of God.
1. They have only been to Cyprus and already one of their party departs.

- a. In verse 13, we are told that upon leaving Cyprus and arriving in Perga, John Mark deserted them.
 - The one thing we know about this is that Paul was very displeased with him and considered him to be unworthy to join the mission again.
 - At the end of chapter 15, Barnabas wants to bring him along again, but Paul absolutely refuses.
 - Later on, Paul refers to him as being useful, but in Acts 15, he was not ready to have him join them again.
 - What we don't know is why John Mark abandoned them.
 - Did he miss the comforts of his fine home and the servants in Jerusalem?
 - Did he object to the hard and dangerous road that was ahead of the missionary team?
 - Was he irritated that Paul had taken over the leading place from his cousin Barnabas now?
 - Or was he offended about the way Paul was jettisoning Jewish customs as they ministered to Gentiles?
 - For some reason, he abandoned them and it does not appear to have been a good reason.
 - b. Sin in missionaries is often a great hindrance to missions.
 - Missionaries go out with great enthusiasm,
 - but then about the time a lot of money has been spent to train them and about the time they are getting settled into their living quarters and gaining a working knowledge of the language,
 - they decide it is too hard for them to continue and come home.
 - The stress is too great, the demands are too high.
 - Of course we have to be careful that we are not too harsh. We do not always know the circumstances...
 - But there is far too much putting one's hand to the plough and looking back.
 - Everyone struggles with the temptation to give up when things get hard.
 - Don't you find that this is so with you?
2. These men are no different!
- Over and over again, Paul attributes his labours to the grace of God.
 - The only thing that kept him going all those years was God's grace.
 - That is what has kept Vince and Julie going in Sudan despite dangers and threats and disappointments.
 - They have a family in a place that is oppressively hot and that has no modern conveniences—that can wear you down...

- Remember the trouble they had with their former security guard?
 - Remember when the first group of men they were training decided to go with another mission?
- There are also divisions that can arise among missionaries...
 - Without grace, Paul and Barnabas might have had such division that they abandoned the work and went home!
 - That is true of all of you too!
 - You can't go on as a faithful elder or deacon apart from the grace of God.
 - You can't go on as a faithful mother or father or wife or husband or child who honours your parents but by the grace of God.
 - You can't even go on as a disciple of Christ!
 - Without grace, you would abandon Him and the work He has given you to do!
 - But there is grace! Grace to persevere!
3. So give thanks that the gospel has come to you!
- a. Because the only way it came is by the grace of God working in all the people that were used to bring it to you.
 - b. They would have given up long before if the Lord had not sustained them.
 - He did it in part because He had appointed you to hear and be saved.
 - He brought the message to you and He is to be praised for it!

TRANS> So without grace, Paul and Barnabas would never have brought the gospel to this place...

- C. And not only that, but it is also true that the people in Pisidian Antioch did not deserve to hear the gospel.
1. That is not a particular slight to them though—
 - *Nobody* deserves to hear the gospel!
 - We don't even deserve that there should *be* a gospel.
 - But our gracious God brought to us just as He brought it to Pisidian Antioch.
 2. It is a marvellous thing that the Lord had already prepared some of the people in this city to hear the gospel...
 - It is a marvellous thing that the Lord had preserved a synagogue there with plans that it would be receptacle for the gospel.
 - It is a marvellous thing that this synagogue had met for their Sabbath Day service and had read from the law and the prophets.
 - It is a marvellous thing that it was the custom of the day to invite visiting rabbis to preach and that they followed this custom...

- You see the invitation in verse 15:
 - **Acts 13:15: And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”**
- This put Paul in the pulpit with his wonderful gospel.
 - What a difference this was to make in the lives of many people in Pisidian Antioch!

TRANS> I don't mean that these things were extraordinary, but I mean that they were all pre-planned by God in order that the gospel might be given entrance in this place at this time.

3. Just think of all the things that came together in your life so that you were able to hear the gospel.
 - It is not because you are any better than others.
 - You are a sinner too...but God brought the gospel to you and you should be very thankful.
 - There are many people who will die on this very day, even while I am speaking to you, who have never heard the gospel—not at all.
 - Are you any better than they are?
 - No! It is all of grace that you have been so privileged to hear.

TRANS> Well now that we have considered all that the Lord does to get the gospel to His elect in Pisidian Antioch (and to you!),

- let us look at the gospel itself that was preached.

II. Paul begins with the old familiar story of God's grace to His people Israel.

- This is in verse 17-22
- His whole emphasis is on what God graciously did for His people...
 - It is about how He just kept on giving and giving...
 - Almost all the verbs are about what God did for His people...

A. First, in verse 17, there is God's electing grace.

- **Acts 13:17: "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it.**
1. First, you see that it says He **chose** them...
 - Verse 17 begins: "**The God of this people Israel chose our fathers,**"
 - It does not begin by saying,
 - “The people of Israel decided that they would search for God, and so they came to Him to be His servants and He accepted them.”

- No, it is God who chose them...
 - And he tells them that it had nothing to do with their strength, for they were but slaves in Egypt...
 - or their size, for they were but a tiny company—the father Abram had a barren wife...
 - Nor was it their godliness, for they were idolaters when God came to them.
 - If you are one of God’s people, it is all of free grace...
 - You did not choose Him, He chose you.
2. Next, vs. 17 says that God: **“exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in Egypt.”**
- This refers to the way He blessed them and multiplied them so that Pharaoh became afraid of them.
 - It is very similar to what we see happening in many western nations with the Muslims, only God is exalting them in order to judge us.
 - It is very sad that in the West, the Lord is not exalting His church or making us a threat.
 - That is because we have had the gospel for so long and He is chastening us...
 - But the good news is that He **is** exalting His people in many places—
 - There are nations in Africa where believers are starting to dominate and shape the culture...
 - In China, there is a rapidly growing underground church that is putting fear in the hearts of the officials.
 - In Iran, the same thing is happening.
 - And in India, there is a rapidly expanding Christian population.
 - King Jesus is still doing His work!
 - Part of that work involves judging us for our slackness in the west...
 - But praise be to His name—it also involves exalting His people.
 - It is His work—we cannot exalt ourselves by political manoeuvring and lobbying...
 - But the Lord must exalt us by His mighty arm.
3. And thirdly in verse 17, His electing grace is seen in bringing His people out.
- **“with an uplifted arm he brought them out”** of Egypt...
 - The Egyptians had the military power and all the rest, but God humbled them and delivered His people.

- This was a very miraculous and special deliverance that testified of the mighty arm of the Lord to deliver His people so that they may serve Him.
- B. And that brings us to second aspect of God's grace—what we might call His **establishing** grace.
1. For Israel, that had to do with bringing them into the Promised Land.
 - His exalting them and bringing them out from under the oppression of pagan government that ignores the Lord was in order that He might give them dominion...
 - freedom to establish government that accords with His will.
 2. He bore with them while He trained them in the wilderness...
 - a. Verse 18 speaks of how He continued to put up with them in the wilderness—
 - during the time that He was teaching them His statutes and commandments...
 - teaching them of His holiness and that the only way to approach Him was through the blood of the covenant...
 - teaching them to trust in Him for all things.
 - How patient He was with them as these lessons took 40 years when they might have taken much less!
 - b. Whatever godliness we have comes about through His patient instruction of us too...
 - How slow we are to learn—but He puts up with us and slowly we learn His ways...
 - Even Jesus had to do this with His disciples.
 - As a faithful father, our Lord sticks with His people until they finally learn His ways.
3. And you see that it was by His action that He gave them the nations...
 - Verse 19 says:
 - **Acts 13:19: "And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.**
 - You see how it does not say that **Israel** destroyed the nations and took the land,
 - but rather that it was **the Lord** who destroyed the seven nations and gave the land to Israel...
 - Have we had the privilege in the west of dominion over the nations?
 - Have we an inheritance of great abundance?
 - Have we an inheritance of law and order that is rooted in God's law?

- It is not because of our righteousness or our strength—
 - It is the inheritance we have from God!
 - Do you have something of this inheritance in your home?
 - Do not boast! It is the gift of God.
 - Humbly look to Him and pray that He will give you this blessing and preserve it for you.

TRANS> And then we are brought to the third aspect of God's grace to His people of Old—

- the grace that He brought to them after He had given them the land...

C. His **shepherding** grace.

- He is the One who gives us leaders to shepherd us according to His wisdom.
- 1. First, the period of the judges is mentioned in verse 20:
 - **Acts 13:20: He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.**
 - Note that it is still God who is acting—
 - He is the one who gave them judges in His grace to preserve them.
 - During this period, it becomes quite evident that the Lord uses these shepherds to keep His people from destroying themselves!
 - Two things continually threatened their very existence as His people—
 - First, intermingling with the nations so that they lost their uniqueness as God's people—so that they became idolaters and fornicators...
 - much as we see happening to the church in North America today...
 - And second, becoming so weakened under God's chastisement that their enemies are able rise up and wipe them out...
 - Remember how they were under the oppression of the Midianites and the Philistines and many others?
 - Well, do you also remember how God used the judges during this time?
 - He raised them up as reformers and as warriors to deliver His people before they were completely destroyed.
 - He did this in a very obvious way—in a cycle that repeated itself over and over in which...
 - they would turn to do evil,
 - the Lord would then raise up oppressors over them,
 - they would cry out to Him...
 - and then He would send a judge to deliver them.
 - He was showing how much we need a Saviour who is flesh,
 - but who is given authority and power by the Lord to deliver us from our enemies **and** from our sin!

- Too often the people only wanted deliverance from their enemies but not from the sin.
 - So the cycle kept going on for 400 years...
2. Soon everyone grew weary of this cycle, and the people cried out for a king like the other nations.
- They wanted stability, but they still do not get it—
 - As the Lord's people, stability does not come from merely having a shepherd to organise us and lead us out to battle...
 - Stability comes from having a shepherd that leads us to the Lord.
 - So to teach the people, the Lord gives them a king such as they desire.
 - Verse 21 summarises what happened:
 - **Acts 13:21: And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.**
 - The results of having Saul are not that great.
 - As is typical with kings and authorities who don't have a heart for God, Saul becomes an oppressor...
 - using his authority for personal gain—not as a servant to God and the people—not as a shepherd—but as a hireling.
 - He is not in leadership for the sake of the people, but to follow his own selfish desires.
 - This is why our society attacks fatherhood.
 - We see it as a selfish, oppressive, tyrannical office...
 - And that is because in ungodly hands, that is what it is!
 - By God's grace, we need leaders and we need to be leaders who are shepherds, who take responsibility for the sheep and lay down their lives for them!
 - Surely we recognise this by now—as the people did after having Saul for their king!
 - But our problem is that we despair of fatherhood—that there could ever be leaders who give of themselves.
3. But see what the Lord does in His grace!
- He gives Israel a true shepherd who has a heart for Him! David!
 - **Acts 13:22: "And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'**
 - David was altogether different than Saul because he,
 - though not a perfect man,
 - truly had a heart for God!

- And God gave him authority to subdue nations and led him in reforming the nation's worship and behaviour.
 - He served his people with a servant's heart!
- But notice what it says...
 - God is the One who raised him up!
 - The verbs are still telling us what God did!
 - It is His action, His grace!
 - Only God can raise up shepherds for us—in government, in the church, in our homes—who have a heart for Him.
 - And by His grace, He sometimes does!
 - Even when we don't ask for it, He does it in His grace!

TRANS> But of course all this points to the need we have for God to raise up the One who alone can permanently deliver us from sin and death.

- David had authority to drive back Israel's enemies so that Israel was not destroyed,
 - but he had no authority to deliver the people from death.
- He was able to bring in God's law and establish worship at the temple according to God's will,
 - but none of his priests had an offering that could truly atone for sin,
 - and none had grace that could truly make the people holy and give them new hearts.
- Over the years God taught His people that everything depended on His grace.
 - His electing grace
 - His establishing grace
 - And His shepherding grace
- The Jews and the Gentiles who heard Paul at the synagogue in Antioch were quite familiar with all that Paul had said up until this point.
 - They knew that they were a people who were formed and kept by the grace of God...
 - It was all quite familiar to them and made them happy to hear the good old story of grace.
 - But now as Paul continues his sermon, he says something that shocks them!

III. Paul brings forth to them the news of fulfillment!

A. Look at what he brings to their ears in verse 23!

- **Acts 13:23: "From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—**
 1. The men in the synagogue would have expected Paul to tell them of the promised Messiah for whom they were all waiting...

- “God has been gracious to us, and now we look for Him to be gracious to us again by raising up the Messiah He has promised of the seed of David.”
 - But instead he brings them the news that raising up the Messiah is something that God has already done!
 - You can imagine that their attention was riveted!
 - If anyone was nodding off, they were wide awake now for sure!
 - They were all expecting the Messiah as this time because the prophets had spoken of His coming at this time...
 - But did this visiting rabbi say that He had actually come?
 - He did say that—
 - How will he back it up?
2. He reminds them of the ministry of John the Baptist.
- a. John had ministered for a long time, and his ministry had reached very far.
 - It seems that many people in places like Pisidian Antioch knew more about John than they did about Jesus.
 - So Paul connects with them at this point and reminds them about John’s message.
 - You can see that in verse 24-25:
 - **Acts 13:24-25: after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’**
 - b. John had preached a baptism of repentance, telling the people to prepare for the coming of Christ for one very obvious reason...
 - Because the Christ was coming at that time!
 - John’s message was that the kingdom was at hand!
 - John makes it clear that the one he was preparing the way for was much greater than he was.
 - By saying that he was not even worthy to loose his sandals,
 - which was the task of the lowliest of slaves...
 - John shows how great this coming One would be!
 - c. And Paul basically says,
 - “Today God has brought you word that the promised One has come!”
 - Paul is speaking of course about the sermon he was preaching to them right that moment!
 - Look at verse 26:

- **Acts 13:26: "Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent.**
 - Oh what a privilege it is to hear this message of true salvation—
 - This message that has the power to save us from Hell forever!
 - Nothing is more important than this!
 - Nothing is more wonderful than this!
 - God has sent you this message! God has sent the Messiah!
3. But of course they might well wonder why they have not heard about this.
- a. If what Paul said was true, wouldn't word about it have come from Jerusalem?
 - This is often a stumbling block for people.
 - They are in some established church—and they have been taught that they are saved by ceremonies or by being good or whatever,
 - and you proclaim the gospel to them and they say, "Wait just a minute—how is it that I have never heard this before?"
 - And they stumble because their leaders are blind and have not preached the gospel to them.
 - b. So as a good preacher, Paul anticipates this objection and answers it without being asked...
 - He explains that the rulers in Jerusalem did not know Him, nor did they understand the prophecy that was spoken concerning Him.
 - You can see where he says that in verse 27...
 - **Acts 13:27: "For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers...did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath...**
 - That is there problem—they did not know Him nor the scriptures concerning Him...
 - But Paul is explaining something here—
 - I left out the word *because*...
 - **Acts 13:27: For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him.**
 - This says a lot—
 - They condemned Jesus **because** they did not realise that it was God's will for Him to be condemned!
 - Even Jesus' disciples did not understand this even though it was clearly testified in scripture—

- The whole ceremonial law was about atonement by the shedding of blood!
 - And the prophets said that He would be despised and rejected by His own people.
 - And because the rulers at Jerusalem did not understand that the Messiah would be a lowly one who would be condemned,
 - They fulfilled what God had spoken and condemned Him.
 - They thought a Messiah that **could** be condemned could not be the Messiah.
 - It was not at all what they had in mind!
 - So they condemned Him and delivered Him to Pilate, fulfilling what had been written.
 - Acts 13:28-29 explain:
 - **Acts 13:28-29: And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.**
4. But of course this is not the end of the story.
- Indeed, the leaders of Jerusalem in their blindness crucified Him and buried Him,
 - **“But (verse 30) But God raised Him from the dead.”**
 - a. Paul supports this from the account of many eyewitnesses over many days...
 - People who saw Him after He was raised
 - **Acts 13:31: "He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.**
 - b. Paul further supports it from scripture...
 - 1) He declares to them that resurrection was something that was promised in scripture to the fathers...
 - **Acts 13:32: "And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers.**
 - 2) He supports the resurrection and session of Christ with Psalm 2 which he quotes in verse 33:
 - **Acts 13:33: "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’**
 - A lot of people don’t understand this declaration in Psalm 2 because, they say, Jesus was already God’s only begotten Son...
 - How could he be begotten at that time?

- But this is actually the language of coronation when a father crowns his son and begets him to the throne.
 - It is very important to recognise that as Mediator—as having come in the flesh and become God-man—
 - Jesus was not crowned until after He was raised from the dead.
 - God did not call Him to sit at His right hand until after He had finished the work of redemption.
 - Until then, and I say this with respect, Jesus had no power to save His people from their sins.
 - If He could have saved us without going the cross, He certainly would have done so!
 - But He could not, so He was not begotten to the throne of David until He finished the work redemption and had the power to save His people from their sins.
 - So Psalm 2 is about the resurrection of Christ once He had made His soul an offering for our sins.
- 3) Now let's look at the next proof that Paul gives...
- The promise to David was very well known—
 - God had told David that his son would be given his throne and that He would reign forever.
 - It was understood from Psalm 110 and Psalm 89 and 2 Sam 7 that He would not die, but would reign until all His enemies were put under His feet.
 - This is referred to by Paul in verse 34 as “the sure mercies of David”
 - **Acts 13:34: And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’**
 - We have just seen that Jesus was not begotten to the throne until after He had died and been raised up.
 - So you see, the promise that He would not die only pertained to Him after (not before) He had been given the throne.
 - Before that, He would die and He did die...
 - As we have seen, He had to die.
 - But after He had died, **then** He was given the sure mercies (or blessings) of David...
 - the covenant promise that He would reign on David's throne forever and ever!

- 4) Paul further shows from scripture that the Messiah was to be raised from death *quickly*...
- This he proves from Psalm 16 which shows that He would not be permitted to experience the corruption of His body.
 - **Acts 13:35: Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’**
 - Jesus was raised very shortly after death and given the sure mercies of David—a seat on the throne forever to rule over all.
 - This was certainly not true of David because his body did stay in the grave... as Paul explains in verses 36-37:
 - **verse 36-37: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.**

TRANS> So Paul shows that in Jesus there is a complete fulfilment of what God has promised concerning the Messiah!

- All the prophecies come marvellously together...
 - That He would be condemned and die at the hands of His people.
 - That He would be buried but then raised up after a short time.
 - That He would be given the throne of David.
 - That once given the throne He would live and reign forever.
- B. And so what is the application of all this—to Paul’s hearers and to us?
1. That in Jesus there is the full forgiveness of sins.

- Verse 38 says:
 - **Acts 13:38: Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;**
- My brothers and sisters, Paul goes right to the heart of the matter here!
 - This is what Israel needed more than anything else.
 - This is what all of us need more than anything else.
- Yes, we have death.
 - Yes, we have Egyptian-like enemies and Roman-like enemies that oppress us.
 - Yes, we have economic and social problems that need to be solved.
- But every one of these has been brought on mankind because of sin.
 - In short, we have gone our own way instead of God’s way.
 - Not one of us is without sin.
 - We not see how wretched we are because the sin that makes us wretched has blinded us.
 - But everyone has a conscience and everyone knows something of his wickedness...

- And when God shines the light of His Word and opens our eyes by His Spirit, we see yet more of our wretchedness...
- But it is not until the day of judgement that we will see it as it really is...
 - But it is there, and it is wretched because God tells us that it is...
 - And so we need forgiveness more than anything else.
 - Without it, God will always be opposed to us because of our unforgiven sin...
 - and we will die in our sins and be cast into the lake of fire forever!
- But Paul tells us the wonderful news—that through Jesus—
 - “This man” who died and was raised and begotten to sit on the throne of David forever—
 - went to the throne with the power to forgive sins!
 - He obtained this power through His suffering and death in the place of sinners,
 - and so through Him is preached the forgiveness of sins.
 - That is what you really need if things are ever to be right with your Creator...
 - and Jesus is the only way to obtain forgiveness.

2. Paul goes on to explain that everyone who believes in Him is justified...

- verse 39 says:
 - **"and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.**
 - To be justified is even better than to be forgiven—
 - It includes forgiveness, but it is more than that!
 - To be justified means that you have not only been pardoned, but also that you have met all that is required of you...
 - That you have done all that is required to please God and to have His full favour.
- There is no way you could expect to obtain this by keeping the Law of Moses.
 - The Law of Moses exposes our sin and our need of Saviour...
 - It teaches us that we cannot come near to God, even in a ceremonial temple, without all sorts of washings and sacrifices.
 - It is completely hopeless to find justification there!
 - The whole purpose of the law was to lead us to Christ!

- He is the One who pleased God.
 - He is the righteous One who took His place at the head of the church where He represents all of us before the Father!
 - He is the one, who in that position as Head, totally pleased the Father in behalf of all His people.
 - He is the one, who in that position, took responsibility for all of our sins and suffered for them!
 - And all you have to do be numbered with those people is believe!
 - Give up on dreaming that YOU could please God.
 - No, it is everyone who believes who is justified.
 - You have to look to God's provision of grace to be justified.
3. Paul warns you not to miss this grace because if you do, you will perish!
- In verse 40-41, he sounds the warning:
 - **Acts 13:40-41: Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: "Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you."**
 - Like Paul's hearers, you too have had this message declared to you!
 - God, by His grace, has brought it to you.
 - God, by His grace, has done this great work of salvation through His Son.
 - It would be horrible for you to hear about it and to be so blind and so hardened that you will not believe...
 - That such grace should be so close to you—so in reach—and that you should miss it and perish!
 - You could have everything!!
 - Right now—it is there for you!
 - How awful if you should miss it all!
 - And you who do believe...
 - Isn't our God amazing!
 - We are sinners—wicked wretched sinners—and He has done all this through His Son that we might live!
 - What grace is this that the pure holy Son of God should be punished for our transgressions and that we should be justified!
 - Love Him! Thank Him! Praise Him! There is none like Him.