

# God's Gospel of Grace Proclaimed

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Well, let's turn now to God's Word, and we're in the book of Acts. So please turn to Acts chapter 13, and you'll find it on page 921, if you're using one of the visitor Bibles.
- Acts chapter 13, we're reading from verse 13. Paul and Barnabas have just begun their mission trip. They've been on the island of Cyprus, and now they head to the mainland of South Turkey.
- And what we have in this passage is a large recounting of Paul's sermon in the synagogue. And in true style, it's a three-pointer.
- So see if you can spot the three points of Paul's sermon as you read. Let's read from verse 13 of chapter 13. Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga and Pamphylia.
- And John left them and returned to Jerusalem. But they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Poseidon. And on the Sabbath day, they went into the synagogue and sat down.
- [ 1 : 14 ] After reading from the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them saying, Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.
- So Paul stood up and motioning with his hand said, Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. The God of this people, Israel, chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt.
- And with uplifted arm, he led them out of it. And for about 40 years, he put up with them in the wilderness. And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance.
- All this took about 450 years. And after that, he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king.
- And God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin for 40 years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, I have found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will.
- [ 2 : 29 ] Of this man's offspring, God has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus, as he promised. Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.
- And as John was finishing his course, he said, What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me is one coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.
- Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and among those, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation.
- For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him, nor understand the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.

And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

[ 3 : 39 ] But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us, their children, by raising Jesus.

As also it is written in the second psalm, You are my son. Today I have begotten you. And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, I will give you the holy and sure blessing of David.

Therefore he says in another psalm, You will not let your holy ones see corruption. For David, after he had served the purpose of God and his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption.

But he whom God raised up did not see corruption. Let it be known to you, therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

And by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed from by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the prophets should come about.

[ 5 : 01 ] Look, ye scoffers, be astounded and perish, for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you. As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath.

And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

The next Sabbath, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, it was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

[ 6 : 20 ] And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. And as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

And the word of God was spreading throughout the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of the district.

But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Amen. May God bless to us his word this evening. Good. Well, please do turn to Acts 13.

We'll spend a bit of time together now thinking about this passage together. So Acts 13, page 91. Now at home we have a coffee table.

[ 7 : 31 ] And on our coffee table is a book called Speeches That Change the World. It's a good one to dip into from time to time. And it contains a selection of speeches that have, according to the publishers, changed history.

And many of them are indeed great speeches. From Adolf Hitler, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela. Speeches that have changed the course of history.

Some of them you wonder how they made it in there, but nevertheless, it's a good little book to have on the coffee table. But I think the publishers could have saved themselves a lot of time and energy and expense by simply printing the book of Acts.

Because Acts is a narrative, but it contains speeches that truly have changed the world. The destinies of millions of people have been changed by the contents of this book.

Luke gives a lot of space in his account to speeches, sermons. And someone else has done the math, but according to this person, Acts contains just over a thousand verses.

[ 8 : 36 ] And 365 of them are verses containing speeches or sermons. About a third of the book is given over to speeches just like the one we have in our passage this evening.

And this one is a unique speech. It is the only account we have of the Apostle Paul addressing a synagogue. And so we would do well to note carefully the content of this speech, this sermon.

Luke, who compiled this account, he's included this so that we would have certainty about the content of the gospel. Now geographically, things have moved on since last week.

Paul and Barnabas were in Cyprus and they've now set sail. They arrive in Perga, which is what we would call southern Turkey. And they head inland to the city of Antioch in Poseidon.

This isn't to be confused with the other Antioch or indeed the other 14. There were about 16 Antiochs in the ancient world. You have to be careful when you're asking for directions. You've got the right one.

[ 9 : 46 ] But this is Antioch in Poseidon. And on the Sabbath, Paul and Barnabas head to the synagogue and they take their seats. And look at verse 15.

Following the reading from the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue, they turn to Paul and Barnabas. If you've got any word, brothers, we'd love to hear it. Speak. But they have no idea of the magnitude of what is to follow.

Paul stands and speaks. And we'll take the rest of the chapter in two sections. The first, looking at his speech, the speech itself.

And then secondly, we'll look from verse 42 to the end, the response to that sermon. So let's look firstly then at the speech, verses 13 to 41.

And we see here the gospel message preached to God's people. Now we saw last week the start of the chapter. We saw there Paul and Barnabas setting off on their missionary journey.

[ 10 : 50 ] And we saw the key tasks of a truly missionary church. Namely, speaking the gospel word, but also safeguarding the gospel witness.

Speaking and safeguarding. And the content of that gospel word, well we see it unpacked here for us as Paul preaches in the synagogue.

It's important, isn't it, that we know what the content is to be. So we're going to say go and preach the gospel. But what gospel? What's the content? Well here we have Paul, a pretty full account of his sermon there in the synagogue.

And he's speaking, notice verse 16, he's speaking to the men of Israel and also those who fear God, that is Gentiles who converted to Judaism.

And so he starts his sermon with what would have been for them very familiar territory. But he ends up saying what he always says.

[ 11 : 50 ] If you read on through the rest of Acts, if you read the rest of his speeches, you'll see that he always comes back to the same things. Paul's proclamation of the gospel, no matter who he's speaking to, always includes the same elements.

he always ends up saying exactly the same thing. Different starting points, but always the same conclusion. And it's no different here in Acts 13.

His starting point, looking at the history of God's people, leads him on to speak of the historical events of Jesus' life, his death, his resurrection.

We see that in verses 23 to 27. He then goes on to make the offer of the forgiveness of sins. You see that in verse 38, 46 and 48.

And then following that offer of forgiveness, he then requires the response of belief, of obedience, of repentance, verses 39 and 48.

[ 12 : 56 ] That is how Paul always ends up his speeches. It's how all the sermons and acts end up. No matter who he's speaking to, no matter how he might begin his sermon, he will always end up coming back to the very center of it all.

The risen Lord Jesus, the promised Savior, and the imperative to repent and believe. And so, a failure to communicate those facts, which Paul always comes back to, a failure to communicate those is a failure to communicate the gospel.

So my question to you is, are you clear on these issues, these facts? Are you clear on what Paul proclaims here at the end of his sermon? They begin differently.

You read through different accounts of sermons and acts. They begin differently, but they always end up at the same points. So we'll look a bit more clearly at Paul's speech as he speaks to the wonderful gospel of grace, of God's message of salvation through Jesus Christ for all who believe.

And we'll take it in three sections. Paul's, as I've mentioned, is a three-point sermon. Seems clear to me. And he seems to mark off each new section of the speech with the words, brothers.

[ 14 : 15 ] So look at verse 26. Brothers. And again, in verse 38, let it be known to you, therefore, brothers. And they seem to indicate a slight change in direction.

They seem to mark off his sermon in three sections. So we'll follow these breaks as we look at the speech where we see in verses 16 to 25 God's grace in the past.

And then verses 26 to 37, God's grace fulfilled in Christ. And then verses 38 to 41, God's grace offered to you.

So look first then, Paul's first point in verse 17. God's grace in the past. And Paul's saying here, you need to know your history.

Now a lot of ground is covered in just a few short verses here. Most of the Jewish people's history is contained in seven verses. That's a lot of history to get crammed into seven verses, isn't it?

[ 15 : 17 ] It starts with the call of Abraham there in verse 17. Then it moves on to their time in Egypt and then their deliverance through Moses and then the 40 years and the wilderness and then into the promised land verse 19.

After that, we have the period of the judges and then the kings versus Saul and then after that David. And it's especially the promises made to David that Paul draws attention to.

Verse 23. Of this man's offspring, God has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus, just as he promised. And this is where all of Israel's history has been going.

The long-awaited savior, the offspring of the woman, the one who would bring about the great restoration, the great once for all, sacrifice for sins, one who had finally crushed the head of the serpent, a savior.

But before Paul unpacks the way in which Jesus has fulfilled all that was promised, he speaks about John the Baptist verses 24 and 25, the one who proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, one who pointed beyond himself to another, the one who he was unworthy to untie even the sandals of.

- [ 16 : 45 ] Seven short verses and Paul covers a huge sweep of Jewish history from Abraham right through to John the Baptist. And the focus, Paul's emphasis, is not so much on the people of Israel themselves, but it's rather on the gracious action of God towards his people in history.

This is all about what God has been doing, isn't it? Notice who is the one doing things here. Verse 17, the God of this people, Israel, chose our Father.

He made them great. End of verse 17, he led them out. Verse 18, he put up with them in the wilderness. Verse 19, he gave them the land.

Verse 20, he gave the judges. He gave them a king. Verse 21. Verse 22, he raised up David. And then verse 23, God has brought to Israel a savior.

God is the actor. He is the one doing things. He is abundantly gracious to an unworthy people, to a rebellious people. He chooses, he makes, he rescues, he puts up with, he gives, he raises up, he brings a savior.

- [ 18 : 11 ] You see, Paul doesn't stop with the history. He takes them on to where all this history was leading to and what God was doing in history. From the very beginning, God promised a great rescue, a great salvation.

And that through his people, he would make them a light to the nations. And Paul says to all these folk gathered in the synagogue, don't you see, don't you see where all your history has been leading to?

You know that you've been waiting for a savior. He's prepared them for the great news, hasn't he? Look, verse 23, God has brought to you a savior. This is the one you've been waiting for.

They needed to know, didn't they? They needed to know their history. They needed to know where all this had been leading to. And that's what Paul unpacks for them.

Look at what God has done for you all through your history. It's been leading to this point. God's great actions of grace in the past are fulfilled in this moment.

- [ 19 : 23 ] God has brought you a savior. They needed to know their history. They needed to know how God had acted in great grace in the past.

That's how Paul goes about it there in the synagogue. And so as we share the good news about what God has done, we need to help those we're speaking to, to see how God has been at work in history.

Now if you ever find yourself in a synagogue offered to speak, then this is a pretty good model to follow. But for someone not versed in all the details of Israel's history, you may want to start somewhere else.

But you need to get to the point where you can speak of Jesus and how he was the great climax of an ancient story. A story that belongs to, is directed by, and belongs to the sovereign Lord.

A story that all of us are caught up in. Whether we realize it or not, whether we like it or not. This is the history of all people on this planet.

- [ 20 : 35 ] Because it was through this people that was to come the savior of the world. And so we need to share with others, don't we, history.

They need to know their history. So that's Paul's first point. He shows the folk there in the synagogue God's great grace in the past.

He showed them their history. And we too, as we share the gospel, need to be clear with that with others. Let's look on to Paul's second point. He showed them the past, God's grace through Christ in the past.

Now, in the next point, from verse 26 to 37, we see God's grace fulfilled in Christ. Paul is saying, you need to know your savior.

God's promised salvation, it has been fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus. That is Paul's point. This is the wonderful news that Paul brings to those Jewish believers in Antioch.

[ 21 : 44 ] Look down at verse 32 where you have the climax of the whole sermon. Here's what Paul says, we bring you the good news that what God has promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us, their children, by raising Jesus.

It is in Jesus that God's promises are fulfilled in his life, his death, his resurrection. This is the message of salvation, verse 26.

Just look at how Paul unpacks it down in verse 27. For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.

And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

But God raised him from the dead. This is monumental news, says Paul. I've just recounted to you your history.

[ 22 : 59 ] You have been waiting for a savior. This is it. Jesus is the one. The one you've been waiting for all these years has now at last come bringing salvation.

This was the one that God's people were waiting for. Just think back to Simeon in Luke's first account, his gospel. And there in chapter two you read about Simeon.

He had been waiting, hadn't he? Waiting for this long awaited savior. And now says Paul, he's come. And those events I've just recounted to you, those goings on in Jerusalem, his crucifixion, his death was no accident, says Paul.

This was always the plan. God had predetermined these events because through Jesus' death, the salvation of many is secured. It was in this death that the full price for sin was paid forever.

And to demonstrate that this salvation was accomplished to vindicate Jesus, God, verse 30, raised him from the dead.

[ 24 : 09 ] It was a resurrection that was witnessed, verse 31. It was a resurrection that was promised, says Paul. He goes on to refer to Old Testament scriptures, verses 33 to 35, to demonstrate how Jesus has fulfilled these promises of resurrection.

what was the exact nature of those promises? What was it exactly that these Jews in the synagogue were waiting for?

Well, look at that middle reference, end of verse 34, that Paul makes. He says, I will give you the holy and sure blessing of David.

it. Now, what is that? What is this blessing of David? Well, this is a direct quote from the scriptures. This was a synagogue where the scripture read every single week.

They would know this passage very well indeed. It's from Isaiah 55. Here's what it says, incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast sure love for David.

[ 25 : 25 ] That is what Paul is saying Jesus has brought. Life, an everlasting covenant. Huge blessings are promised here by the Lord, aren't they?

That was a promise made to God's Old Testament people, an everlasting covenant, life, steadfast love forever. That is what God's people are waiting for, a great salvation, the permanent salvation of eternal life.

This is huge. This is talking about the death of death and life everlasting. How could that be?

How could God promise such a thing to a sinful people? well, just a few verses prior to that in Isaiah 53, we read of the suffering servant, one who was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hid their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions.

[ 26 : 48 ] He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his stripes we are healed.

Do you see what Paul is saying? That promised one has now come. We who deserve death are given life because he who deserved life was sentenced to death.

Through his death in our place we can know peace and healing. To us is given life eternal. And because says Paul, because his body did not see corruption, because he was raised to life, we have that hope, that certain hope of everlasting life.

Jesus defeated death, verse 37. All the promises of scripture are fulfilled in Jesus, says Paul. and he says we bring you, look back at verse 32, we bring you good news, that what God has promised, he's now fulfilled.

Forgiveness of sins, life beyond death, eternal life. Now that's pretty good news, don't you think? forgiveness of sin, life everlasting.

[ 28 : 25 ] The biggest questions in life, the biggest fears that we all face, they find their solution in Jesus through his death, his resurrection.

Is our gospel, is your gospel, as big and as comprehensive as that? is your gospel as big as Paul's?

Forgiveness of sin, everlasting life, that is what he's holding out and explaining to these folk there in the synagogue. All those great promises in the Old Testament, forgiveness of sin, life everlasting, has now come.

But it's not just an abstract concept, is it? We don't leave it at that, and Paul certainly doesn't leave it there either.

Yes, we see God's grace fulfilled in Christ, but that is a grace offered to you, to us. Paul offered it to those first hearers there in the synagogue, didn't he?

[ 29 : 35 ] Look at the final section of Paul's sermon, verses 38 to 41, God's grace offered to you. And Paul is saying to these folk, you need to believe.

I've outlined your history, I've shown how it's fulfilled in Christ, you need to believe it. And Paul brings this truth about Jesus, the news, about the crucified and risen Lord Jesus, to bear on those there in the synagogue.

This is grace for you, he says. Will you accept it? Look at what he says there in verse 38. Let it be known to you therefore brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sin is proclaimed to you.

And by him everyone who believes is free from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. Paul holds out this glorious news of the grace of God, the forgiveness of sin, freedom in Christ.

He holds out these glorious realities and he says to them, take hold. It's for you. It's for anyone who believes. This is news.

[ 30 : 46 ] This is a message that the Jews in the synagogue then, and everyone who has heard it since, it's news that people will respond to you either in belief, leading to forgiveness, or disbelief, leading to death.

And so Paul urges them, believe, and he warns against disbelief. Look at the warning there in verse 40. Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the prophets should come about.

Look, he scoffs, be astounded and perish, for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you. Paul warns them, don't be like that, don't be those people that the prophets spoke about.

Believe all I've told you, look at what's on offer here, heed the warning of the prophets. That is Paul's gospel appeal. And that is the appeal of every sermon recorded in the book of Acts.

Will you see what Christ has done for you in his death and resurrection? Will you repent? Believe the good news? And know the joy, forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

[ 32 : 02 ] That is the offer. That was the appeal Paul made then. That's the appeal I must make to you tonight. If you've never repented, never believed, well you must.

Hear Paul's warning. Hear his offer. God's grace to you. will you hold out and take it?

Forgiveness of sin, everlasting life. Well that's Paul's three point sermon. As we see the gospel message preached there to the people of God.

God's grace in the past. God's grace fulfilled in Christ. God's grace to you. you need to know your history. You need to know your savior.

You need to believe. What then of the aftermath? What was the fallout of Paul's sermon there in the synagogue? Well let's look on then as we close in these final few moments to our second key point, the gospel message proclaimed by God's restored people to the nations.

[ 33 : 21 ] This is from verse 42 to the end. And initially there is wonderful response as you might expect and hope. This was a synagogue after all where the scriptures were regularly opened.

They would have known these ancient promises that Paul spoke about. And so when they hear that they've been fulfilled they're like yes of course this is it. Wonderful news. When Paul showed them how Jesus fulfilled the great promises through his death and resurrection they respond with glad acceptance.

They can see that yes Jesus must be the savior. Look at verse 42 and following. They went out the people begged them to come back next week. They wanted to hear more.

Many were told in verse 43 followed them. Paul and Barnabas instructed them urging them to continue in the grace of God. And word must have spread pretty quickly around the city.

The next Sabbath we see the whole place is packed out. The whole city is basically there to hear. Seems to be real genuine hunger for the word of God.

[ 34 : 34 ] But immediately there is from amongst some of the Jews a reaction. Verse 45. Some were filled with jealousy when they saw the crowds.

They were a vile of Paul. How is Paul going to react? Knowing the bigger picture, Paul isn't deterred.

He is not flustered, is he? As I was reading this I thought about President Bartlett. Have you seen the West Wing? It is a great TV program. I recommend it.

But whenever there is a big crisis, it gets dealt with and he says, what is next? Let is move on. And Paul is a bit like that. What is next? Let is move on.

Look at his response. Since you thrust aside, that is the word of God, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

- [ 35 : 32 ] Paul is clear, isn't he, on the bigger picture? He is clear on God's great plans and purposes. God always, didn't he, always had the nations in view all the way back in Genesis chapter 12 with the call of Abraham.

What was Abraham's family called to be? A blessing to the nations. Look at Paul's reasoning here. He says, we are turning to the nations for so the Lord has commanded us, saying, I have made you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

In the first volume of his account, Dr. Luke picks up this very same quote from Isaiah, and he shows how the Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of it.

Again, Old Simeon there in chapter 2 of Luke, there in the temple, waiting for the consolation of Israel. When he sees the child Jesus brought in, he quotes these very words from Isaiah, saying, for my eyes have seen your salvation, that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles.

And what is true of Jesus, in that he is the ultimate light of revelation to the Gentiles, what is true of Jesus, says Paul, is also true of his people.

- [ 37 : 01 ] It's true of all who are united to him by faith. That is why he's able to say what he says here in verse 47, the Lord has commanded us to be a light to the Gentiles.

That is the task, that is the role of all who belong to Christ. If you're a Christian, then you are part of his restored people, and you, as one of Abraham's descendants, are to do what Abraham's descendants were always intended to be, a light to the nations.

Jesus, and we can be that, you and I can be that, because of the descendant, Jesus Christ. We are his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

But, as we see here, it is a witnessing that divides. And so we see here at the end, great Gentile joy, as many believe and rejoice in the good news, there is great growth, verse 49, as the word goes out and out through the whole region.

But alongside that, we're not surprised to read, are we? Because this has been the pattern over and over and over again. Alongside growth, there is opposition.

- [ 38 : 21 ] And Paul and Barnabas are forced out of the city. The great and the good, the powerful of Antioch, force them out. And that is the pattern of witnessing to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, there is growth. But alongside that, opposition. Sometimes fierce opposition. There is a great division. And it is a division with eternal consequences.

This wasn't just a differing of opinions here. This isn't a falling out due to a clash of personalities or dislike over presentation. No, this is a fundamental parting of the ways.

Look at what Paul says about those who oppose him and his message. Verse 46. Since you thrust aside, does he say, let's just agree to disagree?

No, he says, you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Reject this message and you're rejecting eternal life.

- [ 39 : 26 ] You see, to reject the gospel now, that is to turn away from eternal life forever. It's serious, isn't it?

But look at how he ends verse 48. He says, belief, on the other hand, leads to eternal life. Eternities are in the balance.

Whenever the gospel is proclaimed, even this evening, right now, eternities are in the balance. rejecters. And the rejecters, they are those that we'd expect to accept.

It's the insiders, isn't it? The Jews who reject the message here. And it's the outsiders who gladly accept. Luke is showing us, isn't he, the content of gospel witness, but also the reality of that witness.

He's shown us in detail Paul's sermon in the synagogue, but also the response. And so Luke would have us be clear and certain as to both of those things, clear on the content as we witness, but also clear on the reality as we witness.

[ 40 : 47 ] So don't be discouraged when folk reject. It is going to happen. Paul, the great apostle, he was met with rejection a lot.

Jesus, rejection at every turn. And we can expect no less as his followers. But alongside rejection, there will always be glad acceptance from some.

And you and I have no idea who's going to accept you. We can't see into people's hearts. But we are, according to this passage, you and I are the light to the nations, bringing the gospel, the news that brings salvation to the ends of the earth.

That is our task. So let's get to it in his strength. let's pray, shall we? Father God, we do thank you for the clarity of your word, for the confidence it gives us in the content of your great gospel.

people. And so would you give us courage as we step out into the world. And we don't step out alone.

[ 42 : 23 ] We go in your strength, with your spirit within each one of us. So please would you help us to be a people that long to share this great gospel with others.

help us. And we give us steadfastness in that task, knowing there will be both opposition but also acceptance. Help us. Give us courage.

For we ask it. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.