

# THURSDAY 04 August 2022 "Forgiven??"

## (Acts 13:36-39)

Hello, my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

*Our title, "Walking with Jesus" is rooted in my wondering what it would have been like to walk along those dusty roads with Jesus and His disciples. Or a few years later with Paul and his traveling companions.* That's where we are today. Paul and Barnabas concluded their time on Cyprus Island where they had begun their courageous proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus even including a powerful blinding confrontation with Elymas the sorcerer who tried to turn Sergius Paulus the proconsul away from God's truth. (Acts 13:4-12)

Paul and Barnabas then took a sailing ship from Cyprus to the province of Pamphylia and hiked the 3500-foot elevation and nearly 100 miles from the coastal town of Perga inland to Pisidian Antioch. By the way, no invitation had come to them to visit that city, no welcoming party with hot food and warm beds awaited them. *These two men were on an adventure with God!* Not unlike that of Moses or Joshua or Daniel or Samuel these men were following one thing... the call of God commissioning them to **"...the work to which I have called them."** (Acts 13:5) I wonder if you know anyone like that in our modern times? I do and they are both courageous and passionate about fully following Jesus no matter what or where! And the adventure they are living is very much like in Bible times!

Paul and Barnabas had no pre-arranged travel map, no specific people they had appointments to meet with. Each day their mission was to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as best they could discern it, and be ready to engage anyone willing to listen, with the greatest news of all time... the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, God the Son, the Redeemer of the world! Can you imagine living like that... every day waiting on God for directions for that day?

Yesterday we left Paul and Barnabas in the Pisidian Antioch Synagogue on the Sabbath day. Paul is midway through his remarkable, spontaneous message which he is delivering at the invitation of those present in the Synagogue that they visited that day. These men had never seen Paul and Barnabas before and knew nothing about them. But in the Synagogue, any visiting God worshipping man was welcome to give a word "of exhortation" if they had one. Paul always had one and he loved responding to that invitation. Yesterday we looked closely at how Paul carefully wove Jesus into the Old Testament Scriptures with which these Synagogue men were so very familiar, especially drawing the link between Jesus and King David, one of their great heroes. Then Paul said this: **"Now when king David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep, he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. But the One [Jesus] whom God raised from the dead did not see decay."** (Acts 13:36,37) Who is "the One"??

Paul was becoming a master at making bold, shocking statements, which he linked carefully with famous Old Testament Scriptures. (Remember, the New Testament had not yet been written so the only Scriptures known at that time were what we call the Old Testament.) This left the Jewish Synagogue leaders in Pisidian Antioch scrambling for answers to Paul's logic and clarity. *It was obviously true that King David had died as we all do, but Paul was challenging them to consider the direct relationship between David's death and the fact that from God's perspective, David had completed the God given mission of his life!* What mission? Well may I suggest it was twofold... first being a humble shepherd boy who loved God deeply and then secondly being Israel's 2nd King. That caused every man in the room to consider what their God given mission was and both how effective they were in living it and how close they were to fully accomplish their life mission. May I ask, have you given that much thought? *Why are you alive today? What purpose is God attempting to accomplish in this world through you at this time in history?* When will your mission be accomplished? And then what?

For a second time in his speech Paul focused on the outrageous, radical concept of Jesus' resurrection by saying **"But the One [Jesus] whom God raised from the dead did not see decay."** Paul was comparing Jesus to David but showing that *Jesus was far superior to King David because Jesus was both the God sent Savior for the world and He was raised from the dead by God!* These men in Pisidian Antioch could not ignore Paul's claim of resurrection for Jesus or his claim of Jesus as Savior. But what did it mean? If true, how should those outrageous claims affect their lives and what should they do about it? Oh, their questions started piling up and getting bigger and bigger in their implications!

Paul gave them only a little time to think, and then he poured on another layer of mind-blowing truth about Jesus: **"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you! Through Jesus everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses!"** (Acts 13:38.39) Look around the Synagogue... no one is blinking or even breathing! Did you hear what Paul just said? *Forgiveness of sin has always been one of the deepest longings of every living person and people will do almost anything to gain forgiveness*, isn't that true? How many times in your life have you said, "I'm sorry, please forgive me"? Oh, it's one thing to say that to a friend or a family member, but when we say that to God it's a whole different matter isn't it my friends? When we say "I'm sorry, please forgive me" to another person, we normally receive a response which assures us they forgive us, *but what happens when we say that to GOD?*

Travel the world my friends, ask people in every part of the world, as they are worshiping whatever they call 'god'... *what do they expect from their 'god', especially man fabricated 'gods', when they seek forgiveness for their sins?* What response do you think you'll hear? The truth is this: no religion can give total assurance that Almighty, Holy God forgives sin at the time of a sinner's repentance, **except Biblical, Evangelical Christianity!**

Islam does not guarantee Allah's forgiveness nor does Hinduism guarantee sin forgiveness nor does Buddhism, nor any other religious system INCLUDING Judaism!! That's right! The Old Testament sacrificial system God gave to Moses including the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 did not earn them God's forgiveness of their sins, but rather God's mercy in not punishing their sin. ***It is only through the atonement death of Jesus Christ that God is finally able to extend sin forgiveness to repentant sinners, because finally Jesus paid the death penalty for sin!***

**And because Jesus is the sinless Son of God, Jesus' death was accepted by God the Father as payment enough for ALL the sins of ALL repentant people!** Paul wrote it like this: ***"In Him (Jesus) we have redemption through His (Jesus) blood, the forgiveness of sins..."*** (Eph. 1:7) ***This is the core, the centerpiece, the cornerstone of the Gospel!*** So, let's hear again what Paul said that day in Pisidian Antioch: ***"I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through Jesus everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses."*** (Acts 13:38,39) This powerful truth resonated from that day, in that Synagogue, through the Gospel wherever it has been proclaimed to this very day all around the world!

Do you see the core decision which must be made? Paul said ***'...everyone who believes...'*** There it is my friends! But...believe what? ***Believe the truth about Jesus... who Jesus is, the truth Jesus taught and what Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection!*** **Place your full faith and trust in Jesus and God will forgive your sins, all of them!!** Why? **Because God will accept Jesus' death as payment in full for your sin debt so God can declare you Justified, Forgiven of your sins!** Because this truth is so radical, so life changing, it became the centerpiece of the truthful hope Paul proclaimed for the rest of his life...both in spoken messages and in the 13 books of the New Testament which Paul wrote! **Now here's the biggest question you'll ever face in your life... do you believe in Jesus and His truth? Are your sins forgiven because of your faith in Jesus?**

And here's a familiar song to help us consider this powerful truth, my friends. . .

**Today's Scripture is Acts 13:36-39.**