



The Acts of the Spirit

TURNING TO THE GENTILES



ACTS 13:44-52

"THE TURN"

APRIL 28, 2024

SERMON SUMMARY

This week, John North, Leader of EvangelismSHIFT, spoke as a part of our church's ongoing focus on evangelism and discipleship in the book of Acts. Preaching from Acts 13, he highlighted these points for our consideration:

- This text is the bombshell turning point in the early church's life that impacted the rest of the world. The Gospel moved from being proclaimed primarily to Jews to also including Gentiles.
- Even before Jesus, Jews already saw themselves as missionaries sent to the ends of the world to convert gentile people to worship God and adhere to Jewish Law. This was a hard task. They would spend lots of time and energy to see only a few converted. Those who converted to Judaism did so with an understanding that the law was the most essential part of their religious life.
- The apostles first took Jesus' message to Jews in every city in the Mediterranean—the revelation of Jesus as Messiah was received and grew exponentially among these Jews. However, for any gentile who converted, there was confusion as to whether they must adhere to Jewish law to follow Jesus.
- Paul and Barnabas then came preaching the good news that in Jesus, ALL people have freedom from the Law of Moses and can be saved through the blood of Jesus. This caused thousands of Gentiles to rejoice and convert to Christianity.
- However, the Jewish synagogue leaders rejected this message, leading Paul and Barnabas to focus their gospel preaching on Gentiles throughout the Roman Empire.

After explaining this historical context, John challenged us to become like Paul and Barnabas, being sent out into our areas of influence with the Good News of Jesus, which sets us free from the law and the consequences of our sins. John summarized how we can do this into two points:

1. Being a joyful witness to everyone we encounter so we can identify seekers of God.
2. When you identify a seeker, directly but gently point them to faith in Jesus and the freedom he offers.



DISCUSSION



This document can be used for either personal or group reflection.

Group facilitator: you do not need to ask every question but can select the best ones for your group dynamic.

Read Acts 13:44-52

- What jumped out to you from the text?

Jewish Missionaries spend lots of time and effort converting people to Judaism and adhering to Jewish law.

- What do you think their message to Gentiles was?
- How do you think it was received?
- Why might a gentile have converted?
- Why would many have not?

Conversely, Paul and Barnabas spent little time and energy and saw thousands converted.

- What was different about their message?
- Why was it received with Joy?
- Why might a gentile have converted to Christianity?
- Once these Jewish leaders were Christians, how might it have been hard to reconcile the law with the good news of Jesus?
- How does it help us better understand the tension between Jewish Leaders and Paul/Barnabas?
- What was the primary focus of the Jewish Christian Leaders when sharing the gospel with Gentiles?
- What was Paul/Barnabas's primary focus of the Jewish Christian Leaders when sharing the gospel with Gentiles?
- How does this apply to us today?
- How can we avoid the same trap of the Jewish Christians, placing barriers to the gospel on those far from God?



John closed by challenging us then not to become bogged down but instead become like Paul and Barnabas, sharing the gospel by:

1. Being a joyful witness to everyone we encounter so we can identify seekers of God.
2. When you identify a seeker, directly but gently point them to faith in Jesus and the freedom he offers.

As a result of hearing these points and the rest of John's Sermon....

- What was your big takeaway?
- What do you want to put into action this week?

Prayer