

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

God is Great, Awesome God, Great God, Our God, How Great is Our God, New Doxology, I Will Run

WELCOME

Have you ever written a love letter or note to someone, only to have it rejected by that person, crumpled, and thrown in the trash? Or have you ever received a love letter or note that you rejected and thrown away?

WORD

ACTS 13:42-43

⁴² As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. ⁴³ Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

(Read Acts 13:42-50)

OUR RESPONSE CAN EITHER BE WISE OR UNWISE

Nowadays, people line up for hours outside the cinema just to watch the latest blockbuster movie. Perhaps you have done that yourself as you eagerly anticipated finally being able to see the movie that everyone's been raving about. Now imagine if people had that sort of response to God's truth being revealed to them! Imagine people lining up outside churches for hours, waiting to finally hear the truth being proclaimed.

How do we respond to the truth? Do we desire to hear it so much that we even beg to have it taught to us? Maybe this scenario is (sadly) unheard of in our time, but in **Acts 13:42** we read of people **begging** that the truth proclaimed to them (**Acts 13:38-39**) be taught to them again the following Sabbath. What were these things? The **forgiveness of sins through Him (Jesus)**, bringing us **freedom**. Our sins are like a huge debt that we can never pay. Jesus paid for all our sins such that we can be debt-free before God if we accept this Truth that can truly set us free.

Paul and Barnabas urged the God-fearing Gentiles who turned to Christ to continue in the grace of God (**v. 43**). Though we are saved when we place our faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, we are urged to continue living the Christian life by the grace of God, not in our own efforts (**Philippians 1:12-13**). One way to define grace is that it is **the power to will and to act according to what God wants**. The new Gentile believers in **Acts 13** responded wisely to the truth of the gospel because they **responded eagerly** to the truth.

Some people though, would rather choose to hold on to what they have believed all their lives instead of open their hearts and mind to the gospel. Such were the Jews (**Acts**

13:45, 50) who felt jealous that the Gentiles were being brought into God's family. They believed that only the Jews were supposed to be God's people. But God made it clear to Israel that He chose them not because they were special, but because of His grace (**Deuteronomy 7:7-8**). The Jews did not have any right to withhold God's truth from the Gentiles.

How about us in the church today? Sometimes, we may think that some people ought to be excluded from our worship services where the gospel is preached! "What is that celebrity doing here? She's involved in a scandal!", or... "that politician is so corrupt, I can't believe he has the nerve to be in church this morning...". If "sinners" are not welcome in our church gatherings, then we are acting just like those Jews in **Acts 13** who wanted to exclude the Gentiles from learning God's truth, and we could be blaspheming (**Acts 13:45**). We respond unwisely to the truth when we contradict it, such as when we prevent others from hearing the gospel by our attitude and actions. We ought to be like Jesus who had compassion on people who were lost and without a Shepherd (**Matthew 9:36**).

OUR RESPONSE IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY

When the gospel is presented to us, our response is our responsibility — when we choose to reject it, we bear the consequence of an eternity without Christ. We judge ourselves as unworthy of eternal life (**Acts 13:46**)! When we reject the truth, we are unwisely responding to it.

We ought to follow the example of the Bereans (**Acts 17:11-12**) who not only received God's truth eagerly, but examined the Scriptures daily to check if what was being taught to them was true. Only God's truth has the power to transform, but we have to

WORD (cont'd)

respond to it wisely. The Jews' rejection of the gospel became a pivot point in history because then it was brought to the Gentiles who received it with rejoicing (**Acts 13:47-48**). Israel did not recognize that it was God's grace that brought the gospel to them first. They rejected Jesus, because grace, though offered to us freely, can still be rejected.

OUR RESPONSE WILL IMPACT US — AND OTHERS — IN A CRUCIAL MANNER

When we contradict and reject the truth, there are crucial consequences. The truth of God is not just a set of facts printed on sheets of paper. **It is God's love letter written to us.** When we reject His truth, it's like we crumple up His love letter and throw it in the trash.

Today we who have heard the gospel and accepted it are part of the fulfilment of **Acts 13:46-47** where **verse 47** says:

'I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, That You may bring salvation to the end of the earth.'

Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles with the Truth that matters most. Today, God orchestrates circumstances to bring the gospel to you. He used people as His messengers to bring the gospel to your particular place at a particular point in history.

Responding wisely to the truth means that we continue to **spread it** even further (**Acts 13:46-49**). An unwise response would be to instigate persecution against those who preach the truth (**Acts 13: 50**). At home, for example, do we parents discredit the truth because of our hypocrisy—behaving badly towards each other and our children, then putting our best foot forward at church on Sundays? As true followers of Christ, we must engage the family according to God's truth and do not contradict it, and the truth will continue to have a crucial impact in the lives of those who respond to it beginning with our families. Truth matters, so respond wisely to the truth!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. How would you describe your response to the gospel? Is it a wise response, or an unwise response?
2. What will you do this week to demonstrate your eagerness to know the truth? How can you be more like the Bereans?
3. To whom will you "spread" the gospel this week? When will you do it?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for those you will share the gospel to this week that they will wisely respond to the Truth. Spread the gospel by intentionally talking to at least one family member, friend or co-worker about Jesus this week.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends