

Coming Face to Face with Truth **Acts 13:42-52**

Introduction:

1. In the last message, we studied the apostle Paul's first recorded sermon in Acts 13:16-41. Can you imagine having the opportunity to hear this mighty apostle preach?
2. But how did the people of Antioch respond to Paul's preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Did everybody fall down in conviction and trust Christ as Savior? Not hardly!
3. As we will see, when they came face to face with the truth, the responses were varied. In fact, the responses 2,000 years ago were very much the same as what we can expect to see today in people.
4. People's habits, houses, clothes, and hair styles may have changed over centuries of time, but their attitudes towards God's truth have not. People are still people.
5. Have you ever tried to share Christ with another person and did not receive a positive response? This can be discouraging, and we can begin to think that there is something wrong with **us**. But, as we study this passage, you will see that people have not changed.
6. Let's examine four responses from the people who heard the apostle Paul preach. Every one of us falls into one of these four categories of people.

First, there were seekers. vs. 42-44

1. When Paul preached in the synagogue, there were Jews and Gentiles present. Notice the response to Paul's gospel in verse 42. The Gentiles asked Paul to preach again the next Sabbath day. Their initial response was one of interest. "We want to hear more."
 - The gospel of Christ that Paul preached was new to them, but they were obviously seeking God's truth. They were very interested.
2. Some of the Jews actually followed Paul out of the synagogue, and they also wanted to hear more (vs. 43). They didn't want to wait until the next Sabbath day, so Paul engaged in some personal work right there on the street.
3. When a person shows an interest in the gospel, this does not signify conversion or salvation, but it is the first step. If there is no interest in God's truth, then there certainly will be no conversion. **Illustration:** In church, some listen intently, but others are disinterested.
4. Have you ever witnessed to someone, and there was no interest whatsoever? But then you may share the exact same message with another person, and they listen intently to every word, and maybe even want to know more. This is the first step towards salvation.
5. Look what happened the next week (vs. 44). This is the right way to draw a crowd!
 - Churches resort to worldly and fleshly tactics in an effort to draw a crowd. Paul taught the Word. He gave people truth.

6. May we pray that God would lead us to people who are open and seeking God's truth. Maybe you are seeking truth; you are seeking God. That is awesome. You will find Him through His Word. God says "seek me" because He is "findable." Isaiah 55:6; cf. 45:19

Second, there were rejecters. vs. 45-47

1. There were many Jews who flat out rejected the truth of God when confronted with it.
 - The Bible says that they "*spoke against*" Paul's words, "*contradicting*."
 - This word, "*contradicting*," means "disputing; refusing."
 - In other words, they were arguing with Paul. They were twisting and perverting the Word of God to deny the truth of God.
2. They were also blaspheming, which means "to vilify." So they went beyond arguing, to the point of actually dishonoring Christ and the gospel of Christ.
3. How did Paul respond to these rejecters? vs. 46-47
 - Paul wasn't going to waste his time arguing with these self-righteous Jews. They made a very clear choice that they did not desire God's Word, nor were they interested in obtaining light and salvation. vs. 47
 - So Paul turned from these unbelieving Jews and turned his attention to the Gentiles who **were** seeking God's truth. This is where Paul would spend his time.
 - Lesson to learn: Don't waste time arguing with people who have no interest in God's truth, but focus on people who **are** seeking God's truth and are open to it.
4. What caused these people to reject God's truth? Envy, which is a form of pride. Pride is what always keeps people from accepting God's truth. We are too proud to admit we may be wrong, or too proud to humble ourselves before Christ. Psalm 10:4

Third, there were persecutors. vs. 50-52

1. Some people will argue with you, but some people will get downright nasty!
2. The Jews stirred up some of the leaders of this city and turned them against Paul and Barnabas. They were people who were very "religious," but also wielded great governmental power, authority, and influence.
3. The persecution rose to the point that they actually expelled Paul and his group out of their city. They drove them out like cattle. vs. 50
4. Jesus predicted this would happen (Matthew 23:34). In fact, persecution has been promised to all believers who stand for Christ and His truth. 2 Timothy 3:12
 - You may not be thrown out of town. But, as a believer you may lose a friendship, a job, or even a marriage because of your faith in Christ and your stand for Christ.

5. How did Paul and the disciples respond to this persecution?
 - They shook the dust off of their feet as they left. vs.51a; cf. Matthew 10:14
 - This was a symbolic gesture that signified an act of judgment. It basically meant, “We are leaving, and in so doing we are leaving you to the judgment of God because you would not receive the truth.”
 - They went to the next city. vs. 51b; cf. Matthew 10:23
 - Their attitude was, “If you won’t receive God’s truth, we will go look for some more seekers.”
 - They were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. vs. 52; cf. Matthew 5:11-12
 - The idea here is that it is a privilege to suffer for Christ.

Fourth, there were acceptors. vs. 48-49

1. Of the Gentile seekers in verse 42, many became acceptors! They accepted Paul’s message of truth about Jesus Christ and they believed on Him. vs. 48
2. There must come a moment in time when you make a choice of your will to receive God’s truth and believe on Jesus Christ. There must come that time when you admit, “God is right, I’m wrong.” It says they “*glorified the word of the Lord.*”
 - **Illustration:** Sitting down on chair and resting in it and trusting it completely
3. There were people there in Antioch that **heard** God’s truth, gladly received it, and glorified the word that Paul preached. This is why they are said to have believed and, in turn, received eternal life. Ephesians 1:12-13
4. The only ones ordained or appointed to eternal life are those that hear and receive God’s Word. These people were seeking the truth of God and, when they heard it, they believed it. This is why they were appointed to eternal life. John 1:11-12; Romans 1:16