The Book of Acts Lesson 28

Acts 14:1-28

“Preaching In The Sheaves”

Introduction: Psalm 126:6 “*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.”* This is the verse that was the inspiration for a hymn that you are sure to have heard if you have been attending Hillcrest for very long. What exactly is a sheave anyway? According to Webster’s 1828 Dictionary a sheaf is: A quantity of the stalks of wheat, rye, oats or barley bound together; a bundle of stalks or straw. The word “sheaves” refers to the many bundles of crop that a farmer would bring in during his harvest. This song paints a beautiful picture of the Christian work in winning souls for Christ. Paul and Barnabas were busy in the work to which God had called them. Through their lives we see that sheaves are costly, not without toil and some travail along the away.

1. Paul and Barnabas continued in the work of the Word.
   1. We continue to see the Lord leading them to preach the gospel throughout the land.
      1. In spite of opposition they did what they were supposed to do. v. 3
   2. Their message divided cities as we see in v. 4
      1. Paul and Barnabas were not directed by the reaction of their audience.
      2. Because of this they found themselves on the run many times. v. 6
   3. They were faithful to preach the gospel. V.7
      1. Think about all the people who would not have been saved if they had not been determined in their mission.
      2. How determined have you been about the task that God has called you to?
         1. Has there been a time when you felt closer to God than today?
         2. Have you been better about witnessing in the past?
         3. When is the last time that you had to get some more gospel tracts to carry in your vehicle?
      3. These questions are not intended to make you feel guilty, but to serve as a reminder that God wants you to be a part of this work.
         1. We can all contribute in different ways.
            1. Some are good harvesters and lead people to the Lord personally.
            2. Some are faithful witnesses and make an effort to invite people to church whenever they can.
            3. Some know many lost people and can bring friends and loved ones to church.
         2. We do not all have to live up to the standard that others are setting. We just simply be diligent in the task that God has given us.

Transition: God is mindful of the masses and can affect entire cities, but He also wants to show compassion to individuals.

1. Jesus set an example in going to the sick and lame that Paul and Barnabas followed.
   1. Paul and Barnabas, like their Lord were not respecters of persons. They did not care what people could offer them. v. 8
      1. The gospel must never be withheld from people because of how they look, or because they are different from us.
      2. Faith or faithlessness are the factors that can keep people out of hell.
   2. When people see the effect that our God can have on a hopeless individual it will make an impact.
      1. Those in Lystra mistook Paul and Barnabas for gods and wanted to honor them.
         1. They believed that their gods could come down to be among men and did not want to miss the opportunity to show them how much they loved them.
      2. Paul as the chief speaker vehemently refused their adoration.
         1. God is the only one worthy of worship.
         2. Preachers, teachers, and Christians in general should always be careful about the way we receive praise from others, remembering that God is the true source of any blessing or ability we may have.
      3. The impact will not always be positive. v. 19
         1. Jews from far away followed them to Lystra and would have killed Paul if it had not been for the power of God.
         2. They left him for dead.
         3. The next day he made a trip that would tax anyone physically.

Transition: This is a stark reminder of the suffering that both Paul and many other Christians have faced throughout history. But it also ought to set a fire within us; if they were willing to endure so much, striving unto death, shouldn’t we be willing to endure hardness as well?

1. Paul and Barnabas were determined because of the reward that there is in harvesting.
   1. v. 27 After establishing leaders who would help new believers grow they went back and reported to their sending church.
      1. This is the pattern that we see established for World Missions.
         1. Missionaries are sent out through a local church.
         2. Missionaries are accountable to the local church. v.26
         3. Missionaries and their local church rejoice in the faith among all nations.
      2. We see this today in the missionaries that come to report on what God is doing through their ministries abroad.
      3. It is unbiblical for an individual to go without the blessing and approval of their church. v.26
   2. You may look at the task of evangelism and feel intimidated by various obstacles you feel are impossible to overcome.
      1. Shyness
      2. Ignorance
      3. Awkwardness
      4. Fear
      5. Disinterest
      6. Etc.
   3. If you determine to trust God to help you overcome these obstacles you will find the joy of bringing in the sheaves.
      1. It is not every week that it happens, but we have seen souls saved on Saturday mornings through visitation.
      2. Since January of 2014 we know of 45 souls trust Christ through the ministries of Hillcrest.
      3. Over 400 first time visitors have come and filled out visitor cards.
      4. Don not let anything keep you from being a part of this harvest that God has blessed Hillcrest with.
      5. You may be the person who God uses to set Hillcrest on fire for souls.

Conclusion: If you stop and think about it we have much to be thankful to God for. No church is perfect because it is filled with sinful men and women, but Hillcrest is a place that God has used for the harvest of souls since 1956. This is a blessing and should be a source of encouragement, but we should always strive to go forward for the sake of the gospel. If everyone got on board we could see the hand of God move mightily upon the city of El Paso. This would surely bring difficulties that pale in comparison to the joys of bringing in the sheaves.

Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,

Though the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;

When our weeping’s over, He will bid us welcome,

We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.