

“**Boldly Going Out!**”

Acts 13 (13:1-13)

Intro. – A preacher tells the story of a builder in the church where he serves. This builder sold a house to a young couple who had just moved into the community. After becoming acquainted with them, he invited them to attend AM worship with him and his family. Sensing their reluctance, he added, “I’ll tell you what. If you don’t like it, I’ll buy you a steak dinner next week.” That couple did come and eventually became Christians and are faithfully worshipping and serving in that church to this day.

Most of us need to be more forward in sharing our convictions. Not suggesting we bribe people or become so overbearing we turn people off. I am saying we all need to be bolder in lifting up Christ to those around us.

Whenever I’m by myself in a fast-food restaurant, sometimes I can’t help but hearing some pretty interesting conversations. I hear all about sports... tires... cars... electronics... etc. Many times these type of conversations are the result of recent purchases. Someone has bought something new and everyone chimes right in as to what they think and know about whatever the topic of conversation might be.

Here’s my point. We all talk unashamedly about “non-risk subjects” even though we don’t know very much... Yet, when it comes to important matters like faith in Christ, heaven and eternal life, we clam up and excuse ourselves on the basis of ignorance or “we just don’t know enough.” Fact of the matter is we don’t need more information or additional evangelistic training. We need a renewed concern/ burden for the lost – a burden that contributes to a new boldness

Purpose: to learn how to boldly go out for Him

Looking at the following points found in Acts 13, we’ll better understand how to more boldly go forward for Christ. Once you become more earnest in sharing your faith, you will encounter the same kind of experiences the apostle Paul did when he first started:

I Expect Intense OPPOSITION (vv 1-11)

- Paul/Barnabas were ordained by the Lord’s Church in Antioch. From here they began their first missionary trip. Took John Mark (B’s nephew) and went to Cyprus = B’s home.
 - the reception/reactions they received are some of the reactions we can anticipate:
- A. Elymas Opposed Them
1. Bar-Jesus = Jewish false prophet = magician (called upon powers of darkness to do supernatural tricks) i.e. he was head deep into the occult.
 2. Elymas (his professional name) had influence with the proconsul (Roman official), until Sergius Paulus, “a man of intelligence” showed interest in the gospel.
 3. Elymas was threatened by this = going to lose power and money = opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith...
- B. Elymas Will Oppose Us
1. World is comfortable with those whose *religion* doesn’t threaten them:
 - a. e.g. it’s ok call self *Christian* long as convictions don’t threaten world’s habits, attitudes, lifestyles...
 - b. after all there must be *separation of church and state*...
 2. Truth/Christianity naturally threaten the world = Jesus said, (Matthew 10:34) “*Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.*”
 3. People respond various ways when threatened:
 - a. some withdrawal to give the silent treatment...
 - b. some get angry to try to “cut down” by ridicule...
 - c. some attempt to identify us with rigid, bigoted, works oriented salvation...
 4. Illus. – Penz Products = Ransom Ebersole... called him “Preach” and I was “Little Preach” = terms of ridicule... not easy to love such people...
 5. Point: if there is no opposition to our testimony... NOT bold enough in that testimony!

C. Elymases Must Be Confronted

1. Paul confronted his Elymas (v 9b) = hey, doesn't sound real positive does it? Not very friendly or tolerant... and then Paul blinds the guy!
2. Good thing we can't work miracles today – probably use intimidate people into believing/obeying.
3. World is BOLD in its sin = unashamed of abortion... gay lifestyle... pre/extra marital sex... etc.
4. Not a time for wimps – 1 Corinthians 15:58 “...*be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*”

II Expect Encouraging RESPONSES (v 12)

- to boldly share one's faith, must anticipate some positive responses:

A. God Promises Results

1. Psalm 126:6 “*He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.*”
2. Isaiah 55:11 “*So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*”
3. Paul and Barnabas experienced this with Sergius Paulus – the point being you and I can experience this with friends, neighbors and even family members...

B. World Gives Opposition

1. There are few greater thrills and knowing you have been used of God to win someone to Christ!
2. Don't let a person's intelligence, position or prominence intimidate you:
 - a. all have same basic emotional and spiritual need
 - b. author Paul Tillich describes “*Three Anxieties of Modern Man*” that no amount of affluence or prestige can resolve: 1) anxiety of death 2) anxiety of guilt 3) anxiety of purpose of life.
 - c. only Christ can answer and solve these fears...
3. Paul presented gospel to leading figure island of Cyprus and this man responded positively!

C. Fields are White

1. As our world becomes increasingly pagan – opportunities for evangelism increase...
2. People asking: “What's happening to our world?” – We have pop stars cursing the Cross, sports figures strung out on drugs, leading Hollywood figures bragging about their lifestyles and venereal disease reaching epidemic proportions...
3. Opportunities abound; battle lines being drawn and some people are realizing must choose...
4. Many are searching for answers only Christ can give; therefore, remember “When electricity goes out in the cave, it's a great time to be a flashlight salesman.”
5. Jesus said it this way in John 4:35 “...*life up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.*”

III Expect Disappointing DEFECTIONS (v 13)

A. John Mark Left Them

1. This short phrase reveals much = J. Mark left the mission team without Paul's consent
2. 5 yrs. later (Acts 15:36-39) Paul and Barnabas part ways because Barnabas wanted to take J. Mark and Paul didn't because J. Mark had deserted them on their first mission trip... Why deserted? Can only speculate but do know it drastically disappointed Paul...

B. People Will Disappoint

1. If you're “turned on” Christian people who are passive and indifferent (just going through the motions) will disappoint...
2. Christians who don't grow = attendance sporadic, daily habits not good, shallow, selfish/carnal...
3. Illus. – Jim S. coming out “Big Red Liquor”...
4. Greatest disappointment is defection:

- a. we all know Christians who were faithful... even leaders in church, but, for whatever reason they bailed...
 - b. disappointing and disillusioning = “If they can’t make it, what makes me think I can?”... Without reliance on God’s Spirit in and through our lives we won’t!
5. Don’t put trust in people... = Always put truly ONLY in Christ!

Conclusion: Want to conclude with the following challenge. Preacher friend of mine wrote this article to challenge his people. Want to use his idea to summarize this message with a challenge.

He tells of a top executive in one of America’s largest insurance company. This man found success in an industry where failure and intense competition is the norm. This salesman saw most of his salesmen were suffering from *call reluctance* – fear of making calls due to rejection/failure. So he offered his salesmen a free lunch if they could turn 25 bona-fied “no’s” before noon on any given day, Monday – Friday. This idea seemed like a sure thing; so, these salesmen were convinced people weren’t interested... they would at least get free...

In their enthusiasm to get “no’s” they ran into a problem – people were saying “yes.” Here they were trying to win free lunches by getting twenty-five rejections and people were slowing them down by having the audacity to actually buy insurance from them!

My preacher friend used this to illustrate most Christians are living under the same false assumption – all people are not interested in their need for Christ and His Church. We have convinced ourselves that people with whom we work, live with, play with, are perfectly content to die and face eternity without hope and promise that comes only in Christ. Let’s fess up – we have *soul winning reluctance*!

Here then is my challenge. I’ll buy lunch for anyone here in the church family who in any one given week’s time in any week remaining in 2017, can get twenty bona fide “no’s” for the request to sit down and study the Word of God concerning their need for God’s gift of grace. I’m absolutely persuaded most, if not all of us, have *evangelism reluctance*. So, how about it? Are you ready for the challenge? Are you ready to share your faith boldly? I promise the following three things if you are?

1. There is no greater challenge than sharing the gospel of God’s grace...
2. There is no greater thrill than seeing positive results...
3. There is no greater opportunity than right now!