PAUL’S FIRST RECORDED SERMON

Intro: Paul was converted to Christ in Acts 9. Immediately after his conversion we see Paul preaching Christ (Acts 9:20, 22, 29 “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.... 22But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.... 29And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him”). Now it is about 7 to 8 years later, Paul and Barnabas went on the first preaching tour, and Luke (the beloved physician) records Paul’s first sermon. Therefore, this sermon deserves special attention. It also deserves our attention for what we can learn from it. This sermon is found in Acts 13:14-43.

I. THE PLACE.
A. It was in the city of Antioch Pisidia.
B. It was in the synagogue.
   1. Paul’s audience were Jews or Jewish proselytes, for only these were allowed to worship in the synagogue.
   2. These were people who already believed in God.

II. THE TIME.
A. “On the sabbath day.”
   1. Why did the apostle choose this day of the week?
   2. This day afforded them an opportunity to speak, and it afforded them an audience since that was the day the Jews assembled.
   3. This day (for worship) is not bound on Christians.
      a. Col. 2:14-16 “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:”
      b. It was a part of the Old Testament law which has been done away.
         (1) Exo. 20:8 “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”
         (2) Rom. 7:1-7 “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. 7What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”
         (3) 2 Cor. 3:
         (4) Gal. 3:19, 24-25 “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.... 22Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 23But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”
      c. The day of worship for the Christian is the first day of the week (Sunday).
         (1) This was the day our Lord was raised from the dead.
(2) This was the day of Pentecost (the beginning of the church) fell on.

(3) Acts 20:7 “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”

B. When the opportunity was given.
1. Acts 13:15-16a “And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.”
2. They did not try to disrupt things; cf. 1 Cor. 14:40 “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

III. THE SERMON.

A. It is interesting to compare the contents of this sermon with the sermon on Pentecost and the sermon by Stephen before the Sanhedrin.
1. All three follow the same line of thought.
2. Note the points of emphasis.

B. God’s dealings with Israel.
1. Acts 13:16-25 “Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Gi, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.”
2. This culminated in the sending of His Son, the Savior of the world.

C. Jesus proved to be the Savior of the world.
1. Acts 13:26-37 “Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tiding, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.”
2. This was proved by Jesus death and resurrection.
   a. The death of Jesus was in accord with prophetic utterances; Acts 13:27-29 “For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.”
b. God raised Him from the dead; Acts 13:30-31 “But God raised him from the dead: and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.”

c. The resurrection of Jesus was a matter of prophecy; Acts 13:32-37 “And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.”

(1) Psa. 2:7 “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

(a) This makes Jesus the prophet of God.
   i) Heb. 1:1-2 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”
   ii) John 12:48-50 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

(b) This makes Jesus the priest of God.
   i) Heb.1:3 “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”
   ii) Heb. 2:17-18 “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

(2) The sure mercies of David.
   (a) 2 Sam. 7:12-16 “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

(b) This makes Jesus our King.
   i) Heb.1:3 “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”
   ii) 1 Tim 6 :15 “Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;”

(3) Psa. 16:10 “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”
D. Forgiveness by faith in Christ.
   1. Acts 13:38-39 “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”
   2. This is a blessing which the law of Moses could not give.
   3. This faith manifests itself in obedience to the commands of Christ, in repenting of our sins, and being baptized in water for that forgiveness.
      a. Luke 24:46-47 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
      b. Mark 16:16 “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

E. A Warning.
   1. Acts 13:40-41 “Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

IV. THE IMPRESSION THE SERMON MADE.
   A. Acts 13:42-43 “And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.”

   B. The reaction
   1. They were invited to speak the next week.
   2. Many followed Paul and Barnabas; no doubt in admiration for them and their message, to learn more: these were persuaded to continue in the grace of God.

V. LESSONS WE CAN LEARN.
   A. We, like Paul and Barnabas, need to accept every opportunity to preach the Gospel of Christ
      1. Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”
      2. The Gospel is God’s power to save
         a. Rom. 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
         b. Jam. 1:21-22, 25 “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.... 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

   B. Forgiveness of sins can be found only in Christ Jesus.
      1. John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
      2. Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

   C. If we reject the Gospel we invite sorrow and doom. 2 Thes. 1:6-9 “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them.
that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Conclusion: If you have not obeyed the Gospel, do so today to avoid the sorrow and doom which awaits and enjoy the salvation which may be found in Him.