

What Does The Lord Expect Of Us?

Acts 13:1-5

Hello, and welcome to "It's a Good Life." Let me begin today's program by saying that, you know, the joy of the Lord is my strength today. I hope that you have found that secret. So many verses in the Bible point to the fact that, through the Lord Jesus Christ, we have joy; we have strength. The Lord gives us the ability to do what He wants us to do, and I want to speak to you for the next few minutes about where do we fit. What exactly does the Lord expect of us? In Acts chapter 13, verses 1 through 5, we'll be reading there in just a moment.

Let me invite you first of all to look at our website, www.LRWM.org. You can go to that website and request a free transcript of this program. I'll be glad to mail it to you. You can use the website to request that by email. You can also use that website to download a free transcript, and if you simply want one written, we will be glad to send that to you free of charge. Write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731.

Acts chapter 13, verses 1 through 5. It says now, *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.* ²*As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* ¹³*And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid [their] hands on them, they sent [them] away.* ⁴*So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.* ⁵*And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to [their] minister.*

Well, where do we fit today? We see in these verses that things were being laid out for these people present there, and we see first of all in Acts chapter 11 and verse 26 that the disciples there in Antioch were called Christians. This is the first reference to Christians in the Word of God.

And 300 miles north of Jerusalem was the City of Antioch, and it was the third largest city in the Roman Empire. And then we see that Christians in Antioch were the first to send missionaries to foreign lands. The first missionaries, as we've read in our text today, were Barnabas and Saul, and they faced the question that all must answer: What shall I do with my life?

No doubt, when they got saved....now you remember, Saul of Tarsus was on that road and he was knocked to the ground by the Lord's presence and he said, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" And that should be the first question on our minds and in our hearts today. Lord, what would You have us to do? And we see that God's Word comes back to us.

And in verse 2 of chapter 13 of Acts, we see that it says there that, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul....* We are to be separated unto the work of the Lord. Each of us is born individually, born again individually, called individually. Each performs his labors individually, dies individually, is rewarded individually. Every one of us shall give an account to the Lord individually.

And we notice also in Psalm chapter 139, verses 14 through 16, that each person is unique. The Bible says there in Psalm 139, verses 14 through 16, *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully [and] wonderfully made: marvellous [are] thy works; and [that] my soul knoweth right well.* ¹⁵*My*

substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, [and] curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all [my members] were written, [which] in continuance were fashioned, when [as yet there was] none of them.

Now, how this flies in the face of the diabolical lies of those who would say that a baby within a woman's womb is not a human being....I've actually been in the presence of one senator of our nation who made the statement to me personally, "I am not sure that what is in the stomach of that woman is a human being." How dare someone like that stand and say and proclaim that they are a smart person? How dare a person stand and proclaim that they are well acquainted with the Word of God? They may have read the Word of God, but they have not had that Word applied to their hearts. How dare someone say that that human being within that woman is going to be aborted because "I do not know if that thing within a woman is a human being."

God help those people who have that idea in their minds and in their hearts today. God save those people from the wrath that is coming down on them. And God can save them today. We need to pray for those individuals. We need to pray that God would just reach down and grip their hearts today and that they would know that they need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Each individual is unique. Behind every atom of a man's being is the careful design of the Creator. I have a question for you. Has your mother any more like you? The answer, of course, is no, and some would say, "There's nobody like me." And that's quite true. Well, neither has your Heavenly Father any more like you. You are unique in the sense that you are different. Each is made to fit in a particular place, for that place the chosen individual is the best qualified person on earth. God has no one else to fit the job or the position

that He has for you. A person is happiest when he is in the place God has chosen for him.

You all know the story of Jonah when he was called of God to preach to the City of Nineveh, how he was unwilling to go. He tried to flee from God but was overtaken by the disciplinary providence of God, and he suffered disastrous hardship. But when he repented, God graciously reinstated him in his intended ministry, and he went to Nineveh and there in his labors there was tremendous fruit. It was tremendously fruitful because Nineveh turned around because of His preached Word.

And notice something else. God assigns each worker to a particular task. In verse 2 of our text is says *the work whereunto I have called them*. There is only one task in which we can be completely acceptable to our Lord. It is no less pleasing to our Lord to be a dedicated fisherman than to be an apostle if that is His plan. But a called apostle is no longer acceptable or successful as a fisherman, John 21 verses 1 through 6. There is only one task that will bring a full measure of blessing to ourselves.

There is only one guide who can bring us to our intended destiny. How gently Jesus leads us. In Psalm 32 and verse 8, it says, *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye*. Jesus Christ looks straight ahead. He sees the future. He knows what's coming up, and if we will trust Him, He will guide us all the way. How beautifully His plans unfold, like lilies with hearts of gold. And there is only one way we can come to know the task God has for us. John 7:17 says, *If any man will do his will, he shall know....*

But God does not speak to unwilling ears or reveal Himself to unwilling eyes or come with salvation and blessing into an unwilling heart. God does not force anyone. Now, God can bring it upon our hearts and bear upon our hearts and

convict our hearts, and I believe that's how any person is saved today, that the Holy Spirit deals with the heart, convicts them and lets them know that they're lost and on their way to the devil's hell.

Proverbs 3:6 says, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* You don't know which way to go today? You don't know what to do for the Lord? Read Proverbs chapter 3 and verse 6. He's going to direct your path as you acknowledge Him and say, "Lord, what should I do? Where do I fit?"

Proverbs 4:18 says, *[T]he path of the just [is] as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* God's Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. The more we get into the Word, the more we understand what God expects of us and where we are to be placed into the body of Christ. The body of Christ is made up of born-again believers, those people who have trusted Jesus as their Savior, those people who God has placed there for a specific purpose. And your purpose in life today as a Christian is to be serving God in the local church. God has instituted the local church to be His witness in this world. He said, "I came to seek and to save those who are lost, and now Father, I am no more in the world but these are." And who do you think He's speaking of there? He was not only speaking of the apostles and the disciples present at that time when He was here. He's speaking to our hearts today. He left us into this world so that we could be serving Him and helping others come to a saving knowledge.

Now, in God's economy, there is no provision for believers standing on the sidelines, but for personal witnessing sustained by consistent living, prayer.... prayer, seeking God's face. There are no spare parts in the human body or in the church, the body of Christ. There is a place for every believer who is willing to accept the perfect will of God. In Romans chapter 12 verses 1 and 2,

it says, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.* God doesn't ask any more than we can give. Verse 2 says, *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Are you serving Him today? Are you letting Him lead you? Are you a member of a good, Bible-preaching, Bible-believing local church? If not, get in one. Don't go to the church of your choice. Go to the church that's standing upon the Word of God that preaches God's Word and preaches that Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven.

Now, if you've never trusted Christ today, let me invite you to bow your head right now. "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive you as my Savior today. To the best of my ability, I know I can't save myself. To the best of my ability, the best I know how, I'm asking you to save me today."

If you're a saved person and you're not living for God, let me invite you to bow your head and ask His forgiveness today and start serving Him right now.

Thank you for joining me today, and let me invite you to join me at this same time next week when I'll be looking forward to seeing you and may I say that it is a good life serving the Lord. May the Lord bless you is my prayer.