

Acts Chapter 13 v 13 - 43

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[0 : 00] first Easter evening. On the evening of that first day of the week when the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said peace be with you. After he said this he showed them his hands and sighed. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Well they would be wouldn't they? Overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Well it is evening here on Easter Sunday and though the doors are not locked we trust that the Lord Jesus is present with us and that by his Holy Spirit he might grant us that peace which we can find nowhere else except in the presence of our risen Savior. Well let's stand and sing our first hymn 267 in our hymn books. Christ the Lord is no 276 beg your pardon 276 I got my order picked up. Lo in the grave he lay Jesus my Savior. Let's stand and sing. Hallelujah Christ our rose because he lives and is triumphant over sin and death he is our Savior the one to whom we can come in prayer. Let us pray together let's have our time of open prayer and open praises open thanksgiving for this Easter Sunday for all that it means to us his people. So I'll lead very briefly if a few others come before the Lord lead us in prayer in our praises in our thanksgiving in our faith. Let us pray together. Lord Jesus Christ we come to you the very Son of God the very one who rose from the dead the very one who was low in the grave. We thank you again our Father that you raised up Jesus from the dead that you did not allow decay to have its way with him that death could not hold sway over him for death only has power where sin exists. We thank you that Jesus had done with sin once and for all and forever. He had no sin of his own but he paid the penalty for hours and so once that penalty was paid nothing could keep him in the tomb any longer and on that third day as you promised he rose again. Oh Lord we ask that this evening just as those disciples of that first Easter Sunday were aware of the presence of Jesus amongst them so Lord we ask that you would be present with us that we may know you speaking to each heart the words of peace that we might know you breathing upon us afresh your Holy Spirit. Hear us oh Lord come amongst us we pray and bring honor and glory to your name and that of your Father for we ask these things oh Lord our God in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lord we thank you that we have the evidence that Jesus is alive through the witness of those that saw him those that touched him. We thank you Lord Jesus that you revealed yourself to your disciples to the apostles in the upper room and to those on the road to Emmaus and to 500 at one time and we thank you for this period of time in which you walked the earth after your resurrection. We thank you and we praise you that you ascended into heaven you are now seated at the right hand of the Father. We thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to us to dwell within us to dwell within us and we thank you Lord Jesus that one day you will come again and every eye will see you and every knee will bow and proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So we thank you that we can meet together in this room tonight and we pray our Father that through your word through the spirit moving amongst us that we might be filled with joy and gladness and have restored unto us and have restored unto us and have restored unto us the joy of thy salvation for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

[4 : 28] Amen. Wonderful hymns. Let's turn together to God's word and to Acts and to Acts and chapter 13.

Acts and chapter 13 to the preaching of Paul in Pamphylia. So Acts 13 beginning at verse 13. And that's found on page 1107. If you have the church Bible, the red one, it's page 1107.

Acts chapter 13. Beginning at verse 13 and reading through till we get to verse 43.

From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

[5 : 26] From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them saying, Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.

Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said, Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me. The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors.

He made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt. With mighty power he led them out of that country. For about 40 years he endured their conduct in the wilderness. And he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance.

All this took about 450 years. After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people asked for a king and he gave them Saul, son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled for 40 years.

After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him, I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart.

[6 : 42] He will do everything I want him to do. From this man's descendants, God has brought to Israel the Saviour Jesus, as he promised. Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.

As John was completing his work, he said, Who do you suppose I am? I'm not the one you're looking for. But there is one coming after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie.

Fellow children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus.

Yet in condemning him, they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.

Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead. And for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem.

[7 : 50] They are now his witnesses to our people. We tell you the good news. What God promised our ancestors, he has fulfilled for us their children by raising up Jesus.

As it is written in the second Psalm, You are my son, today I have become your father. God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay.

As God has said, I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David. So it is also stated elsewhere, You will not let your holy one see decay.

Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep. He was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him, everyone who believes is set free from every sin.

[8 : 50] A justification you are not able to obtain under the law of Moses. Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you. Look, you scoffers, wander and perish.

For I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you. As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these sins on the next Sabbath.

When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

We thank God he's given us his faithful word. Well, let's turn back there to Acts and chapter 13.

Acts and chapter 13 and the sermon particularly of Paul as he preached there in Pisidian Antioch. It's universally recognized that the disciples, the apostles of Jesus, who stood up to preach on the day of Pentecost, were totally different to the men who, on the day of Jesus' arrest, ran for their lives and scattered.

[10 : 11] They were totally different men from the men on that very first Easter Sunday, who had locked the doors for fear of the Jewish rulers. They were transformed men, changed men, different men.

And the reason for their transformation can only be explained by the fact that they had received of God's Holy Spirit. That's how the apostle Paul explains what happened on that day.

In his sermon at the very beginning of Acts 2, he says this, Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you. In other words, what has happened? They were speaking and

preaching in other languages.

These people are not drunk. It wasn't Dutch courage, as it were, that gave them the boldness to stand up when once had been so afraid. It's only nine in the morning. This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.

In the last days, God says, I'll pour out my Spirit on all people. They'd receive the power that Jesus had promised they would receive even before he was taken back to the Father's presence.

[11 : 19] The infilling of God's Spirit that they were told to wait for in Jerusalem. Jesus says to them there in Acts 1, verse 8, You'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

Now we all recognize that, acknowledge that, see that. But I believe there's something else there as well. Something else that happened to them as they received of God's Holy Spirit, which enabled them to be such transformed men.

They had power not only to act, but they had power to grasp, power to understand, power to be convinced of something that they did not fully grasp before.

Earlier in John and chapter 2, verse 21 and 22, when Jesus had spoken about the temple of his body being destroyed and raised again. We read this.

After Jesus was raised from the dead, his disciples record what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. Up until the giving of the Holy Spirit to open up their minds and understanding, they had not fully grasped the implications of Jesus' resurrection.

[12 : 35] In fact, the gospel writers tell us that even when they saw Jesus in the flesh, as it were, on several occasions, they still doubted. Matthew 28, 17, when they saw him, this is in Galilee, after the appearances in Jerusalem, they worshipped him, but some doubted.

Luke 24, when Jesus met with them after he had been on the Emmaus Road, he said to them, why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds? But it's clear now, from the day of Pentecost, that the resurrection is the central event that they believe, believe, the central event that they proclaim and preach.

Acts 2, verse 31, on that Pentecost day, what does Jesus, what does Peter say? Seeing what was to come, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. In fact, if you take the time and go through all the preaching, all the sermons of Acts, you'll find again and again that every single one of them speaks about and leads to the resurrection of Jesus.

Here's chapter 3, verse 15. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. Chapter 4, verse 10. Know this, you and all the people of Israel, it's by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead.

[14 : 10] Chapter 5, and verse 30. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead. And so we come to Acts, and chapter 13, and the sermon there, of Paul, in Pisidian Antioch.

He's been laying out, hasn't he, if you recall, as we read through that sermon, all the events of God's saving mercy. Throughout history, when the people were in Egypt, and the Lord brought them out, when they were in the wilderness, and God provided for them, he recounts all of God's dealings with them, through the raising up of a king, a king like David, a man after his own heart, and then he comes to Jesus.

He points out the key events in the life of Jesus. His rejection by the rulers of the day, his innocence, that they could not give any reason for him to be executed.

His execution, and his burial, they laid him in the tomb. And it's only then, as he's recounted God's works through history, as he's told them of the situation, of the death of Jesus, that then he declares these glorious words, but God raised him from the dead.

And in those words, I believe, dear friends, we have the greatest encouragement and joy, but God raised him from the dead.

[15 : 39] If we would grasp those words, if we truly took them to heart, and believed them, and understood them for what they are, then we would find, in every circumstance of life, in every moment, in every situation, that we are those who have joy, and peace, and faith, and strength, to live for him.

But God raised him from the dead. Whatever the question is, whatever the difficulty is, whatever the problem is, the answer is this, but God raised him from the dead.

And I want us to look at this sermon of Paul, I want us to look at three things, three particular areas in our lives, where we need to believe, and to understand, but God raised him from the dead. Words of encouragement, in our day and generation, as they have been, to every believer, throughout all of time. First of all, we see here, that these words, when believed, are the answer, to a sinful humanity.

Look there, what we read, verse 27. The people of Jerusalem, and their rulers, did not recognize Jesus. Though they found no proper ground, for a death sentence, they asked Pilate, to have him executed.

[17:06] Those chief priests, those religious leaders of the day, the Sanhedrin, the rulers of the day, in religious affairs, condemned Jesus. They called him a blasphemer.

They counted him only, as a man worthy of death. Yet they were the establishment, the greatest religious leaders, of the day. Those who had inherited, the truth of God's word.

And yet they, as a religious world, as it were, stood against Jesus, and they rejected him. And then of course, we find we have Pilate, who is he?

He is but the Roman governor. He is the representative, of that Roman empire, centered upon the emperor. The most powerful empire, the most powerful empire, in the world of that day.

Possibly the most powerful empire, the world has ever known. An empire that lasted, almost a thousand years, covered the entire known world. They put him to death, and they laid him, in a tomb.

[18:07] When mankind, has done its worst, against God. God. When mankind, had unleashed, the fierceness, of its rebellion, and sinfulness, and wickedness, upon Christ.

When in its own eyes, the world considered, that Jesus was well beaten, and finished, and done away with, and the end of him. Paul says, but God raised him, from the dead.

We live in a world, dear friends, which is a world, of sinful humanity. A world, which has declared, that Christianity, is dead, and buried. A world, that says, we do not need, God any longer.

Our worship, can be reserved, for human ingenuity, for technology, and for science. Every need, that we have, can be answered, by man's, own cleverness.

We have no need, of the foolish, follies of our forefathers. The answers, to the mysteries, of the universe, are there for us, and we can find, them out. And even, where there is, something which is, called Christianity, particularly in the West, it is only, something which pays, at best, a lip service, to the gospel, of Jesus Christ.

[19:24] The church itself, is nothing, but a tired old, has been. It seems, the church is, shriveling up, chapels are closing, the word of truth, is disappearing.

Surely, it cannot be long, before even, in the West, the church, will eventually, disappear. We are outnumbered, by sinful humanity.

We are on the back foot, when the world, is advancing. We feel, that we have lost, the fight. But dear friends, God, God, raised him, from the dead.

There could not be, a worse, attack, of the world, against God. There could not be, a more clear, time, in which it appeared, that the world, and all of its, sinful wickedness, of God, had triumphed.

But God, raised him, from the dead. When sin, seems to prosper, so that what is good, is called bad, and what is evil, is exalted, as righteous. When wicked men, grow more powerful, influential.

[20:28] When the Bible, and Christianity, of the Bible, is laughed to scorn. Dear friends, let us remember, but God, raised him, from the dead. Can there, ever be, a human power, that competes, with that?

But we feel it. There are times, aren't there, when, like the, the psalmist of old, we feel ourselves, struggling, as we face, a wicked world.

Here's what the psalmist, says in Psalm, 2373. But as for me, my feet, had almost slipped. I had nearly, lost my foothold. For I envied, the arrogant, when I saw, the prosperity, of the wicked.

They have no struggles. Their bodies, are healthy, and strong. They're free, from common, human burdens. They're not, plagued by human ills. Therefore, pride is their necklace.

They clothe themselves, with violence. From their callous hearts, comes iniquity. Their evil imaginations, have no limits. They scoff, and speak with malice. With arrogance, they threaten oppression.

[21:35] Their mouths, lay claim to heaven, and their tongues, take possession, of the earth. Isn't that, very familiar? Isn't that, sometimes again, how we feel, as believers?

The world is advancing. Wickedness is increasing. Surely, it's pointless, hanging on, to Christ. Surely, it's pointless, seeking to live for him, when the world, denies him so strongly. But dear friends, we know, wealth, is here today, and gone tomorrow. Science, is never the last word, for something else, will be discovered. Human strength, and power, that rises, inevitably falls. But God, raised him from the dead. Whatever the world, threw at Jesus, it was not enough. Whatever the world, throws at us, it's not enough. For God, raised him from, the dead. Secondly, not only is, not only are these words, a great answer, to the world, and its sinful humanity, but we find that these words, are our defense, against a spiritual enemy.

[22 : 55] Behind all that happened, at that Easter weekend, all that led up, to the very death of Christ, surely there was another, powerful force, at work. An unseen, and pervasive enemy, of God's people, that has not gone away.

The devil, a spiritual, enemy. Think about it. Who was it, that came into the very heart, of Judas, that he should betray Jesus, for 30 pieces of silver?

Was it not the devil, we're told? And who was it, who had asked to sift Peter, so that he denied, knowing the Lord Jesus, on three occasions, surely, it was Satan, who was the one, who turned the crowd, in Jerusalem, into a pack, of wolves, baying for the blood, of Christ, and crucifying.

Surely, it was Satan, who was working, in the heart of Pilate, to turn an innocent man, over to be murdered. There is a spiritual enemy, at work in this world, and we need, a defense against him.

I don't want to press, the matter too hard, but I see there is a link here, I believe, in verses 33, concerning this enemy. Paul speaks, and quotes from Psalm 2, you are my son, today I've become your father, if you read that Psalm, you'll know, it's all about the enemies of God, raising their heads against him, and saying, let us free, stop telling us what to do, throwing off, his rules.

[24 : 30] And that verse, following from, Psalm 2, verse 7, goes like this, ask of me, says God, and I will make the nations, your inheritance, the ends of the earth, your possession, you'll rule them, with an iron scepter, you'll dash them, to pieces like pottery.

That verse, of ruling, with an iron scepter, is a verse, that keeps on cropping up, through the Bible, through the New Testament, until eventually, it lands us, in Revelation, and chapter 12.

And there we find that verse, particularly, in context, with Satan himself. For there we're told, in verse 4 and 5, the dragon, who we know is the devil, stood in front of the woman, who was about to give birth, so that she might, so that he might devour her child, the moment it was born.

She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations, with an iron scepter. It's Christ, isn't it? And indeed, don't we see, that the cross, is the culmination, of all that Satan, had been trying to do, throughout the life, of the Lord Jesus.

Don't we see Satan, right there, hounding our Lord Jesus, to the grave? Wasn't he the one, who stirred up the jealousy, of King Herod, to send his soldiers, to slaughter all the boys, under two in Bethlehem, hoping to extinguish, the life of the new king?

[25 : 57] Wasn't it Satan, who in the wilderness, said to Jesus, jump off, the temple, to your death? Don't we find, again and again, throughout the gospels, that the crowd, who listened to Jesus, turn upon him, want to kill him, take up stones, or try to drive him, off the cliff.

Isn't it always, in the background, that the devil, is at work, even where the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, is ministering? And so, when we come to, that good Friday, we come to that place, where the Son of God, dies upon the cross, is it possible, that as he breathes, his last, there is an ecstatic, cry of joy, amongst Satan's, armies.

At last, after 33 years, of trying, to put him down, the job, has been done, the seed, of Eve, has been bruised, and beaten, but God, raised him, from the dead.

When Satan, had done everything, he could, when all the powers, of darkness, had mounted, their fiercest assault, upon the Lord, Jesus Christ, so they believed, that they had triumphed, but God raised him, from the dead.

All was not over, he was not beaten. In fact, we find, unwittingly, Satan, had fulfilled, God's purposes, as he worked, in the hearts, of the religious leaders, and Pilate.

[27 : 24] Do you see there, in verse 29, when they had carried out, all that was written, about him. When you see, in verse 27, yet in condemning him, they fulfilled the words, of the prophets.

They, Satan thought, that he was, fulfilling his own agenda, carrying out, his own plan, bringing about, his own triumph, when in fact, all that he was doing, was carrying out, the very will, and the

promises, and prophecies of God.

And now, death and sin, were destroyed. The very powers, which Satan has, over humanity, were triumphed, over themselves, and destroyed.

Paul writes, in Colossians, in chapter 2, in verse 15, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and what he achieved, at the cross. He says this, and having disarmed, the powers, and authorities, he made a public, spectacle of them, triumphing over them, by the cross.

Dear friends, as Christians, as those, who've sided ourselves, with the Lord Jesus Christ, we have an enemy, a very real enemy. The Bible calls him, the accuser, of the brothers.

[28 : 39] Calls him, that tempter, of old. He's that enemy, who prowls, Peter warns us, like a roaring lion, looking for someone, to devour. He makes it, his very business, to seek to tempt, and to trip up, the saints.

His purpose, has always been the same, to deceive, to lie, to cheat, the church, out of her inheritance. He sends his servants, as angels of light, to teach false gospels.

He blinds the eyes, of men and women, so they cannot believe, the gospel, and the light, of God's truth. And even today, somewhere in the world, he will have been instrumental, in putting to death, believers.

It seems as if, Satan, with all his power, is at work, and there is nothing, that we can do, to stand against him. But when Satan, has done his worst, God raised him, from the dead.

Think of that wonderful hymn, that we sing, from time to time. When Satan, comes to convict us, we read, when Satan, tempts me to despair, and tells me, of the guilt within, upward I look, and see him there, who made an end, of all my sin.

[29 : 53] Doesn't the devil, our accuser, condemn us? Doesn't he, tell us, that our sins, are too grave, that God should, ever forgive them? Doesn't he tell us, that we'd be better off, just, keeping our nose, out of God's business?

We'd be better off, not witnessing, or living for him. We'd be better off, just being complacent, just being nominal Christians. Doesn't Satan, put up obstacles, in our way, when we seek to witness, and share Jesus, with others?

Don't we find him, working in the hearts, of them? Dear friends, let us remember the words, God raised him, from the dead. What can Satan do, in response to that? Nothing.

What are all the hordes, and hosts, of hell, able to do, in the face, of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God raised, from the dead? Nothing.

So we see, that the resurrection, the good news, that God raised him, from the dead, is the answer, to the sinfulness, of humanity. It is the defense, against Satan, that spiritual enemy.

[31 : 02] And the resurrection, is our hope, in a suffering world. Verse 36, Now when David, had served God's purpose, in all, in his generation, he fell asleep, he was buried, with his ancestors, and his body, decayed.

The Bible says, that death, is the last enemy, of God's people. It's a certain reality, of everyone, of all people, in all times, even a man, as great as King David, who we were described, earlier in verse 22, as a man, after God's own heart.

Even he had to suffer, and even he had to die, and be buried. And Paul tells us, as he recounts, the struggles, that he faces, in his own life, he puts it in this way, he says, death, is at work in us.

Or, we face death, all day long. In this life, dear friends, we suffer. We suffer, the consequences of sin, as our bodies, decay, and become old, and decrepit, and painful, and sore.

We see the consequences, of sin, take their toll, physically on us, as well as spiritually. The world, in which we live, is a world, of suffering. And there are times, when such suffering, is too much, for us to bear.

[32 : 25] There are times, when we feel, in such pain, and weakness of flesh, that we feel as if, what is the point, of going on? What is the point, of living another day? What is the point, of getting out to bed?

And then of course, there is the suffering, that our hearts, feel, when we lose those, that we love, to death. We weep, and we grieve, as we experience, the pain of pain, parting, as one by one, our family, and our friends, are taken, by death.

What's the point, of going on, when death, is only, the end? What's the point, of loving, and caring, for others, when we must lose them, and suffer pain, at their going?

And what can we say, about our own death? The reality, that we will die, even as Christians, it's not something, that we delight in, or rejoice in, doesn't have a thought, in the hour of our death, concern us.

How will I die? Will it be protracted, and painful, and long? All that I possess, all that I own, all that is now, will be gone.

[33 : 36] And yet, in spite of all these things, and in the face, of all these things, whether it be, the suffering of the body, whether it be, the suffering of loss, whether it be, the reality of death, we can say, but God raised him, from the dead.

The guarantee, for us, that, and for all God's people, in the face of death, and all of its horrors, is, the resurrection, of Jesus.

Paul writes, in 1 Thessalonians, in chapter 5, sorry, for chapter 4, he says this, brothers and sisters, we do not want you, to be uninformed, or ignorant, about those, who sleep in death, so that you, do not grieve, like the rest of mankind, who have no hope, for we believe, that Jesus died, and rose, again.

In the face of loss, in the face of death, the reality, the guarantee, the hope, is the resurrection, of Jesus. When everything, around about us, appears hopeless, when militant, atheism, is on the march, when Satan, and all of his hosts, seems to have blinkered, the eyes, and deadened, the hearts, of the vast, hordes of humanity, when suffering, is at every hand, when it seems, that there is no point, that there is no hope, God still, has something, to say, on the matter.

God has, the last word, always. He is the God, who delights, in turning, a lost cause, into an opportunity, for his glory. There could have been, nothing more hopeless, than the cross, but there is nothing, more hopeful, than the truth, that God raised him, from the dead.

[35 : 27] Dear friends, if only, I really believed it, if only you, really believed it, and believed it, with every fiber, of our being, then we, we would not fear, anything else, because there is nothing, that compares, with the truth, that God raised him, from the dead.

Let's sing, our final hymn, a wonderful hymn, of praise, a wonderful hymn, of joy, Jesus, to whom be the glory.

281, thine be the glory, risen, conquering son, endless is the victory, thou or death, has won. 281. O commend, ärtree, risen, of ■ dark, Tenor it all!

Thank you.

Thank you.

[37 : 51] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[40 : 09] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.