

**Sermon File # 911**

**Scripture Text: Acts 13:42-52**

**Sermon Title: *Reaching the Receptive***

**Manuscript written by Roger Roberts and sermon preached**

**On Sunday 19 October 2008**

**At International Baptist Church, Brussels, Belgium**

**For additional information regarding this manuscript, contact  
[Roger.Roberts@ibcbrussels.org](mailto:Roger.Roberts@ibcbrussels.org)**

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## ***Reaching the Receptive***

### **Introduction:**

Open your Bibles with me to Acts 13:42-52, where we find Paul on what has traditionally been called his first missionary journey. We noted two Sundays ago that the church in Syrian Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas on this missionary venture to take the message of the risen Lord Jesus into “the ends of the earth,” as the disciples were commissioned by the risen Lord (1:8). Paul and Barnabas were accompanied during the first part of this venture, by John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, who evidently deserted them in Perga (13:13). This first journey, about AD 45, took them into Cyprus and what is now Southeastern Turkey, known then as Asia Minor. This first journey, about a year in duration, was met with success, with many Jews and Gentiles coming to faith in Christ. But also, Paul experienced mounting opposition, especially from the Jews, and was stoned nearly to death (14:19). But amazingly, not only did Paul survive, he even returned to the city where he was stoned in order to encourage the new believers there (14:21).

This morning I want us to focus on Chapter 13, Verses 42-52, which centers on the response of the people to Paul’s sermon in Pisidian Antioch (13:13-41). We read some important statements from Paul, who indicates a decisive turning

point in his ministry to focus on reaching pagan Gentiles instead of non-receptive Jews. These verses contain important truths about how God would have us reach those who are receptive.

Follow as I read **Acts 13:42-52**.

As your pastor/elder, I realize my responsibility to lead you as we together seek to obey the Great Commission in our context here in Western Europe, and more particularly in suburban Brussels, Wezembeek-Oppem, Belgium. For an understanding of our strategy to reach people with the message of Jesus Christ I think we can do no better than the Word of God, and particularly the approach used in *The Acts of the Apostles*. As we have said throughout our journey through Acts, this second volume of Luke is better titled, *The Acts of the Risen Jesus through the Spirit-filled Church*.

As a pastor in the US, I sought, along with the churches I served, to find the right methods of reaching people with the message of Jesus, and in American evangelicalism there is no shortage of programs and methods for doing church outreach. One of the spiritual problems in American evangelicalism is pragmatism, a dependence on methods that are designed to appeal to a consumer mentality, as the means of doing God's work. But I have come to realize that Kingdom of God work is meant to be done God's way, with dependence on him and following the guidelines given in his Word.

For that reason I have not followed the trend of developing a seeker-friendly church, which is based on the idea that a church, by offering entertainment, can attract the unconverted into their assembly, where the message of Jesus is presented, substituting an evangelistic meeting for the church's worship. Certainly there are some successful seeker-friendly churches in North America that have done an amazingly effective job in attracting the unconverted into their buildings. They have effectively evangelized many that they've attracted, but their efforts to lead these new converts in discipleship have reportedly been less effective than their evangelism.

Here in Belgium I believe the method that gives us the best hope of reaching the unconverted is not a transplanted American scheme. Recently I consulted with the director of the Belgian Evangelical Mission, who has given his entire ministry to reaching Belgians for Jesus, and he concurs with me that the American way doesn't work here. The pattern that worked in the earliest churches and in the missionary journeys of Paul was to create a worshiping fellowship of believers who met with God and who then went out into the marketplace to the people's various spheres of influence to relate to the unconverted and then to share the transforming message of Christ. The worship of God's people was not directed to the people, to cater to their tastes, but rather was directed to God, to please him. The unconverted who came into the assembly of worshipers were not

entertained, but rather were stricken by the unfamiliarity of what was happening and by the awareness of convicting presence of God (1 Corinthians 14:24f).

So, whether inside the house of worship or out in the marketplace of everyday life, the church and its missionaries were involved in reaching the receptive with the message of Jesus. As we see from Paul's first missionary journey, reaching the receptive involves...

### ➤ **Relating the message to everyone**

As we noted in 13:1-3, the church at Syrian Antioch prayed for and sent out Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first "foreign" mission venture. Accompanied by John Mark, they went first to the island of Cyprus, where they evangelized many, including the governor of the island. Before Paul and Barnabas sailed to the mainland of Asia Minor, John Mark, for some reason, called it quits and returned to Jerusalem (13:13). Arriving in Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, where Paul preached the message of Christ as the fulfillment of Jewish salvation hope (13:16-41).

Reaching the receptive assumes the proclamation of the message of Jesus, which is...

- *The full truth, boldly spoken*

Paul and his missionary colleagues were driven by a passion for the life-changing truth of Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God. Paul preached Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah of the Jews, who is the only way for anyone, both Jew and Gentile, to be made right with God and receive the gift of eternal life.

It's possible for a church to lose sight of why it seeks to reach people in the first place. Simply to gain new members and to grow the institution of the church is the result of pure pragmatism that misses the point of what it means to be the people of God. Churches in the Western World and in North America in particular have found good marketing techniques for attracting people to the church for its entertainment value or because it addresses felt needs. Some of these may well be legitimate needs, such as for marriage and family life enrichment or self-improvement, including freedom from addiction and wellness-enhancement. Obviously, Paul applied the good news of Jesus to people's physical, "felt" needs, as we say. During this first missionary journey, he healed a crippled man, which attracted a lot of attention (some bad, as well as good! See 14:8ff).

Relating to these felt needs may be useful for attracting people, but the church must remember its core message. The good news of Jesus as the only way to the Father is the power of God to change lives (Romans 1:16f). Through hearing

the message of Jesus proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit the unconverted come under conviction of sin and receive grace to repent and to experience rebirth. Only by being transformed by the saving message of Jesus will people then desire to belong to the Body of Christ and the church will not depend on other methods to “attract” people to its worship and ministries.

This is why it’s absolutely essential that every believer understands the story of Jesus and how through his death and resurrection he saves sinners who turn to him in faith and repentance. The church, and IBC in particular, must make the communication of this message central in its preaching and outreach, such as through our Bible studies, home groups, English classes and of course, Alpha courses, both in the evening and through the Sunday afternoon Prime Time fellowship.

Perhaps here the question needs to be asked: “Do we believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father and that belief in him is essential for salvation?” Amazingly, more and more who claim to be evangelical Christians no longer believe that the evangel is based exclusively upon faith in Jesus Christ. A lot of church members in Christian and more specifically, evangelical churches are essentially universalists, saying that as long as people are committed to a belief system, they are as acceptable to God as are those who profess faith in Jesus Christ. Obviously, Paul and Barnabas believed that salvation is through faith in Jesus alone, which was their compunction for sharing the message of Christ. And we will never commit ourselves to reaching the receptive unless we believe that we have a unique and urgent message to share.

We must communicate this message, not as dry history, but as a living reality, that must be proclaimed with dependence on the Holy Spirit. (It’s important to note that Paul and Barnabas went on this first journey “by the Holy Spirit,” who was their source of power, wisdom, protection and encouragement (13:4). Paul and Barnabas spoke this message with the total freedom that only the Holy Spirit can give. Boldness in *Acts* is not characterized by arrogance, insensitivity or rude behavior that demands a hearing. Rather, boldness is a freedom from intimidation that allows the believer to share the message naturally and freely in a winsome manner. I think boldness is also enhanced by the wonder and enthusiasm we have about the good news of the risen Jesus, who is at work within and all around us. Too easily we lose that sense of wonder and excitement about what God has done for us and what he can do for others.

As we see in our text (verse 46), this boldness allows us to freely reach out...

- *To those who reject the message*

Obviously, the Holy Spirit was at work through the witness of Paul and Barnabas, with the people’s invitation to them to speak further on the following Sabbath (Verse 42). And on that next Sabbath, “almost the whole city gathered to hear

the word of the Lord” (Verse 44). Such a great response was a threat to the religious status quo, and so the jealous Jews verbally attacked Paul and Barnabas and tried to discredit their message.

In sharing the message of Jesus and in being his faithful witnesses, we can expect to meet with failure in the eyes of the world. In fact Jesus gave his disciples what someone called “a sacrament of failure,” which Paul and Barnabas observed. When persecution was stirred up against them and they were thrown out of the region, they “shook the dust from their feet in protest against them” (verse 51). This was a symbolic action used by Jews when they returned to their homeland after journeying in the land of “unclean” Gentiles. When Jesus told his disciples to use it whenever their message was rejected he knew that the Jews would see the symbolism: To reject the message of Jesus is to be rejected by God himself and to be excluded from his new people (Matthew 10:14).

Jesus taught his disciples that they would reject them even as the world had rejected him (Luke 6:22; John 15:18-16:4, etc.). In his parable of the seed and the soils Jesus taught that our part is to scatter the seed of the word and that much of the seed would fall on unfruitful ground (Mark 4:1-12; Matthew 13:1-15; Luke 8:4-10).

Perhaps the majority response to our witness, particularly in this post-Christian culture, will be one of simple indifference. To many, the story of Jesus will, at first at least, be regarded as a curiosity out of the past, something horribly out of date in these secular times. Others will reject the message because it threatens to disrupt the status quo of their lives and the life of their families.

Let me interject here how that I never cease to be amazed at how certain parents, even of grown children, can be so indifferent to the spiritual upbringing of their children until their children begin to show an interest in the Christian faith, particularly one that involves seriously following Jesus. Obviously, these parents realize that when they follow Jesus seriously, their children will upset the status quo of total indifference to spiritual matters and, instead of the family religion being just an occasion for family traditions, it threatens to become a life-changing experience.

And yet, whatever rejection we experience, we, like Paul and Barnabas, must continue to scatter the seed, not knowing who, even among the indifferent, might later respond to the message.

And we like them must relate it...

- *To those who oppose the message*

One of the many impressive things about the Apostle Paul was his absolute determination to share the good news of Jesus, whatever the response and even

through persecution and suffering. During this first missionary journey we know that Paul suffered a serious illness and was stoned nearly to death in the city of Lystra (14:19f). Instead of being deterred, Paul seemed even more determined to encourage the believers and continue to proclaim the message.

No doubt Paul never forgot that he had been a serious and even zealous enemy of the message and kingdom of Jesus. He knew that the same grace of God that changed his mind and heart could change anyone's heart and life (1Timothy 1:12ff). Earlier in *Acts* we read how that "a large number of priests became obedient to the faith" (6:7b). No doubt at least some of these priests had been avowed enemies of Jesus of Nazareth, but the Holy Spirit made their hearts receptive soil for the seed of the word about Jesus.

Thus we should never give up on those who appear to us as hopeless cases and as determined opponents of our faith. The greatest enemies can become the greatest champions of the cross. Thus we continue to pray for God to work the miracle of faith, repentance, belief and rebirth, which is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8ff). One of the things that continue to impress me, when I read accounts in *The Barnabas Fund* and *Open Doors* ministries about the persecuted church, always there's a plea for pray for the persecutors. These who are suffering and dying for their faith have such grace from God upon them that they, like the Lord Jesus himself, pray and want others to pray, that these enemies and persecutors might be converted and become fellow believers and children in the Family of God.

Paul never gave up on the rejecters and opponents of the message, who were primarily among his own people, the Jews. We can read in Romans 9-11 about his great sorrow, unrelieved burden and unceasing prayer for his "brothers, those of (his) own race, the people of Israel" (9:3f). And Paul continued to follow the pattern given by Jesus, to first take the message of salvation through Christ to the Jews, then to the Gentiles (Matthew 10:6; Romans 1:16 and Paul's practice of first going to the synagogue, as we see throughout *Acts*).

Although Paul never gave up on these rejecters and opponents, our text gives us one of the great milestones of church history. Paul became known as the Apostle, the missionary, to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). He teaches us that reaching the receptive involves...

➤ **Focusing on the responsive**

Years ago as a young Baptist pastor, I was awakened to the awareness that most of the evangelism done in my church tradition was directed toward nominal church members and what were known as over-worked, "gospel-hardened" prospects. We conducted so-called evangelistic campaigns that did very little to attract unbelievers, and much of our preaching, even on Sunday mornings, was

“preaching to the choir.” Thus, pastors in my tradition would preach gospel messages to those already converted and we did very little to teach and to disciple Christians to grow in their faith and prepare to share the message of Jesus in their spheres of influence.

It was a Methodist, in fact the evangelism director of the United Methodist Church, USA, who helped me to see this erroneous strategy. In his book, *The Contagious Congregation*, George Hunter III made the point that the earliest church took the gospel to the receptive, even though they continued to pray for and keep connected with the unreceptive, trusting that in due time they too might become receptive.

Thus, our focus, even right here in post-Christian Western Europe, must be on...

- *The pagan outsiders*

Paul’s preaching aroused the interest of both “devout converts to Judaism,” religious proselytes, but the general population, “almost the whole city” (42-44). These included the ones who had no background in the Scriptures and to whom the entire story of Jesus was totally unfamiliar.

And certainly here in Belgium, and even in the expatriate community, we will have no trouble finding those who are totally unfamiliar with the message of Jesus. Many of these will have been baptized into the Roman Catholic Church, and may even have attended religion classes in their youth, but probably would have little understanding of the person and work of Jesus, the cross, the resurrection and the way to have a personal relationship with God. Many in this culture, if they have an inclination toward the “spiritual” side of life, are being attracted to new age spiritualism, which includes all sorts of occult practices, which are readily available through television and the Internet.

These are the people who will go with their families to the coast on sunny Sundays, participate in cycle rides around the city, and look at you in wonderment as you and your family depart for a church service on Sunday. The truths of God’s word are totally unfamiliar to them. And yet, they may have a spiritual hunger and longing that only God can satisfy. In fact, all of us have a God-given hunger which he alone can satisfy. And with these pagan neighbors of yours, there may be a curiosity about you, your faith and about this church.

There are ways we can make a connection with these people. First, there’s your personal friendship which you can offer through hospitality to your neighbors and work associates. And God has given this church some “hooks” that connect with unbelievers, offering some things that meet felt needs, such as our MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers), Bible studies, English Classes and Alpha Courses, and the Prime Time fellowship for young singles. Just week before last I answered a call at the church office from a Wezembeek-Oppem fireman who

asked, for himself and some of his colleagues, about our English classes. They had heard about them through some police officers who had attended these classes that use Scripture and relate the message of Jesus through the course of instruction in five levels of English. Our Alpha Courses have ministered to students and local Belgians who had no knowledge of the message of Jesus, but were interested in basic instruction and were attracted to the hospitality of these classes, which take place in a home and include an evening meal together. As a result of this witness, we continue to attract to the message of Jesus international graduate students from pagan, even atheistic and other world religion backgrounds.

Once, several years ago, we had a neighbor family (living next door to our church) attend our springtime Sunday afternoon picnic. This family simply wandered over to our church yard, curious about what was taking place. Perhaps this next spring we should pitch this annual picnic to this Wezembeek-Oppem neighborhood, calling it a “Come Meet Your Neighbors” Day, and provide a free picnic to all who will attend. After all, we see in the gospels that Jesus used the meal as the primary means for him to introduce himself to pagans, “sinners,” those of doubtful reputation.

I believe that during these days of economic and political crisis here in Belgium that the Spirit of God could be blowing among us and we must be ready to share the message and join the harvest. I know it seems unlikely and mission organizations have abandoned Western Europe as a hopeless case, as a nation that had its opportunity and rejected the message. Yet, these new pagans have never really heard the message. As missionary-theologian Ajith Fernando notes, the receptivity of pagans in Pisidian Antioch was remarkable because this city was a stronghold of emperor worship. For them to become say “Jesus is Lord” meant they could no longer say, “Caesar is Lord” (page 388, *Acts: NIV Application Commentary*). When God begins to work, the most unlikely become receptive and even regenerate!

But in addition to the pagan outsiders there were also...

- *The religious insiders*

There were in Paul’s congregation in Pisidian Antioch some who were religious seekers, who had already become proselytes to Judaism because of their attraction to a life of faith. And even now there are people in our community who are sincerely seeking God, through some of the ministries I have mentioned and also through our Sunday Bible teaching and our worship services. I pray that there will be many more who will be added to this number, who find our fellowship to be warm, accepting and inviting and our worship services to be a meaningful experience with the risen Christ. (Paul told the Corinthians that it would be in the midst of genuine worship of the risen Christ that pagan

unbelievers would be convicted by the preaching of the message of Christ. See 1 Corinthians 14:24f).

Also, whenever we visit an historic old cathedral here in Western Europe, I will invariably notice some one or two people who are seated in the church or cathedral, after having lit some candles, and are engaged in prayer. The theology of these people may be entirely “messed up.” But I cannot help but think these are people who are seeking after a relationship with God and are sincerely offering prayers to God, much as did Cornelius, to whom God sent Peter with the saving message of Christ (Acts 10:4, 31). As evangelicals here in post-Christian Europe, living among those who are heirs of a somewhat (though not entirely) dead Roman Catholicism, we must beware that we not be like the religious Jews who turned against Paul. They turned against Paul because they were filled with jealousy (45). Many of the pagans were being converted and taking over “their church,” as it were. As one commentator said, these jealous not only thought that they belonged to God but that God belonged to them!

There also are likely people who are long-time worshipers and even church members who still have not come to peace with God and assurance of salvation through Jesus Christ. (I once read a comment from world evangelist Billy Graham that the most promising field for reaching the unconverted is the membership roster of a local church) I have even known of pastors who got truly converted! You can't ask for a greater miracle than that! Too often we expect what Chuck Colson describes as “cookie cutter conversions,” that everyone should come to faith in basically the same way. But in fact, God works differently and with different timing, and we need to expect that he is at work in IBC and even among our most loyal participants, to give the life-changing reality and presence of the risen Lord Jesus. As we gather for worship, fellowship and ministry at IBC, we never know with whom we might be rubbing shoulders, as to their true spiritual condition. They may yet be on the cusp of a life-changing commitment to Jesus, and as yet are still examining the faith. Our concern must be that we are living a life that bears up under their scrutiny and that we not be guilty of anything that might cause one of his “little ones” to stumble (1 Corinthians 10:32).

This message hopefully will encourage those of you who have unbelieving spouses. Paul would say that there is already a sanctifying influence upon their lives. Some of your godliness will “rub off”; but also, they are under the Holy Spirit's influence very day of their lives, and through your godly example God can make them receptive and responsive in his time (1 Corinthians 7:14). Never stop praying for your unbelieving spouse, and living a godly, winsome life (as in 1 Peter 3:1ff) and trusting that the seed of the word may yet take root in his/her heart.

Paul and Barnabas show us that reaching the receptive also involves...

## ➤ **Trusting God to spread the word**

No one was more aware than the Apostle Paul that the Holy Spirit was his enabler and that God used, not his strength and his smart strategy, but rather his weakness. Paul preached and witnessed and lived by the weak power of the cross of Christ, and that...

- *He gives success*

Many modern church leaders and church-planting strategists would say that Paul's mission in Pisidian Antioch was a failure. After all, he was run out of town! And his last gesture was his Jesus-instructed "sacrament of failure," shaking the dust from his feet in protest against the persecutors (51). Again, Jesus taught that our work is to scatter the seed, but God causes the life and growth of faith in the hearts of those made receptive by the Spirit.

I'm happy to know that God sees things we cannot see and thus he measures success in a much different way. Paul lived under the critical scrutiny of the "super apostles," who sought to gain popularity with the churches by convincing them of their superiority to Paul. They were able to concoct good reports about their ministry that would "show up" Paul's comparative lack of success. But Paul dismissed their comparisons and removed himself from these popularity contests. He said his only accountability was to God and as God's manager he wanted only to prove himself faithful to him (1 Corinthians 4:1-5). Even so we, in our witness to and prayers for those around us, must trust that God will honor his word and give us success in his time. We may not be allowed to see our fruit till the consummated kingdom.

Verse 48 in our text reminds us that conversion is truly by God's sovereign initiative in doing his work, which explains the promised success. There is also in this verse an allusion to the human responsibility to hear the word and to respond in faith. In our praying, witnessing, evangelism and mission involvement, we are linking up with God's eternal purpose in bringing in his elect, those whom he has appointed for eternal life. We trust that he directs us toward those very persons as we gladly share with everyone at every opportunity he gives us.

Paul and Barnabas had peace that God was using them to reach the receptive with a life-changing message. Lives were truly changed by the Holy Spirit in this city because...

- *He gives joy and the Holy Spirit*

The last verse is the mark of success—not only Paul and Barnabas, but also new disciples who were filled with joy (52). These were not just people who had made "decisions for Christ," which is the usual way many evangelists, churches

and denominations measure their success and growth. True conversion brings joy to the heart of the convert and the messenger. I don't think all angels have wings, but I like the way an African American preacher described for me the joy of leading another person to faith in Christ. He said "You can almost feel the flapping of angel wings," no doubt in reference to Jesus' saying the angels in heaven rejoice over the conversion of one sinner (Luke 15:10).

Also, the new convert is given the joy of the Lord through a personal relationship. It's the joy we discussed last Sunday from Philippians 4:1-9, which is closely akin to peace. We are given that joy in Christ as part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and are commanded to keep that joy and grow in that joy, which is the awareness of the presence of the risen, loving Lord Jesus. Those who are truly converted know that the greatest and only abiding joy, through the vicissitudes of life's challenging circumstances, is the joy of the Lord. He has saved us and is converting us that we might know the depths of his joy—that we might enjoy him forever!

This is the reason why we try to reach the receptive, that these who are apart from God's help and hope, might know eternal and abundant life, which is a life of joy. Through Christ, there's a joy before for the messenger and the recipient, those receptive of the message. There was nothing, not even persecution, that could deprive Paul of his joy. And for you and me as well, and the joy we offer in Jesus, there is an assurance of joy that no adversity can take away from us.

Later during this first missionary journey, in Lystra Paul was first idolized when his identity was mistaken for the Greek god, Hermes. Then, after some opposing Jews came and stirred up the crowd against him Paul was stoned and left for dead. Amazingly, he recovered and the next day he resumed his travel itinerary! Then, he returned to Lystra, the city where he was nearly killed, in order to encourage the new believers there (14:22). Talk about an indomitable spirit! This can be explained only by the presence of the Holy Spirit in Paul. The Holy Spirit infused Paul's life with love and joy, which are also the lead aspects of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Today we must pray for our fellow believers and for messengers of the gospel in places like and eastern province of India and in Iraq, where Christians are being driven from their homes, their possessions, including their homes are taken from them and/or are being destroyed. Pray that they might be delivered from further harm. Hopefully, the governments of these and other countries will provide protection and religious freedom for these fellow believers. Secondly, pray that they will stand strong in the Lord Jesus and know his joy, peace and strength during these days of suffering and persecution. And pray that in all of this and in whatever ways God may choose to work, his name will be honored and his kingdom will grow among those that he alone can make receptive to his word.

## **Conclusion:**

I pray that we at IBC Brussels, in the heart of Western Europe, will continue to seek after those who are most receptive to the good news of Jesus, while continuing to witness to those who as yet are not open to our message. I pray that we will be ready for the harvest when the Spirit of God begins to move among us.

There may be some of you here today who are open and receptive to the saving message of Jesus Christ. If so, you have been made receptive by the Holy Spirit, who must work in everyone's turning to Christ. I encourage you, as did Paul and Barnabas, to "continue in the grace of God" (verse 43). And following this worship service, I, along with many other people in this church, will be eager to visit, share and pray with you as you might request. We're grateful that you're here today and we would love to encourage you to continue to be open to the message of Jesus.

First, we must be certain that we're walking with the heavenly Father and are ready to participate with him in his work with the receptive. We need to realize that he is always at work. Like Jesus, Paul and Barnabas, we simply need to join him (John 5:17,19). This requires that we are living in step with Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit. Without the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the love and joy he gives, it's useless to talk about a strategy for reaching the receptive. Only Christ in us gives the joy, the compassion and the boldness (confidence, freedom of speech and enthusiasm) we need to share the message of the risen Jesus. And we must be willing to trust him for the results. He alone gives success to our witness. And only the Holy Spirit gives us the compassion and love of Christ to compel us (2 Corinthians 5:14). I must remember that, even when I don't feel very loving, I am called to serve and share the message, not because of *my* love, but because of *his* love.

I don't know about you, but I need a fresh infusion of the joy of the Lord and his compassion and zeal to share his life and love with those his Spirit is making receptive to the message of Jesus.

## **Thoughts and questions for personal reflection and/or group discussion:**

1. In what ways might Paul's approach to sharing the message of Jesus in Pisidian Antioch be a model for sharing the message in today's Western Europe?

2. Paul gave a bold and through presentation of the message of salvation. How and essentially what would you relate to an unbeliever who asked you to explain how to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
3. How should you continue to think about and relate to those you know who have adamantly rejected your efforts to share the message of Jesus with them?
4. Do you know of any church-goers and perhaps even church members who have expressed a lack of assurance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? How should you relate to them?
5. What are some possible strategies that IBC (or your home church) might use to relate the message of Jesus to: 1. the expatriate community? 2. the local Belgian community?
6. What assurance do you have that your efforts to relate the message of Christ will succeed? What is God's measurement for success of our witness?
7. Pray that God will give you the fullness of joy through the Holy Spirit as you seek to relate faithfully and effectively with those in need of Jesus.

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