

Antioch of Pisidia
Message 5 in the series, "Faith under Fire"

"Paul and his companions then left Paphos by ship for Pamphylia, landing at the port town of Perga. There John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. But Paul and Barnabas traveled inland to Antioch of Pisidia. On the Sabbath they went to the synagogue for the services. After the usual readings from the books of Moses and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them this message: 'Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, come and give it.' So Paul stood, lifted his hand to quiet them, and started speaking. 'Men of Israel,' he said, 'and you God-fearing Gentiles, listen to me.'" Acts 13:13-16 (NLT)

1. When God opened the door, Paul walked through it prepared!

"...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

"...Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season." 2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)

"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity."
Colossians 4:5 (NIV)

"The God of this nation of Israel chose our ancestors and made them multiply and grow strong during their stay in Egypt. Then with a powerful arm he led them out of their slavery. He put up with them through forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Then he destroyed seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to Israel as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years. After that, God gave them judges to rule until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people begged for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.'" Acts 13:17-22 (NLT)

2. Before Paul preached Jesus, he built a bridge through things they had in common.

"...I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."
1 Corinthians 9:22 (NIV)

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Colossians 4:6 (NIV)

"And it is one of King David's descendants, Jesus, who is God's promised Savior of Israel! Before he came, John the Baptist preached that all the people of Israel needed to repent of their sins and turn to God and be baptized. As John was finishing his ministry he asked, 'Do you think I am the Messiah? No, I am not! But he is coming soon—and I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the sandals on his feet.' Brothers—you sons of Abraham, and also you God-fearing Gentiles—this message of salvation has been sent to us! The people in Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize Jesus as the one the prophets had spoken about. Instead, they condemned him, and in doing this they fulfilled the prophets' words that are read every Sabbath. They found no legal reason to execute him, but they asked Pilate to have him killed anyway. When they had done all that the prophecies said about him, they took him down from the cross and placed him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead! And over a period of many days he appeared to those who had gone with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people of Israel. And now we are here to bring you this Good News. The promise was made to our ancestors, and God has now fulfilled it for us, their descendants, by raising Jesus. This is what the second psalm says about Jesus: 'You are my Son. Today I have become your Father.' For God had promised to raise him from the dead, not leaving him to rot in the grave. He said, 'I will give you the sacred blessings I promised to David.' Another psalm explains it more fully: 'You will not allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.' This is not a reference to David, for

after David had done the will of God in his own generation, he died and was buried with his ancestors, and his body decayed. No, it was a reference to someone else—someone whom God raised and whose body did not decay. Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. Everyone who believes in him is made right in God's sight—something the law of Moses could never do." Acts 13:23-39 (NLT)

3. After Paul connected with people where they were, he walked them to where they needed to be — Jesus.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes." Romans 1:16 (NIV)

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."
2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)

"As Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue that day, the people begged them to speak about these things again the next week. Many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, and the two men urged them to continue to rely on the grace of God. The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear them preach the word of the Lord. But when some of the Jews saw the crowds, they were jealous; so they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said. Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, 'It was necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles. For the Lord gave us this command when he said, 'I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.' When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked the Lord for his message; and all who were chosen for eternal life became believers. So the Lord's message spread throughout that region. Then the Jews stirred up the influential religious women and the leaders of the city, and they incited a mob against Paul and Barnabas and ran them out of town. So they shook the dust from their feet as a sign of rejection and went to the town of Iconium. And the believers were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 13:42-52 (NLT)

4. Some received what Paul had to say with joy — others rejected it with anger.

"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you." 1 Peter 4:12 (NIV)

"Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." John 15:20 (NIV)

Note: Stop focusing on the ones who won't receive what you have to say and start focusing on the ones who will.

"If any household or town refuses to welcome you or listen to your message, shake its dust from your feet as you leave." Matthew 10:14 (NLT)

"He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.'" Matthew 9:37–38 (NLT)