

October 24, 2021 by Steve Brandon



The Working of the Word

Acts 13:42-52

1. The Word Brings Interest (verses 42-44).
2. The Word Brings Opposition (verse 45).
3. The Word Brings Salvation (verses 46-49).
4. The Word Brings Persecution (verses 50-51).
5. The Word Brings Joy (verse 52).

I love the way that the word of God speaks about the way that the word of God works.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us that "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." That is, the word of God is able to reach way deep down into our hearts and convict us of sin. far deeper than any surgeon could reach with his scalpel, Because, the word of God cuts deep into our spiritual being.

Psalms 19:7 says that "the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul." The word of God is able to give life to the soul! Paul told Timothy that the word of God is "able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). The word of God makes us new in Christ. Peter told the scattered believers, "You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of the imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Peter 1:23). Such is the working of the word of God.

Whenever and wherever the word of God is read or spoken or preached it accomplishes all that God has purposed.

Isaiah 55:10-11

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

God's purpose may be salvation, as the word that goes out lands in the heart of a sinner, who repents and trusts in Jesus for the first time. That purpose of the word may be sanctification, as the word confronts a wayward believer of sin, and he confesses it and seeks to walk afresh in the ways of the Lord. That purpose of the word may be hardening. When Isaiah was sent out to preach the word, he was told to say to the people,

Isaiah 6:9-10

"Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'
Make the heart of this people dull,
and their ears heavy,
and blind their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed."

Such is the way that the word of God works. It affects people differently. In 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote to those in Corinth, "The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). The same message preached at the same time in the same place has different results. In Corinth, some heard the message of Jesus upon the cross, and they think that it is foolishness. But others, who hear the exact same message of Jesus dying for our sins, and they find in it the power of God in their lives!

This is exactly as Jesus said it would be. Do you remember the parable that Jesus told of the sower and the seed? Jesus told the following parable:

Mark 4:3-8

"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no

depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

Four seeds fell upon four different soils. Some soils are hard. The seed can't penetrate. Instead, it is taken away by the birds. Some soils are receptive to the seed. The plants begin to grow. But due to the depth of soil or the presence of weeds, the plants wither away. Some soils are good. The plants grow and grow and grow and began to multiply, bearing much fruit.

The disciples came and asked Jesus to explain the parable. Jesus first rebuked them: "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?" (Mark 4:13). In other words, this parable is the key to all the parables that Jesus told! The parable is all about how the word of God works. If you don't understand how the word of God works, you will not understand the teaching of Jesus. Listen to what Jesus said by way of explanation.

Mark 4:14-20

The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

The seed is the word of God. The four types of soil represent four types of souls. The word fall upon four different souls. Some souls are hard. The word can't penetrate. Instead, it is taken away by Satan. Some souls are receptive to the seed. The word of God begin to grow. But do to the depth of their soul or the presence of riches, the word of God withers away. Some souls are good. The word of God grows and grows and begins to multiply, bearing much fruit.

This parable represents exactly what we will see in our text this morning, The word of God will be rejected by some. Others will show interest and be receptive at first, but later will reject it. Others yet, will receive the word, rejoice in the gospel and go forth bearing fruit! My message this morning is entitled, "The Working of the Word." It comes from Acts 13:42-52.

The events of our text take place in Antioch of Pisidia. Paul and Barnabas have arrived there, as they are traveling on their first missionary journey. If you have been here the last few weeks, you will remember how they arrived there. They were sent out by the church in Antioch of Syria, They went according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who set Paul and Barnabas apart for this missionary journey (Acts 13:2). They set sail for the island of Cyprus, where they crossed on foot, from east to west, from Salamis to Paphos, preaching in the synagogues along the way (Acts 13:5). Having reached the other side of the island, they sailed from there to Perga in Pamphylia, and made the 90 mile trip up to Antioch.

If you recall, Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue for the Sabbath-Day meeting. in the middle of the service, they were given the invitation, Acts 13:15 "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it" So, Paul, right there from his seat, preached a sermon about Jesus. In the first half of Paul's sermon, he talked about the working of God, and how the coming of Jesus was simply a demonstration of the faithfulness of God to fulfill his promises in raising up a Savior for Israel, Jesus, just as he promised (Acts 13:23). In the second half of Paul's sermon, he talked about how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning his coming. his life and death and resurrection. He concluded with a warning to those in the synagogue, exhorting them to believe (verses 40-41).

When Paul finished speaking, he and Barnabas left the meeting. And this is where we pick up our text (in verse 42). As you read it, I want for you to listen for how the word of God works, after all, this is the theme of our passage this morning. "The Working of the Word."

Acts 13:42-52

As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Did you notice how many times "the word of the Lord" appears in this text? It appears in verse 44 with the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. It appears in verse 48 with the Gentiles rejoicing in the word of the Lord. It appears in verse 49 with the word of the Lord spreading. Also, in verse 46, we see Paul using the virtual equivalent, "Word of God," by saying how necessary it was for the word of God to be spoken first to the Jews in Antioch.

As we work through our text, we are going to see what the word of the Lord bring. First, ...

1. The Word Brings Interest (verses 42-44).

Initially, when Paul preached to those in Antioch, there was a great reception among the people. they were interested in hearing what Paul and Barnabas had to say. They were like the soils that Jesus talked about, receiving the word with joy! Even before they left the synagogue, people were expressing their desire to hear more.

Acts 13:42

As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath.

Often, when a pastor finishes a sermon, others politely tell him, "Good sermon" or "Thank you for your message." But when Paul finished speaking, they said, "Please come back next week! We want to hear more!" I have never heard this told to me before. [\[1\]](#)

These weren't just kind words as they were leaving the synagogue. These people were in earnest. In fact, they tracked Paul and Barnabas down afterwards and talked with them about what Paul had said in his message.

Acts 13:43

And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas.

Such was the interest of many of those who attended in they worship in the synagogue. There were the Jewish people, who by heritage were Jews. Also present were the Gentiles who had converted to Judaism, submitted to circumcision, and obedience to the law. They sought out Paul and Barnabas. They weren't mere passive listeners, who said, "What a nice sermon that was." Now, they actively followed them Paul and Barnabas after the service to speak with them.

And when they did, Paul and Barnabas spoke to them about the importance of the grace of God.

Acts 13:43

[Many Jews and Jewish converts] followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

My guess is that "the grace of God" is what drew their interest most of all from Paul's sermon. He said in verse 38 and 39, "Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses." Paul was preaching free grace to those in the synagogue that day. "Believe in Jesus" and you will be forgiven of your sins! "Believe in Jesus" and you will be free from the condemnation that comes through the law of Moses.

Those who knew the bondage of the law, were interested in hearing more about how they might experience freedom in Jesus. Paul and Barnabas pushed them to continue in the grace of God. that's the only path of freedom. It's not works that give you freedom. It's not perfection according to the law of Moses that gives your freedom. It's God's grace that comes to us in Christ! Do you know this grace? Are you walking in this grace? Paul and Barnabas were encouraging those who followed after them to walk in the ways of grace.

My guess is that such conversations with Paul and Barnabas continued throughout the week. For the interest in the word of God continued to the next Sabbath.

Acts 13:44

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

Somehow the whole city was abuzz with the visitors who had arrived. Word got around that they would be in the synagogue on Saturday to speak this message of the Messiah. There was great interest in everyone.

This still happens today in some foreign lands. I have heard stories of missionaries who have traveled overseas, particularly to third-world, rural towns, with a projector and a large, portable screen on which they can play the Jesus movie. These missionaries have entered the village and stirred up interest, and have communicated that they will show a movie at sunset. They find a place that would make for a good showing, with lots of room to sit. And the whole village shows up to see the show. Much of this comes from the interest stirred up by these foreigners coming into town. I'm sure that something like this took place here in Antioch, when the "the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord."

Now, either Antioch was a small village, or Luke was speaking hyperbole. But in any case, the synagogue was packed with people. There was S. R. O., Standing Room Only!

We, in America, love it when churches are packed. It means that many people are seeking the Lord! But for the Jews, this was not the case. They did not like it at all! especially all of the Gentiles that showed up on that Sabbath morning! This leads us to our next point. Not only does the word bring interest (verses 42-44), but also, ...

2. The Word Brings Opposition (verse 45).

As Richard Longenecker said in his commentary, "Their initial interest turned to antagonism." [\[2\]](#) We see this in verse 45.

Acts 13:45

But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.

It's interesting here to note what cause their opposition. It was their "jealousy." When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with "jealousy." Here was the out of town preacher doing what none of the preachers in their synagogue could do: bring the interest of the city to hear the word of the Lord.

This is a similar reason why the Jews betrayed Jesus. When Pontius Pilate was dealing with Jesus and the crowds who wanted to crucify him. "He knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up" (Matthew 27:18). That is, there was some sort of jealousy in the religious leaders of Jesus' day, that Jesus was drawing the interest of the crowd, which they were unable to do. At one point, the Pharisees were so threatened by Jesus that they said to each other, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him" (John 12:19). So also were they jealous of Paul.

It is also interesting here to note how they put forth their opposition. They contradicted Paul. They reviled him! (See the end of verse 45). It's not that they reasoned against what Paul was saying. It's not like they had a debate, putting forth arguments for their case. They simply opposed everything that he said!

It sounds like our contentious political environment today. Often, it's not the substance of what is said that is important. It's who is saying it. And what side are they on! Because, if they are on the other side, they must be wrong. And so, their statements are negated. I have seen on YouTube some young people going to college campuses, and speaking with the people there. And they interview them and say, Here's what the president said, do you agree or disagree? And they agree with the statement and say how good it is. And then they say, "Well, actually, it was the former president who said that."

And sometimes they go the other way, They say, "The former president said this " Do you agree or disagree? If their politics is against the former president, they lash out and say how bad that is. And then, the interviewer turns the statement and says, "Well, actually, it was the current president who said that." It's all to make a point, that people often aren't against the policies, themselves, as much as they are against the person or the party they represent. That's what was taking place here. These jealous Jews didn't want others to follow Paul, so whatever he said, they opposed. If Paul said, "A" they said "B." If Paul said, "B" they said "A." Such was their hostility.

Further, their attacks were "ad hominem." Attacks against the man. They were "reviling him" (verse 45). That's what you do when you can't handle the content of what is being said. You speak against the one saying it!

As you speak with people today, you will see this. They won't argue against your Christianity. They will simply oppose it. Or they will try to make you feel silly for believing such things. Or they will tell you stories about hypocrites in the church. But rarely will they really grapple honestly with the issues and the claims of Christ. Don't be discouraged. Long before they resisted you and your message, they opposed Paul and his message.

Well, let's move on. We have seen how the word of the Lord bringing interest and opposition. Now, we see that ...

3. The Word Brings Salvation (verses 46-49).

Acts 13:46-48

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

"I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

These verses are an illustration of what Paul would later pen, when he would write to the Romans: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). As people hear the word of the Lord, they come to faith and are saved from their sins. It is the word of God that brings salvation! And right here in Antioch, we see the Gentiles coming to faith in the word of God that was preached to them.

These verses are also an illustration of Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Perhaps when Paul wrote this to the Romans, he was remembering this very instance. Paul and Barnabas didn't take the opposition against them lying down. No, they boldly addressed it head on. They were not ashamed of the gospel. Church family, we too, ought not to be ashamed of the gospel. It is powerful! It will bring salvation in the lives of those who believe it. But to believe it, they must hear it!

Furthermore, the order of salvation here is significant. Paul went first to the Jews. when they rejected the message, he then turned to the Gentiles. Again, this is Romans 1:16, "... to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Throughout the book of Acts, we will see this. We will see Paul bringing the gospel to the Jew first, and then to the Greek. When he goes to a town, he will go first to the synagogue. only after the Jews here the message of salvation, will he turn to the Gentiles.

When Paul and Barnabas leave Antioch (or, rather, when they are kicked out of the city verse 50), they will go to Iconium, and they go first into the Jewish synagogue (Acts 14:1). When Paul arrives in Thessalonica, he will head first to the synagogue to spread the message of Jesus (Acts 17:1). the same takes place in Berea (Acts 17:10). Whenever Paul fails to enter into a synagogue when first entering a city, it's probably because there is no synagogue in the city.

When they arrive in Iconium (Acts 14:1), they went to the synagogue and "a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed" (Acts 14:1). Sadly, here in Antioch, they didn't believe. But that gave them reason to turn to the Gentiles. This is exactly what Paul says in verse 46, "... behold, we are turning to the Gentiles." This was exactly as the Old Testament has prophesied.

Acts 13:47

"I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

This quote comes from Isaiah 49:6, in which the LORD was telling Isaiah of the role of the Messiah. He was God's servant, to bring the people of Israel back to worshipping the LORD. He was to spread salvation to the ends of the earth, being a light, that people might come to the LORD. When the gospel writers speak of Jesus, they often describe him as light. Jesus was "the true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world" (John 1:9). Those in Galilee were "the people dwelling in darkness [who] have seen a great light" (Matthew 4:16). The charge of the great commission that Jesus gave to his disciples was to bring this light to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20).

Paul, as he quotes from Isaiah, is merely reminding the Jews of what they should know! They should know that the Messiah would bring salvation, not only to Israel, but also to the Gentiles. While the Jews hated this message, the Gentiles loved it!

Acts 13:48

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

I love this reaction of spontaneous joy. For years, the Gentiles were outside of the promises of God. They were merely looking in on the Jews, wishing that they could have what they had. But now, they were being told that they are in! That in Christ Jesus, the promises have come to them! Everything that they longed for was now theirs! What joy they had! Their unrehearsed reaction was great joy! Acts 13:48 they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord,

This was all in accordance with God's plan. We read in verse 48, that "as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." Notice what this text doesn't say. It doesn't say, "As many as believed were appointed to eternal life." No, it says, "as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." In other words, God had his people in Antioch. Those who, long before, had been appointed to eternal life. And when the message of salvation came to Antioch, his people believed!

Jesus said it this way, "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27). Jesus didn't say, "Those who hear my voice are my sheep." That's not the way that salvation works! When the word of the Lord goes out, God's sheep will hear his voice and believe.

This should give great comfort to all of you. Your responsibility isn't to get people to eternal life. Further, your responsibility isn't to get people to believe. (It's impossible to persuade people to believe the word of the Lord). Your responsibility is the message. Your responsibility is to communicate the word of the Lord to others. If they are God's sheep, If they have been appointed to eternal life, Then, they will believe!

Our difficulty is this: we don't know who God has appointed. So we are God's witnesses to all around us, as the theme of Acts is calling us to do.^[9] We pray for the Lord to open eyes and hearts to believe! But they will never believe if they never hear. And they will never hear if we don't speak. I love how those in Antioch were speaking. We read in verse 49, ...

Acts 13:49

And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

I'm not sure how large this region was. But surely it included people from the surrounding villages and farms. From best we can tell, it wasn't Paul and Barnabas who went throughout the whole region. It was those who believed the message went to the various places around Antioch who brought the message out. Perhaps their business took them out to other parts of the region to trade their goods. Perhaps those in the region would come into Antioch to purchase supplies they needed. Perhaps there was family in different parts of the region, where people would go and visit.

At any rate, the word was spreading! In this we can rejoice. But not all were rejoicing.

4. The Word Brings Persecution (verses 50-51).

Acts 13:50

But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.

This is just a precursor of what will happen throughout all of Acts. We are going to see this over and over and over again. The word of the Lord was spreading. But people hated the word of the Lord, and so, they stir up persecution against those who are bringing the word.

We will see this persecution in the next city that Paul and Barnabas go to (Iconium). "The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers" (Acts 14:2). Later, an attempt will be made to stone Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:5), which caused them to flee the city (Acts 14:6). This persecution came because they hated the word. When Paul and Barnabas went to the next city, Lystra, we see more persecution. "But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead" (Acts 14:19). When Paul returned back to Antioch through these cities, we read, "they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:21-22).

If you will be bold to put forth the word of the Lord, it will bring persecution into your life. I have recently been reading through the Bible with

some guys. This past week I was reading of how much people hated Jeremiah because he spoke the word of the Lord. So, he was thrown into a cistern (Jeremiah 38). It was only God's grace that brought 30 men to the cistern to lift him out so that he wouldn't die (Jeremiah 38:10).

The word of the Lord will bring persecution. In this case in Antioch, it was the most important people in the city. In other cases, like in Thessalonica, we will see the wicked men of the rabble being gathered together against Paul (Acts 17:5). Yet, God is faithful.

Writing much later to Timothy, Paul writes, ...

2 Timothy 3:10-11

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

Paul is referring back to this very time when he was persecuted in Antioch. We will see this persecution at Iconium and Lystra and Derbe in Acts 14. But Paul says that God was faithful to him, rescuing him out of all his troubles. I would encourage you with this: any persecution that you may feel from sharing the word of the Lord with other people, whether that's mockings or making you feel bad or belittling you, remember that God is faithful. You have not been stoned yet. You have not suffered, any of you, to the point of blood. Press on. God will be faithful. You will be all right.

The promise in 2 Timothy 3:12 (the very next verse from what is quoted above), is that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." There is this way in which the word of God will bring persecution. If you bring the word of God to others, it will bring persecution. But know this, it will also bring salvation (see verses 46-49).

After this persecution they were "driven out of the district" (verse 50). Then, we see how Paul and Barnabas responded.

Acts 13:51

But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium.

This is merely a symbolic act of how you don't even want to bring the dirt of the city with you. This is just like Jesus instructed them to do, "And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town" (Matthew 10:14). It's a sign to show how the city, in their unbelief, is even polluting the dirt upon which they walk. This action says that they don't want any part of the people in Antioch, not even your dirt.

I remember returning from a missions trip in India. I purchased a small seat that was made from reeds. It was formed in such a way that it is strong enough to sit on. Around the seat was an old tire. When I initially brought the seat back home, the tire still had dirt in its tread. I remember being super-proud of the dirt. But Paul and Barnabas didn't want anything to do with Antiochan dirt!

5. The Word Brings Joy (verse 52).

This is an assumption. The verse doesn't exactly say that the word brings joy, but we see the disciples in Antioch left behind.

Acts 13:52

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

These are the disciples who were in Antioch. Their leaders (Paul and Barnabas), who had brought them the gospel were gone. And now, they are probably facing some of the same persecution. But they are filled with joy.

This is the same sort of joy mentioned in verse 48 that caused the Gentiles to rejoice in their salvation. This initial joy was sustaining joy, which lasted on! It is because they were filled with the Holy Spirit, who was bringing the fruit of joy into their lives.

Although this verse doesn't explicitly say that it was the word of the Lord that brought them this joy, in some indirect way it was. It was the word of the Lord that brought them salvation. This is the word that continued to sustain them in the Holy Spirit.

Do you remember the words of Jesus when he talked about persecution? "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). This is the message of Jesus. He has overcome the world. And though the persecution comes, there is still the peace and joy that comes in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

My hope and prayer for this message is that we would fully understand the working of the word of the Lord.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 24, 2021 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] After I preached this message, I had a handful of people come up to me and say, "Please, come back next week and tell us more!" It was a sign of love and affirmation of my role as a pastor, for which I am thankful to God.

[2] Richard N. Longenecker, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 429.

[3] Throughout my preaching of the book of Acts, I have displayed a slide on the overhead that puts forth our working theme of the book of Acts, "Be My Witnesses."