

It was my niece's 11th birthday this past week. She lives in Wisconsin so we didn't see her but we made sure to call. Actually my wife called and then made sure I called her later. I had good intentions of calling, but other things got in the way and I would have forgotten. That's the thing about good intentions, they're only good if you follow through. No amount of good intentions would've offset not calling her on her birthday.

You've probably had those moments where your timing matched perfectly but only by accident not by intention. Like commenting on how nice your wife's hair looks on a day she just happens to have gone to get it done. Sure you noticed. Or you've had moments where you had every intention to do something but forgot. Like agreeing to pick up a prescription at Walgreens but then forgetting.

The first lesson this morning is a continuation from the first lesson last week. Today we hear about the aftermath one week later. Was it accident or intention that brought the apostle Paul to this turning point? It wasn't chance or accident that brought him to Pisidian Antioch preaching to Jews. And it certainly wasn't chance that had him turning to the Gentiles. And it's no chance that you're here to hear it this morning. Paul demonstrates that...

**The Gospel was always God's intention
For you to hear
For you to share**

I have to admit sometimes I feel a little like the Jewish religious leaders. When our crowds don't match the crowds of other churches and their multiple service Sundays it can be easy to get jealous. But these Jews seemed to be looking for exactly the opposite. They didn't want the crowds. They were under the impression Paul was going to just be talking with them. His message couldn't possibly be for public consumption.

Freedom of speech allows you to say pretty much what you want publically. Protest or pass out flyers, its okay. But freedom of speech also means that the opposition can stand up and speak against the very thing you promote. That's how the Jewish religious leaders reacted to Paul's message. **"When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying."** They had flipped completely from wanting to listen to Paul to being jealous of him to not making it easy for Paul to say anything.

There used to be a billboard on Memorial near Sante Fe showing the Ten Commandments listed one by one. That was it. The message I think was to identify which ones you've kept thinking that would be enough to satisfy God. That was exactly the thought of the Jewish religious leaders. They loved to self-medicate on the Law. It made them feel better to know that they were special, that God had given them something that would keep them separate from all other people on earth. They had the commandments and they were working hard to keep them. That had to please God. Their jealousy wasn't because of the crowds gathered to hear Paul and not them. They were jealous of who was there. Who did these people think they were? They couldn't just connect to God that easy. The message of God wasn't for them to hear.

The moment the Jews rejected Paul something changed. It's the reason we sit here this morning. That day has an impact on you today. Paul was a Jew, Jesus was a Jew, and God had chosen the people of Israel as his special people. But God's intention never was to stop there. In Isaiah God says, **"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob."** The servant is Jesus and the tribes of Jacob are the Jews. **"I have made you a light for the Gentiles."** God's intention always was that the gospel be preached for all to hear, including you and me. It would be nothing for Jesus to just be for Jews. That's thinking too small.

The rescue plan was meant to be universal from the beginning. The Messiah is so great that he saves all people from their sins. He paid for them all. His death sealed them all in the tomb. Because it's a universal message it clearly includes you and me. And if it includes us we don't have to worry that somehow Christ didn't pay for our sins. He did. Every sinful thought is paid for. Every sinful action is paid for. God's intention always was for the gospel to be heard by you and me. We're worthy, not because of us but because of Christ.

There's no more surprising split in the Scriptures than when Paul turns from the Jews and goes to the Gentiles. It catches you off guard. But to anyone thinking they deserve God's grace or thinking God owes them anything a turn is needed. Change is needed. That's just what Paul brought about. You still enjoy the benefits. It was always God's intention that you hear the gospel message, but it doesn't stop there. It was always his intention that you share that message too.

Today at Altus Air Force base there's an air show. I heard they expect 35,000-40,000 people to show up for it. You don't suppose all those people will just show up today by chance on the same day of an air show. I don't think so. To get people to come they had to spread the word. I don't think the large crowd gathered to hear Paul just happened to show up that day. The week before people had heard Paul's powerful preaching. They left that day energized and expecting to come back the following week for more. But they wouldn't come alone. They brought friends, neighbors, and relatives.

I heard someone this week say that people just aren't buying what we're selling. This person was talking about the message we put out there. They thought we needed a niche, a particular group of people we can market ourselves to. I understood but it got me thinking. Was Paul preaching to a niche market group? Did he care if people didn't buy what he was selling? Not at all. Paul preached to everybody, knowing some would reject it. What filled the pews wasn't that he found the right niche group or hit on the right preaching style. I think we could rightly identify it was the enthusiasm and the energy that the people left with the week before that drew people to come the following week.

Paul said that salvation was going to the ends of the earth. ***"When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord."*** They were glad because it included them. They were excited about how far God had come for them and how far God had brought them. That's still the message. Are you enthusiastic and energetic about that message being shared this morning? Does it burn inside you making you want to share it? Maybe not. But it's not the message's fault. Might be the messenger's fault, but don't blame the message. God reached across the centuries for you. He sent his Son centuries before you existed to save you from sin. He doesn't just care for you he loves you with a passion and drive that won't quit. You can have that joy and amazement you once had. You can find it in the pure gospel message of sins forgiven in Christ.

Christ came into this world to save sinners. If you're a sinner Christ came to save you. That applies to all people. It's what we believe. We can't possibly go find a niche market because the whole world needs to hear. But its hard for us here in Oklahoma City to go to nations across the globe, so we work at home and in our schools. We work where God has put us. That's our little niche. But that's where we have to work. Will we work through mass mailings and door hangings? Can't hurt. But the best way to share this message is you sharing with another. Share the excitement this message gives you. Rub it off on people when you work and play and live. Get them to ask you questions because they notice something different about the way you live from everyone else. Paul preached the same good news about Christ to everyone. God's intention is that we share the same.

Revelation painted a picture of new heavens and new earth. This vision was of after this old earth passed away. It's a time like we can't imagine. It's a time to be excited about. God's plan culminates in that moment when he wipes every tear away and dwells among us personally. When death is done away with, mourning over death is too. No more crying, no more pain, and no more sin. Everything about that is true today for you. That's something to change you. You've heard it, now share it. Christ and the gospel was always God's intention for you.