

Introduction:

- *"The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers."* (Acts 9:31, NLT)
- *"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."* (Acts 13:15, NLT)
- *"When the main goal of our faith is to keep us safe from the devil, our faith becomes inferior to what God expects."* Bill Johnson (I do not want to have an inferior faith!)
 - Jesus has way more in mind for us than our survival in this world.
 - We are destined to overcome wherever we are planted! It is the nature of the Gospel to do this. Since most of our lives are being lived out in the market place. This Gospel should be working most effectively there. Where the world is darkest the Kingdom shines brightest. IE. A good jeweler will always put his diamonds down on a black cloth. It causes the brilliance of the stone to stand out!
- *"Any Gospel that does not work in the market place, does not work at all."* I want to start by asking us this morning, "What is staked to you?" It is common practice world wide that when a tree is planted a stake is driven into the ground nearby to help the tree to stand and not be broken during times of windy adversity. The stake transfers its strength to the weaker tree thereby empowering it to stand. Thus the question: What is staked to you? And Who is stake to you?

I. What's Staked To You?

- A. Two things must be staked to us if we are to overcome in this world. The Word and the Holy Spirit. The two are a powerful combination sent from heaven to help us, as the people of God. They are 'sent', meaning the two have a mission to accomplish.
 1. *"He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death."* (Psalm 107:20)
 2. *"It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it."* (Isaiah 55:11, NLT)
 3. *"But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you."* (John 16:7, NLT)
 4. *"But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me."* (John 15:26, NLT)
5. Two things visible through all of the scripture is the Word and the Holy Spirit.
- B. 'Encouragement' is found in both of our texts this morning (NLT). The greek word used is παρακλησις. Encouragement, comfort, exhortation that brings comfort, etc.
 1. Paraklesis - Acts 13:15 *"If you have any word of encouragement (paraklesis), give it!"* Paraklesis is often translated proclamation! Proclamation of thoughts that encourage. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 778). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
 - a) Defined
 - (1) It is defined as calling or summoning to the aid of. IE. Stake by a tomato plant. Come along side. Basically unnoticed but critical to the support of fruit!
 - (2) Is 40:11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd and carry his lambs.

- (3) Is 66:13 a mother's breast to her child. Everyone loves the baby—mom is unnoticed.
- b) In Acts 13:15, it is speaking in God's name/message with the Spirit's power.
- c) IE: Advocate - attorney, one who speaks on behalf of the accused one. In Romans 8:34 He/Jesus is called the Helper/Advocate and he pleads for us. - Ro 8:34
2. In Acts 13:15 it is the Word that serves as the paraklesis. The Word is what stakes us up and it is the the Word that will stake others up if we learn how to speak it in faith.
- a) "If" you have any Word. The term used there is Logos. It comes from the root 'lego.' It means the assembly of like pieces (like thoughts that are related), to gather like parts for the purpose of assembly. IE. Gathering of thoughts that when brought together creates a narration or a communication of something. IE. I have been listening to a civil war series. It is a composition of related thoughts that are narrate. Therefore it gives me the hearer understanding. IE. the apostle Paul spent a year in the desert studying the scriptures so that his message would have clarity. It gave him strength to stand because it staked him up in times of adversity and it staked up his hearers who would believe.
3. In Acts 9:31, it is the paraklesis of the Holy Spirit that caused the church to grow in numbers.
- a) We desire to be a (Presence) driven church not a church that grows by gimmicks.
- b) With the presence came; peace, strength and the fear of the Lord.
- c) The Presence 'staked up' the early church! What is staking you up?
- C. It is awesome that you are staked up by the Word and the Spirit! But if all we do is to stake ourselves up and not penetrate our world we have missed the purposes of God. He sent His Word! And He sent His Spirit so that no one would perish but that all would come to repentance. We plunder hell to dominate earth with heaven! (Finished here. Start at point 2 next week)

II. Get Staked To Others

"He also asked, "What else is the Kingdom of God like? It is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough." (Luke 13:20-21, NLT)

- A. It spreads from where it is put. The Gospel is the message! And a believer that is staked up by the Word and the Spirit will penetrate and influence his world around him.
1. Spirit and Word are Kingdom and their influence is subtle but overwhelming where ever it is placed.
 2. It is actually unstoppable! So what are we allowing to stop us from staking the Word and the Spirit to others.
- B. When I think about the power of God to penetrate the darkness, Daniel becomes a beautiful picture of what I am talking about...
1. He is taken captive to Babylon. He is put into King Nebuchadnezzar's court. He is deeply entrenched in the system of Babylon one of the most demonically inspired governments of history.
 2. In spite of this, he refuses to be defiled by the system. He remains uncompromisingly devoted to God. God is Lord of Daniel's life. If anyone had a 'right' to be bitter, angry, rebellious, offended or hurt by Babylon it was Daniel. Taken from his family, made a eunuch, forced to learn strange customs and culture, surrounded by gods and idols of all kinds.
 - a) One would think God cannot penetrate this place.

- b) Yet Daniel, separated unto God, a holy man, brings the Kingdom into the darkness because he is staked up by the Word and the Spirit. It is his 'staked up' life that has the affect of leaven in a the dark world of Babylon.
- 3. Daniel moves with humility as he speaks: *"And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because God wants you to understand what was in your heart."* (Daniel 2:30, NLT)
 - a) God loves you!
 - b) God wants you to have this message!
 - c) Daniels power is in his service to the king. Not offended, not angry, Daniel serves the purposes of God.
 - d) We use God's gifts to bring God's presence into our dark world.
 - e) The Presence of the Kingdom saves lives just as it did in Daniel's day.
- C. Joseph is another example. With the Word and with God, he is staked up by heaven every where he is planted. And because of that, he is lifted up in each place until he becomes second in charge of all of Egypt.
 - 1. He kept himself pure.
 - 2. He let God shine! He did not become bitter, angry, or offended at his brothers, Potifer's wife, the cup bearer, etc. He continued to let God to allow him to be a stake by which others could be staked to and saved!
- D. To penetrate this worlds system, we must have both purity and power. The Word and the Spirit make this possible. We must be lavishly loyal and love forgiveness at work in us.

III. Plan Your Next Stake Out

- A. Let excellence and integrity cause you to stand out.
 - 1. Daniel and Joseph both lived this way. Noah is another example though none got in the ark with him.
- B. Don't work against the system. Work within it.
 - 1. Again, so often as believers we are trying to get out of dark places rather than to get into them.
 - 2. Moravians who sold themselves into slavery to get to the West Indies to preach.
 - 3. When you believe that the Gospel in you will shine bright in the darkness you work within the system in order to reach the people within the system.
- C. Humbly believe to be a blessing to those you serve or are connected to.
 - 1. Jesus exemplified this. He left His world, heaven, and came into our dark world in order to get to us. He was not looking to escape but realized the purposes of God through His obedience and humility.
 - 2. Daniel had the word of the Lord for Nebuchadnezzar. If he had been proud he would not have given the word. Ie. Jonah started out proud. Jesus considered others better than himself in order to have audience with them. He was looking to help them not curse them. Nicodemus, Pilate, Zacheus, Matthew, Roman Centurion, etc.
- D. Refuse to take offense and rise to the top.
 - 1. Without humility we will take offense. We will think we deserve better and thus become bitter.

2. Without humility we harbor unforgiveness.
 - a) *"Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice."* (Luke 23:34, NLT)
 - b) Stephen: *"He fell to his knees, shouting, "Lord, don't charge them with this sin!" And with that, he died."* (Acts 7:60, NLT)
- E. Always be looking to take advantage of opportunity and obtain an in road.
 1. Patience becomes a virtue at this point.
 2. You are like the hunter, you are looking, waiting, positioning for the open opportunity.
- F. Let the Holy Spirit be your helper.
 1. He wants to touch them way more than you ever will. He carries the Father's heart in an amazing capacity.
 2. The supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit will give you the edge and cause you to overcome, to win, to establish the kingdom.
 3. *"The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers."* (Acts 9:31, NLT)
 4. Even Jesus started His ministry with the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:18 *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...."*
- G. All of these things Jesus did!

Conclusion:

- Daniel staked himself up along side:
 - his three Hebrew friends.
 - all the enchanters and magicians of Babylon.
 - of Nebuchadnezzar.
- Joseph staked himself up along side:
 - of Potiphar.
 - of the cup barer.
 - of Pharaoh.
 - and his brothers.
- Who are you staking yourself up to?
 - Who are you letting draw strength from from you with no expectation of getting anything in return?
 - Who will choose to stake yourself up to?
 - It takes commitment to do this.
 - It means being there when life gets stormy.
 - It means being there when life is boring and you still feel like a slave.
- If you have a word of paraklesis give it!
- As Jesus strengthens you/us we will grow in numbers.