

Tell the Story

Acts 13:13–34

Each day, it's important to take your bearings. Where are you today? In the Easter season, in the scriptures, in your daily life, in your very self? Spend a few minutes getting your bearings for the day.

Let's briefly examine where we are in the Book of Acts and then begin our day with a prayer for deliverance—for ourselves, our fraternity brothers, and all Exodus Men.

You are setting out on mission. We have been watching the growth of the early community. Now a pivotal moment has come of being sent out to the Gentiles to witness to Christ the Lord.

Today is the feast of the apostles Philip and James. They were faithful witnesses to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, and we seek to follow their example.

Pray that the Lord grants deliverance to you, your family, and your fraternity.

Pray for freedom for all men in Exodus, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

A Reading from the Book of Acts

Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem; but they passed on from Perga and came to Antioch of Pisidia. And on the sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it."

So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel, and you that fear God, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. And for about forty years he bore with them in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who

will do all my will.' Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. Before his coming John had preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

"Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning him. Though they could charge him with nothing deserving death, yet they asked Pilate to have him killed. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he spoke in this way, 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.'"

Reflection

In today's reading, Paul stands up and tells the story of salvation. Are you prepared to tell the story? Not just any story but the story that has been given to us by God. Have you told this story to your children? Are you able to tell how Jesus fulfills the whole purpose of history and human life?

We have already heard Peter and Stephen tell it: how everything that happened to Israel was preparing for Jesus, who would bring salvation to all peoples. Now, we hear Paul preach. He starts with Exodus, the Davidic Kingdom, and John the Baptist, giving them as three anchors that his audience could grasp. He then appeals to them, asking them to see more deeply than Jesus' accusers, to listen to the witnesses, like him, who have been sent out. Finally, he shares the great promise given in Jesus: a great blessing leading to eternal life in the resurrection.

Even though it will continue into the beginning of tomorrow's reading, it is not a long speech. Would you be able to give your own version? What are the key anchors that would resonate with people today? Are we stuck in some slavery like the Israelites in Egypt? Are we looking for a different kind of life, like the Davidic Kingdom? Are we looking for some kind of sign, like the prophetic message of John the Baptist? People are still hungry for truth and change. We have to find a way to speak to the heart of people's experiences in our own time.

Ask God to guide you in being able to witness to your faith. Practice sharing the story with others.

Week 4 Action Items

Meditate on the Resurrection.

Get outside.

Continue to focus on Confession.