

Sermon Series Title: "Church Beginnings"

Sermon Series Summary: From now until around Easter, we will be in the book of Acts, covering chapters 1-12. After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, we see the NT church being born by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this series, we see the church being built, the kingdom going forth, and the gospel being proclaimed.

"We are in our "Church Beginnings" sermon series, and through this series, we're going to see that we need to know where we come from to know who we are now and to know who we will become in the future."

Call: 2 Samuel 22:18

Text: Acts 12:20-25

Title: "Futility and Fruit"

Next Week's Call: 2 Samuel 22:19

Next Week's Text: Matthew 26:36-56

Next Week's Title: "Obedience Unto Death"

Future Calls: 2 Samuel 22:20, 21-22, 23-25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 47-49, 50-51

Future Titles: "Resurrection Accomplished, Resurrection Applied" (Matthew 28:1-20)

Fallen Condition Focus: We take God's glory for ourselves and deserve death for sin.

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ was struck down, so that we may have life. And His gospel goes forth through His church.

Central Truth: "Christ was struck down, so that we may have life."

Summary: We are in the last passage of our sermon series. We see King Herod's pride and punishment. The chapter starts off with Herod striking down apostles and the church. The chapter ends with Herod being struck down and the Word of God going forth through His church. We are challenged about our own pride, brought to the eternity of God's word, and drawn to our Savior who was struck down so that we may be saved.

Reflective Questions:

1. What are some ways we take God's glory for ourselves?

2. What is significant about the contrast between Herod's death and God's word going forth in our passage?
3. How does our passage point us to Christ?

I. Introduction

- A. Hook
- B. Transition
- C. Central Truth
- D. Points

II. The Conceit (vv. 20-22)

- A. This chapter that started with Herod killing the apostle James and imprisoning Peter ends with Herod's own death.
- B. He is angry with Tyre and Sidon, wealthy cities.
 1. There was a trade agreement between Israel and these free cities that had been there for hundreds of years.
 2. For some reason, Herod has become angry with Tyre and Sidon. Most likely, these free cities were not respecting Herod, since he was recently imprisoned.
- C. Instead of sieging the cities with armies, Herod stops sending food, starving them out.
- D. Blastus, the king's chamberlain, speaks on their behalf, most likely bribed.
- E. The cities essentially submit to Herod, and there is a feast celebrating such an event.
- F. It is at this celebration, Herod is dressed in silvery royal robes, glimmering in the light (Josephus records this celebration in detail).
- G. After his oration, the people call him a god and not a man. Herod does not stop them like Peter with Cornelius in Acts 10 and Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14 at Lystra.
- H. Don't we seek and take glory that is not ours?

III. The Consequence (v. 23)

- A. An angel strikes down Herod. Luke explains the reason why: he did not give God the glory. And he is eaten by worms and breathes his last.
 1. Luke is a doctor, so he knows exactly what happened. But he wants to explain the divine cause behind the horrific death: God's judgment.
- B. Josephus says that Herod felt this great pain in his stomach and died five days later.

- C. This is the judgment for sin and pride. The wages of sin is death. This is what we deserve.

IV. The Christ (vv. 24-25)

- A. Though Herod died, we see the Word of God increasing and multiplying through men like Barnabas, Saul, and Mark.

1. On the one hand, we see an earthly king: supposedly powerful, killing an apostle. On the other hand, we see the heavenly king: His Word being unstoppable.
2. Not even the death of an apostle and the imprisonment of Peter can stop the Word of God.
3. We see what is truly eternal and powerful.
4. But what's amazing is that it is God's will to use men to share this Word: Barnabas- an encourager, Saul- an ex-murderer/persecutor, Mark- an ordinary member who later runs away from the mission.

- B. How is this Word unstoppable? How is it growing and multiplying? How can weak and broken men be the stewards of this Word?

1. It's because this eternal and powerful word is the word that gives life and transforms souls.
2. The bad news is that we were the proud ones, deserving death. But the good news is that Jesus took on that death. His death was far more painful than Herod's.
 1. Jesus is never surprised. He is unflappable, and yet in the Garden, contemplating His death, He is sweating drops of blood out of turmoil, thinking about His death. Most Christian martyrs faced death in a more courageous and fearless way. Why?
 2. It's because His death was far worse than just physical suffering. It was spiritual. It was the judgment and wrath of God. It was losing the perfect relationship He had with the Father.
 3. He took on that death, so that we can receive life.