

## **Homily For Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Easter - Year I**

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass- May 21, 2019**

**Acts 14: 19-28** "They called the church together and related all that God had done with them."

**Psalm 145** "My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever."

**John 14: 27-31** ". "

### **God Works Out His Plan**

#### **Introduction**

God's grand plan for the salvation of all humanity - is it about us or isn't it? This is a question we have to get right or we can get really mixed up. Essentially the answer is that everything is about God, but he acts for our good and our authentic happiness. On the other hand he also chooses, inexplicably, to have us participate in the working out of that plan. It's so nice of him to do that, but we should never get confused about who is in charge. The Scriptures remind us of this every day. It is God who works out his plan through Word and Deed. Lose sight of that and we run the great risk of excluding ourselves from God's kingdom.

#### **God is Intentional**

There is a very interesting line in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles today, which summarizes this important point. It says that, when Paul and Barnabas went back to Antioch, "they called the Church together and related all that God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith for the Gentiles." It was God who accomplished it. It was the Gentiles who received it, and it was Paul and Barnabas and many others God used to accomplish it.

In the Gospel also, we see how God is so full of purpose. Jesus acts, and God's plan is accomplished. "The hour had come for him to go to the Father. " He is obedient: "I do as the Father has commanded me."

Jesus speaks, calling us to participate and respond in faith: "I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe." Paul tells them that the kingdom of God will be achieved through persecutions, but Jesus has

already given the means to deal with those persecutions. It is peace, but not peace like the world gives, which is often accomplished by force and is always unstable. The word peace is used 92 times in the New Testament and most often means *shalom*, the Jewish sense of harmony and spiritual wellbeing.

### **What the Bible Reveals About God's Plan**

The Bible is, of course, where we look to see how God is working out his plan for our salvation. Today we have this most remarkable story about Paul's mission. He was preaching at Lystra. Some others came in to disrupt his preaching, which they did so effectively that the people there stoned Paul right there in the street, dragged him out of the city and left him for dead. But just before this, they had wanted to make him a god because he had healed someone. We know that this can't be from God because it stirred up violence.

Biblical writing is so wonderful, at times, in how it understates the meaning of what happens. Here we have the disciples gathering around Paul, presumably praying over him. He got up and went into the city, seemingly as good as new because the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. That's 60 miles, almost 100 kilometres, away. Amazing. The Gospel message was not to be stopped by a mere stoning. In fact, they strengthened the souls of the disciples, saying: "it is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God."

### **Call To Action**

Today's scriptures give us a number of clues for how to participate in God's plan of salvation. First, be obedient, like Jesus, who only does what he sees the Father doing. Second, out of that obedience, allow into our very being the authentic peace that comes from Christ, not the false peace that the world seeks to impose on us, which is no peace at all. Third, graced with that peace, hear Jesus say, "do not be afraid." That is how Pope St. John Paul II began his papacy. "Do not be afraid. Open wide your hearts to Christ." Yes, there will be persecution and, yes, it is natural to be afraid of it. So, we must keep asking for the deepest level of assurance that all will be well in him who is the source of true peace.

Fourth, tell what God has done. Speak the praise of the Lord so that, as the psalmist says, all flesh will bless his holy name forever. Fifth, entrust the Church to the Lord. Have confidence that he is present in our midst here today. Trust, but we must also act, which is the last part. Once we have opened our hearts to Christ, open the door of faith to those who have not heard it.

Be obedient. Receive his peace. Do not be afraid. Speak the praise of God so that all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever. Trust in him who will accomplish his plan for our salvation.