

# Life Group Discussion Guide

Against All Odds: How the Name of Jesus Spreads  
Week 8: God's Ultimate Work • Acts 13:26–41

*"We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus." Acts 13:32–33*

As our exploration of the early church continues, we now encounter the central claim of Paul's message: **Everything God ever promised He fulfilled by raising up Jesus.**

*"This claim is monumental. You cannot have true Christian faith without believing that everything God ever promised He fulfilled by raising up Jesus. The people of Judea in Paul's time missed it. But what about the people he was now speaking to in Pisidian Antioch? And what about us?"*

- Describe in your own words what it means that "everything God ever promised He fulfilled by raising up Jesus." What promises did God make? How were they fulfilled in Jesus?
- Do you agree with Pastor Jon's statement that you cannot have true Christian faith without believing Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises? Why or why not?

To aid us in understanding this claim, Pastor Jon took us on a guided tour of its fulfillment, the hope it creates, and the challenge it necessitates:

## 1. The Fulfillment

From the time of His covenant with Abraham, God made many promises to His people. But the linchpin that held them all together—the thing without which none of them would come to pass—was the coming of the long-awaited Messiah.

As Paul continues his exhortation to the Jews of Pisidian Antioch, he makes a shocking claim: Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise. How? While Paul speaks of Jesus' death and His burial, the core of his message is something even more breathtaking—a resurrection from the grave.

*"It's the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead that shows fulfillment. Dead people stay dead. The one person that God brought back to life becomes the undoing of death and of everything gone wrong with this world. The resurrected Jesus is the fulfillment of every promise God had made to them. He is their cleansing. Their healing. Their glory among the nations. Their Sabbath rest. Their holy temple. Their high priest. Their perfect sacrifice."*

- In what way does the resurrection of Jesus fulfill God's promises to His people?
- What does it mean to you, personally, that Jesus rose from the dead?

## 2. The Hope

No one denies that this world in its present form is wasting away. Paul appeals to this reality as, in the next several verses, he uses the word “decay” four times. His point is clear: Even King David’s body decayed, but Jesus’ body did not.

*“Think for a second how marvelous this is! Everything in this life decays. Nothing is exempt. But Jesus’ body did not see decay. After He was beaten and slashed almost to a pulp, He arose with a radiant body like no other. Two thousand years later, He still has that glorious body. And you will have a body like His—and everything else in this world will be made new—all at the return of Christ. **This is the complete hope of our salvation.**”*

- What is the significance of Paul’s declaration that Jesus’ body did not see decay?
- How does this reality fill us with hope?
- How does this hope change the way we live today, in our decaying world?

## 3. The Challenge

Having given all the explanation we’ve studied these last two weeks, Paul now tells his listeners why it matters:

*“Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.” Acts 13:38–39*

Here, Paul outlines two things that are only available through Jesus to those who believe:

**Forgiveness** of sins.

**Freedom** from sin.

*“Everyone who believes that Jesus is God’s anointed king, raised from the dead, will be fully forgiven and free from sin. Do you know the difference between thinking that your deeds make you right with God, and knowing that Jesus is the One who makes you right with God?”*

Many people hold to the idea that their good deeds mean God will bring good to them and their bad deeds mean bad things will come. Even some people who’ve been raised in the church—who’ve heard the Gospel more times than they can count—are still bound by this lie.

- What are the symptoms of a life spent striving to do “enough” good to outweigh the bad?
- Take a moment to do an honest evaluation of your own heart. Have you ascribed to the good deed/bad deed mentality? What has that produced in your life?

*"The gospel says: Jesus Christ by His death and resurrection frees you from the good deed/bad deed duality. Jesus paid for your bad deeds, so you don't need to minimize or hide them. And He's the only one whose good deeds are completely good. He did everything right for you and me. And it's only by believing in Him that you are set free."*

- Have you been forgiven and set free from sin through Jesus?
- Take a moment now to pray together in repentance for seeking salvation in your good deeds instead of in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Receive the forgiveness and freedom proclaimed to you today!

In closing, Paul leaves his listeners with a challenge:

*"Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: 'Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.'" Acts 13:40-41*

In their day, God had done something truly unbelievable: raised Jesus from the dead. This left Paul's audience then, and us today, with a choice.

*"Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate work of God. Don't look for someone else, something else, something better, something new. It's done. The only options are: watch, wonder, and perish because you refuse to believe that God raised him from the dead, OR watch, wonder, and be saved because you embrace the Son of God."*

Everything God ever promised He fulfilled by raising up Jesus. Do you believe or do you scoff at the message?