

Sunday Readings Reflections of 4/17/2016

Reading 1 Acts 13:14, 43-52

Today's reading allows us to share one of Paul's great victories on his first missionary journey. It is the Sabbath, and Paul goes to the local synagogue with his companion Barnabas. The city's large colony of Jews has gathered there to hear Paul's message. He proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ so well that many are converted on the spot. The word spreads rapidly and by the following Sabbath the entire city, Jew and Gentile alike, turns out to hear Paul.

Some of the leaders of the synagogue do not approve of including Gentiles in their midst. They expel Paul and Barnabas. Paul quotes Isaiah ("I have made you a light to the Gentiles") to show that Jesus will be recognized as Savior of the whole world. Not only the Jews, but the Gentiles as well prove Paul right by gladly accepting Jesus as their Lord.

Reading 2 Revelations 7:9, 14b-17

In this vision from Revelation, huge crowds of faithful believers from every nation gather before God's throne. To Christians who are suffering persecution, this vision is comforting. They need to know that their suffering will be rewarded by Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. When the end comes, he will be there to shepherd and protect them. He "will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Gospel John 10:27-30

The words Jesus speaks in this reading were directed to some Jewish leaders who wanted to trip him up. They were hoping he would call himself the Messiah. Instead, Jesus refers to himself as "the Good Shepherd." He describes the secure and lasting relationship he has with his sheep, those who truly hear him and believe. Just as no one can separate Jesus and his Father, no one can take Jesus' disciples away from him.