



Against All Odds

Isaiah 49:6 / Acts 13:44-49 / Philippians 4:10-20

1. Tell the group about a time that you were faced with a task that felt way too big for your to accomplish. Don't forget to tell them how it worked out!
2. As Pastor Mark walked us through the progression of God's redemptive work in mankind's history, what stuck out to you as surprising or significant?

Speaking of the Messiah in Isaiah 49:6, God says, *"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."*

3. How does God affirm His covenant with Israel here while also showing us that His covenant will reach far beyond the nation of Israel? Considering that God's heart reaches the whole world, why do you think some churches are content to focus on their own turf?

In Acts 13:44-49, Paul and Barnabas quote Isaiah 49:6 as the basis for their ministry with the Gentiles. Take a moment and have someone read these verses out loud for the group.

4. How do Paul's words in verses 46-47 show that God desires for both the Jews and the Gentiles to find salvation? How does this show God to be both faithful to His promise and even more gracious than the Jews imagined?
5. Seeing that the Gentiles were so eager to accept Paul's message of Jesus (verse 48), what does this tell us about the value of taking the gospel to those that seem furthest from Jesus? How do you see this dynamic echoed in the C&MA's desire to reach the darkest parts of our world (the 10/40 Window)?

While most of us will not travel across the world to take the gospel to the darkest places, Pastor Mark told us how we can all be part of that mission in our giving to the Great Commission Fund. In Philippians 4:10-20, we see that the church in Philippi practiced this kind of giving for Paul's ministry.

6. In verse 10, Paul says that the Philippians' support gave him much joy. What emotional impact do you think our support through giving has on those that work to take the gospel to the "ends of the earth"? How might that encouragement be a catalyzing boost in the work they do there?

In verses 14-19, we see how our giving to missions is part of being rich in God.

7. When Paul says it was "good" of them to share in his troubles (verse 14), it carries a meaning of them doing the right thing in supporting him. Do you think giving to missions is a noble option or something a Christian should feel compelled to do in their heart? How might our own experience of receiving God's grace factor into our giving towards missions?

8. We know the value of giving to missions for those that need Jesus, but they are not the only ones who benefit. Looking at verses 17-18, what does Paul say are the results for us and what it means to God? What do you think it means that it will be "credited to our account"? Why do you think our giving towards missions is pleasing to God? At this point, would you say your giving towards missions has built up a large or small credit in your account?

9. When we give towards missions lost people find salvation in Jesus, we build up riches in God's Kingdom, and God is pleased with us. There is no other investment with a higher rate of return! Are you investing much in God's mission to reach the world? What will you start doing or do more of to invest your life in reaching the world with Jesus?

- Give? - <http://www.cmalliance.org/about/great-commission-fund>
- Pray ? - <http://www.cmalliance.org/pray>
- Serve? - <http://cccomaha.org/sivo/>

Going Deeper - passages you can explore to dig deeper into the topic

Acts 13-28 - knowing that Paul's missionary work was partly supported by the churches he helped establish, read about his travels and see the impact their giving had on the world.