

Acts Chapter 14

- Paul and Barnabas have preached and taught boldly in **Antioch of Pisidia** and many have come to know the Lord. At the same time there has been a lot of resistance by the Jews who stirred up the honorable women to get them kicked out.
 - So after shaking the dust off of their shoes they come into **Iconium**. ([Map](#))
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V: 1 Predictably Paul & Barnabas head straight for the Synagogue of the Jews and spoke the Word of God, preached the Gospel - and a "great multitude" both of the Jews and Greeks believed.

- It is obvious at this point that the Holy Spirit is leading them in where to go, and what to say:
- How did Paul speak?

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 “¹And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. ²For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

1 Corinthians 12:3 “... no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

- We also see the cause and effect relationship: Paul & Barnabas are preaching the Word and people are getting saved.

Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

V: 2-3 But once again the non-believing Jews stirred up trouble against them; the resistance is coming faster than before.

- Whenever God is doing a good work, there will always be opposition from the enemy.
- They recognized the resistance but then stayed there a long time. The resistance or lack of it wasn’t the primary factor in whether they stayed there or not, the determining factor was the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 28:1 “The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

- The Spirit had obviously determined for them to stay and continue to preach and teach which was then validated by signs and wonders that were “*done by their hands.*” Not done by the Apostles, but done through them.

Jesus said:

John 10:37-38 “³⁷If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. ³⁸But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.”

- People don't get saved because of miracles, or signs, or wonders - people get saved as a result of the Word of God working in their lives. Miracles and signs validate the man, authenticate the man so that people can see that God is working through him, and that as he speaks the Word of God, that it truly is the Word of God.

V: 4 The people were divided: Jesus was and is a controversial and divisive person and subject.

Jesus Himself said:

Matthew 10:34 “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”

- We are all in a position of having to choose - no middle ground or sitting on the fence:

Matthew 12:30 “He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.”

- Notice that both Paul and Barnabas are referred to here as Apostles...

V: 5-7 Believers, followers of Jesus are constrained by His love. We are guided by the Holy Spirit in our behavior - which is always consistent with the person and character of Jesus.

- Non-believers like the Jews of Iconium and the Gentiles are not bound by such things and here we see them respond in a worldly and violent way seeking to kill Paul and Barnabas.

Map:

- As Paul and Barnabas figure that out, they see the door closing in Iconium, seeing an open door in **Lystra** and **Derbe** they flee there to continue preaching the Gospel. They're all about preaching the Gospel!

Mark 16:15 “... go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

- We read that they began preaching the Gospel in Lystra, no mention of them going into a Synagogue. There had to be at least 10 Jewish men to form a Synagogue, but apparently Lystra was primarily if not exclusively Gentile. This makes it even more interesting when the Jews show up to interfere.

V: 8-10 Shortly after arriving in Lystra they see a lame man, cripple in his feet from birth, he's never walked. This is a qualifier, emphasizing that he's been this way since birth.

- As Paul is speaking he discerns in this man's countenance that he has the faith to be healed. Paul also at that moment has the faith to speak in a loud voice commanding the man to stand up.
- There are several gifts of the Spirit operating at the same time:
- Paul had a **"word of knowledge"** perceiving that the man had the faith to be healed.
- Paul was bold saying in a loud voice for the man to stand up, Paul is exercising the **gift of faith**, and the **gift of miracles or healing**.
- The man in some way also exercised the **gift of faith** and stood up.
- The Holy Spirit is moving in a miraculous way and the man is immediately healed, he leapt and walked, demonstrating that he was in fact healed.
- In part this is what we were talking about earlier, the Holy Spirit was moving through Paul & Barnabas in such a way, using Paul to perform this miracle that it validated Paul's ministry and teaching, credentials so to speak.
- Essentially only God can do this, God has empowered this man to do this, therefore as he speaks, he's speaking for God, listen to him!

Church of Acts compared to the church today: Miracles? Signs? Wonders.

- General apathy & lack of faith, lack of koinonia, disobedience, sin - all keep the Holy Spirit from working the way He wants to.
- Chuck Smith - "... **a more excellent way.**" **1 Corinthians 12:28-31.**

V: 11-13 Paul had already preached the Gospel to them (V:7) they had not come representing themselves as anything more than messengers of God.

- But when the people saw the miracle they immediately focused on the instrument that God used instead of God Himself. They mistakenly / ignorantly began to worship Paul and Barnabas.

- There had been a legend in Lystra which said that Zeus and Hermes had come down at one time disguised as humans but that no one gave them any attention or hospitality except for one old peasant couple, Philemon and his wife, Baucis who took them in and entertained them.
- According to the legend, Zeus and Hermes wiped out the entire city with the exception of Philemon and his wife. The two gods then made them guardians of a beautiful temple there in Lystra, and at their death they changed them into trees which stood by the entrance of the temple of Zeus so they could guard it perpetually.
- This is the background behind this verse. So when the people saw this remarkable miracle, they thought the gods had come back and didn't want to make the same mistake that their forefathers had made. So they decided to worship Paul & Barnabas.
- We have to understand, these are non-believers, in this case pagans, doing what pagans do. There are a lot of people all around us that don't understand who we are, they don't understand what we do, we're confusing to them.

1 Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." They don't "get it."

- But this isn't a done deal yet, Paul & Barnabas aren't giving up, and they're not going to allow things to stand the way they are at present.

V: 14-18 Paul and Barnabas energetically sought to correct them and to direct the glory to God for this great miracle.

- Paul would experience many dangers during his ministry, but he probably recognized this particular situation as one of the most dangerous, that is stealing God's glory, or trying to use it to further the Gospel, tainting it.

Turn back to:

Acts 12:21-23 (read)

Isaiah 42:8 "I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images."

- Paul and Barnabas were grieved at their response, they sought to convey that they were ordinary men like them. They sought to give God, the creator of all things the glory, seeking to turn them from their pagan idols to the True and Living God, who made all things.

- Paul goes on to explain that God has been patient with them, but that now He's trying to reason with them and that He left them the witness of the Holy Spirit - which has indeed done this great miracle.

V: 17 Even though people reject Him, nations reject Him - He still sends the rain, He allows the crops to flourish, He is still a blessing God to the just and the unjust.

Ultimately though:

Romans 5:8 "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

V: 19-20 Right about that time, the Judaizers from Antioch and Iconium came and wrecked the party. Just as Paul and Barnabas had barely restrained the people of Lystra from worshipping them, these other opponents to the Gospel show up.

- Interesting how quickly things changed. One minute they think Paul and Barnabas are gods, then next minute they're stoning them.
- When the "drew him out of the city..." typically that means they hauled his carcass outside the city walls to the dump and threw him in the trash heap. No burial, they were just going to let the buzzards pick him apart.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 "2I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

- This incident here in Acts might be the incident that Paul is referring to; where he was killed, stoned, then raised from the dead. In that interim time he may have had a vision of heaven.
- The people thought he was dead and left him there, then as the believers were able to gather around him, he revived and got back up. (Me too...)
- He didn't just get back up and leave, he got back up and went back into the city. Some people just aren't the quitting type!

(Map) The next day they're off to Derbe.

- How do you stop men who are willing to give their lives for their beliefs and convictions? Paul was willing to give his life to bring the message of salvation to those who were dying and going into eternity without any hope. If it cost him his life so be it!

Romans 14:7-8 “⁷For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”

Jesus said:

Mark 8:35 “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”

Map / review:



Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and now Derbe.

V: 21 After having been stoned and resurrected in Lystra Paul and Barnabas made their way further East to Derbe which would be their furthest point on this missionary trip.

- We’re not told a lot about their ministry in Derbe, we do know that they had at least a couple of converts there. One was a man named Gaius who would become a companion of Paul in on a later mission trip (Acts 20:4); and Timothy, who would become Paul’s “son in the faith”, a faithful minister to Paul and the church in general.
- And after they had preached the Gospel to that city and taught the people they began to make their way back in reverse order through the cities they had already visited.
- This is in all actuality a pretty bold move considering that they were basically thrown out of each of these places.

2 Timothy 3:11 “Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

- Interesting how God got Paul out of these different cities. In Iconium they got wind of the plot to kill them, so they left for Lystra & Derbe.
- In Lystra at first they had to stop the people from worshipping and sacrificing to them, then they stoned Paul to death and carried him out of the city to the dump and left him for dead, then God raised him back from the dead. That’s one way out of a pinch.

2 Corinthians 1:10 “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;”

- Paul wasn’t speaking hypothetically, he was speaking from experience.

- We don't read that they went back into the Synagogues in a highly public way, but that they went to the believers strengthening them in their faith.

V: 22 “*Confirming*” the souls of the disciples... literally strengthening, supporting, to place firmly upon. Encouraging them in their faith.

2 Peter 1:10 “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:”

- Strengthening the foundation, knowing what you believe and why you believe it.

1 Peter 3:15 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

- Whether it was through Paul's teaching (**Romans 10:17**) or through the fellowship and conversations, discussions about the faith, counseling through life issues, exhortations to walk in the Spirit, all these things added up to “confirming” their faith.
- Along with the outright encouragement in the word, Paul & Barnabas sought to warn them, prepare them for the spiritual battles that lie ahead.
- As we've seen in our text, and no doubt in our life experiences, whenever God is doing a work in people's lives, the enemy always comes against that.
- When sinners are turned to Christ the enemy doesn't just roll over and play dead, he fights back.

Ephesians 6:12 “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

- There will always be opposition and we shouldn't be surprised by it, in fact we should be prepared for it - which is what Paul and Barnabas as trying to do, prepared them for the battles that lie ahead.

The Apostle John issued the same warning:

1 John 3:13 “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”

Jesus said:

John 15:20 “Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.”

Paul again later warned:

2 Timothy 3:11 “Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

“But that’s to be expected”

2 Timothy 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

- Although the church will suffer tribulation, it won’t be anything like the great tribulation that unbelievers will experience when God begins to pour out His wrath on an unbelieving and rebellious world. This is significant considering what the church is going through today.
- Jesus never said it would be easy, He only said it would be worth it:

2 Timothy 2:12 “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him:..”

V: 23 “*When they had ordained them elders...*” These were all new fledgling churches, there weren’t any old or mature saints to be had. They prayed, and fasted, and sought the Lord, and they ordained elders.

- Paul would later elaborate on the qualifications of elders and deacons, and bishops and so on. He spoke of this in what are termed the “pastoral epistles”, the letters written to pastors, meaning first and second Timothy, and Titus.

Titus 1:5, 7 “Elder” & “Bishop” refer to the same office, and are equivalent to “Pastor.”

Titus 1:6 “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.”

- To be blameless doesn’t mean to be completely innocent, or never having done anything wrong
- “Blameless” – un-rebukable – no proven charges. Many accusations are made about people, but we are speaking about no proven charges against them.
- **Husband of one wife:** Polygamy was very common in that day and culture. It was also common in the Roman and Greek cultures to have mistresses, concubines, and consorts. Here Paul says that leaders are to be the husband of one wife.
- Some people interpret this as one wife for ever, meaning not a divorcee nor a widower. Other’s interpret this as basically one wife at a time, presently married

to one woman which I think is the more accurate interpretation, but that is just my opinion.

- This is one of those interesting areas of Bible interpretation. There are certain areas that are very clear, very black and white, this is just how it is. Like the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the veracity of the Bible - these things are iron clad and not open to debate or interpretation.
- There are other areas however that are not as clear and seemingly more open to debate or variance in interpretation because of the language that is used, this is one of those areas. No one can truly say that either side is wrong because the scripture lends to either interpretation. That doesn't prevent people from taking sides in the issue, it's just that we can be too dogmatic about it.
- **Faithful Children:** Then Paul describes a man who's family is generally in biblical order, children that are in submission to Biblical authority. It would be hard to hold others to a standard which we ourselves do not keep. Again that doesn't mean perfection, but at the least applying the biblical standards.
- **Not accused of riot or unruly:** generally a calm, rational, orderly man.
- These are the kind of men that Paul was appointing as elders as he made his way back.

“... *they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.*”

- They prayed they fasted, they trusted the Lord. They did their part and committed these men to the Lord, trusting that he would guide them and work out any issues along the way.

V: 24-25 Travel log: (Map) Pisidia (Antioch) to Pamphylia (area of Perga) and Attalia (near Perga).

- They continued preaching the Word it says specifically in Perga, but no doubt everywhere they went.

2 Timothy 4:2 “Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

- Being in ministry, being a Christian is a life that moves from one opportunity to another preaching Christ, talking about God's Word, going from Bible study to Bible study with bits of “ordinary life” in between.

V: 26-28 From Perga / Attalia they sailed back to Antioch of Syria from where they had started, having come full circle.

“From whence they had been recommended to the grace of God...”

- Most of us would define the “grace of God” as smooth sailing, or God’s favor in a task, not so much the resistance that Paul & Barnabas encountered, certainly not the stoning and being tossed in the trash heap.
- Yes there was resistance, and even violence against God’s servants - but the fruit, the many, the multitudes that came to know the Lord, the churches that were established in spite of the opposition.

Romans 8:18 “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Philippians 3:7-8 “⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”

“... for the work which they fulfilled.” They finished or completed their assignment.

John 17:4 “I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest Me to do.”

Paul:

2 Timothy 4:7 “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:”

John 4:34 “Jesus said unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.

- That is what we’re called to as well - to finish His work, to keep going.
- Continuing, not giving up, perseverance, endurance - these are all indications of true salvation:

Jesus said:

John 8:31-32 “³¹... if ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; ³²and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Acts 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

- When Paul and Barnabas arrived all the church gathered together and they testified to all the things that God had done, and how He had opened the door of

faith to the Gentiles. Essentially they were now home, ministering to their home church.

- Then they abode there a long time, they rested up.
- The center of the early church would shift from Jerusalem to Antioch from which many other missionary works would be sent out.

We can see Paul operating by and perhaps setting some missionary principles in place as he ministered.

1. It seemed that for the most part he worked primarily in the key cities, then challenged the new believers to take the Gospel message to the remote or outlying areas.
2. Paul figured out who he was speaking to and adjusted his presentation based on that. He used one approach with the synagogue congregations and another with the Gentiles.
 - He referred the Jews and Jewish proselytes to the Old Testament Scriptures.
 - But when preaching to the Gentiles, he emphasized the God of creation and His goodness to the nations.
 - His starting point was different, but his finishing point was the same: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. He focused on establishing and organizing local churches. Jesus had the local church in mind when He gave what we call “The Great Commission” (**Matt. 28**)
4. After we make disciples (“teach”), we must baptize them (the responsibility primarily of a local church) and then teach them the Word of God. Merely winning people to Christ is but fulfilling one-third of the Commission! It takes the local body, fellowship of believers to fulfill all of what Jesus commanded us to do.
5. He grounded the believers in the Word of God. This is the only source of strength and stability when persecution comes, as it inevitably does come. Paul did not preach a popular “success Gospel” that painted a picture of an easy Christian life.

2 Timothy 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”