

5-30-21 Like the Days of Paul.

Acts 14:1-28.

This chapter will end with the conclusion of Paul and Barnabas' 1st missionary journey. It is believed that **Acts 13 & 14** cover a year to two years span of time.

Last week we looked at Paul and Barnabas' efforts in Antioch of Pisidia. We talked about the message that Paul shared. He shared the gospel in the Synagogue with all who were present, both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul, being a reformed Pharisee under the tutelage of Gamaliel used his expert knowledge of all things O.T. and the Law to connect all the dots that led to the conclusion, Jesus Christ is God's Son and Lord and Savior for all mankind.

Jesus is the only solution to mankind's greatest need, forgiveness. One of the most powerful statements made was in verse **38-39**.

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39 and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

That word justified means, declared not guilty, righteous in God's sight. That is what the gospel is, Jesus declares His followers not guilty. The Law says we are guilty. The perfect life/work of Jesus and our faith in what Jesus did declares us not guilty. But it doesn't just stop there. Because of Jesus we are righteous in God's sight. WOW! Praise God! Hallelujah!!

Can you imagine how quiet that synagogue was? I bet the spiritual leaders were in shock. Paul systematically told them what they believed, lived was only half true. That if they continued to believe their way, they would be eternally doomed.

Paul and Barnabas stayed another week presented the gospel again, this time to almost the whole city. Those that rejected the truth ran them out of the town. Today we will look at their journey come full circle.

We live in some crazy times, don't we? How are we to weather the storms, the tribulations, when our faith is put to the test. The days we live in today are I believe like those that Paul lived in.

Many religiously believing in the wrong things, some that have been led to believe they are unworthy of anyone loving them. And others that live their lives for themselves without any consideration of what will happen when life is over. Add to that when the truth of the gospel is presented it is polarizing.

When the tribulations, trials come how are we to respond?

- I. **Be Bold.** (showing an ability to take risks; confident and courageous:)
 - **Read verses 1-7.**
 - Paul goes with what he knows, he goes into the synagogue, preaches and many come to believe. Luke doesn't record what Paul's message was, but I think it is safe to say it was more of the same.

- Just as in Paul's day we need to be bold and share the gospel. People **WILL** still believe and get saved. That is a 100% fact! Jesus is still in the saving business.
- As I said last week, start by encouraging and supporting people around you. Allow the Holy Spirit to change the temperature wherever you are. Last Sunday night I asked, how many people could use some encouragement. Many hands were raised, from believers.
- Will you join me at being more of a coffee bean than an egg headed Christian? When put into hot boiling water the coffee bean transforms the water into something different. When an egg is put into boiling water the heat from the water transforms the egg. The egg becomes hardened.
- Being a coffee bean in today's hot water world will take boldness!
- **Verse 2** gives us that word again, "**But**" which is a contrast. "**the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.**"
- If you are going to try and be a life changing difference, you will face problem people, you will have to be bold. You **WILL** have to be purposeful, to avoid being savage.
- Because people are still poisoning the minds of others, by ignorance and on purpose.
- Look at how bold Paul and Barnabas were. **Read verse 3.**

Matthew Henry, They spoke boldly and were not afraid of giving offence to the unbelieving Jews. But observe what it was that animated them: They spoke boldly in the Lord, in his strength, and trusting in him to bear them out; not depending upon anything in themselves. They were strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Christ working with the apostles, according to his promise, Lo, I am with you always.

- Did the disobedient, rebellious unbeliever's scare Paul and Barnabas away?
- They stayed longer! Have you ever wanted someone to leave? They were at your house or whatever and you have had enough of whatever it was. In your head you are screaming, just leave! Anyone?
- What if they know you want them to leave, and they continue to stay anyway?! (Haha)
- I picture Paul winking at those standing in the background, arms folded, with faces looking like they stepped in manure and continuing to preach.
- Can you be bolder? I'm not saying be in "your face" caustic. Be bolder by changing, steering the conversation to something more positive. Be bolder by living out your faith more openly. That means something different to all of us because we are all in different places on our spiritual journey.
- "Belief brings obedience, unbelief brings rebellion."
- **Read verse 4.**
- If you write and underline in your Bible, please underline, highlight, even circle "**divided.**" There aren't many things I can say will happen 100%. But I can say 100% God's truth divides.

- The city of Iconium was divided, those that were with the apostles, Barnabas labeled an apostle. Then there were those that were against the apostles. There was no Switzerland, no neutral parties.
- I wonder if Doctor Luke was thinking of Jesus' Words when he was recording this event.

Luke 12:51-53, Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. 52 For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. 53 Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

- **Read verses 5-7.**
- Be bold, be discerning and know when to move on.
- Notice they just kept preaching...being a coffee bean and not an egg.

II. **Be Humble.** (a state of mind, pleasing to God)

- **Read verses 8-20**
- When I read **verses 8-10**, I think of what John Phillips wrote in his commentary of Acts.

The parallel between this man's case and that of the lame man healed by Peter is evident. In Acts Luke is constantly making us aware that anything Peter could do as an apostle, Paul could do as an apostle.

- Paul using the gift of healing looks deep inside the heart of this man and sees he had faith, faith in God to be healed and Paul healed him.
- This caused quite the scene. **"The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"**
- Man at his core has the need to worship, here we read about them thinking Paul and Barnabas were Greek gods. They were at the ready to give a sacrifice.
- What was Paul and Barnabas' reaction to being worshipped?
- They tore their clothes, like Hulk Hogan and ran into the crowd crying out, **verses 15-18.**
- As soon as they understood what was going on they wanted to make it right. Remember when Peter was worshipped by a room full of people. This was a bunch of people in the city!
- Paul and Barnabas explained to crowd that they were men just like them. "We are just like you as man, flesh and bone, same nature, sinful after our own ways. But we are trying to tell you to turn from all the useless ways you are trying to do to find favor in dead gods. Turn to the living God who made everything, is over everything, and has provided the sacrifice you need, Jesus.
- I love how Paul used creation, what they could see with their eyes as a gospel presentation.
- **Read verses 18 & 19.** In walks Satan's army to attack Paul. Antioch was 115 miles from Lystra and Iconium was 30 miles away. That was quite a distance to travel.

- They stoned Paul until they thought he was dead. Was he dead, don't know but if anyone had stoning down to a science it was the religious Jew's?
- I wonder if Paul thought about Stephen as the stones were beating against his body. He was stoned only once. He lists his sufferings in **2 Corinthians 11:22-29**.

The depth of Paul's humility, in **2 Corinthians 4:17, For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"**

- In the matter of minutes Paul and Barnabas went from being worshipped to being hated and Paul stoned.
- **Read verse 20.**
- Paul was surrounded by his spiritual family and another miracle happened. He stood up and got back to work. If anyone deserved to take a sick day or month it was Paul.
- As we serve the Lord there will be times we are applauded and other times we are booed. Knowing that, we need to stay humble and continue.
- To reach people we must do as Jesus showed us. He came down to earth to be next to us, to be like us, but not 100% like us, he never sinned. Because of His love, grace, and mercy, He had the ability to draw people to Him. His humility and availability serve as the template of how we are to be coffee beans in days like this.
- Do we back away from the truth? NO! Jesus never did. Every time he ministered to a person, He connected with them where they were at. He challenged them with hard hitting questions that penetrated their hearts. He told them to sin no more. He was able to inspire, encourage, correct, and change the hot water into something different.
- The gospel is still the answer. We must search deep inside ourselves and seek for the ability to love people that are unlovable. Love them in their sin...wow! If they are believers, we can smack them up a little more than a non-believer, they have a different captain at the helm.

III. **Be Faithful.** (remaining steadfast and loyal)

- **Read verses 21-28.**
- **Show map on PowerPoint.**
- **Verse 20** ended saying that Paul and Barnabas went to city of Derbe which was 30 miles away. Then Paul and Barnabas turned around and head back the way they came. If they would have continued southwest they were only 160 miles away from Tarsus, Paul's hometown.
- **Verse 21** says when they were done in Derbe they went back to Lystra (30 miles), to Iconium (30 miles), and back to Antioch (85 miles).
- Paul and Barnabas were faithful to their calling and returned to the very places that posed a threat to their life. Their reputation was known for risking it all for the cause of Christ.

Acts 15:25-26, it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- They were faithful in preaching the gospel. The Word of God produces faith.

Romans 10:17, So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- They were faithful in making disciples. Did you know it is the job of every believer to not only share the gospel but to also make disciples?
- They were faithful in encouraging and exhorting Christians to continue in the faith. **“We must go through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**

2 Timothy 3:12-15 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Matthew Henry, He that has the sovereign disposal of us has determined it to be our lot that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus should suffer persecution; and he that has the sovereign command over us has determined this to be our duty, that all that will be Christ's disciples must take up their cross. When we gave up our names to Jesus Christ it was what we agreed to; when we sat down and counted the cost, if we reckoned aright, it was what we counted upon; so that if tribulation and persecution arise because of the word it is but what we had notice of before, it must be so: he performeth the thing that is appointed for us.

- They were faithful in establishing churches and appointing leaders of them. (verse 23)
- Paul and Barnabas were faithful by being accountable to the church that sent them out. (verse 27)
- The trip took one to two years and covered 700 miles on land and 500 on sea, for over 1200 miles.
- God is so faithful to His followers. God's followers should desire to be faithful to Him.

Conclusion

Be Bold

- Can you be bolder? More daring?

Be Humble

- What does be humble look like in your walk?

Be Faithful

- Are we loyal and steadfast to our God?

