

ACTS

Chapter 14

Note from Kathy

Our pastor recently finished a sermon titled, "One minute after you die." There are only a few things we can be certain about in this life, and one is that we will all die. Then what? Being able to answer this question with truth can give us peace about the future and offer direction to our steps today. Barnabas and Paul had an eternal mindset. They were not overly concerned with the comforts of this world but longed to finish the work they had been called to by Jesus.

James 4:14 reminds us our "life is a vapor, it appears for a little while and then vanishes away." Let us live each day with eternity on our mind.

Acts 13:49-52

The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.⁵⁰ But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.⁵¹ So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium.⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.



Observation

1. After reading Acts 14 at least twice, list below the cities Paul and Barnabas traveled through and returned through during this chapter.
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2. Reread Acts 13:49-52. What motivated Paul and Barnabas to leave Antioch of Pisidia and travel to Iconium?
3. Acts chapter 14 opens with Paul and Barnabas going "as usual" into the synagogue. What did they do in the synagogue?
4. God had given them a holy boldness to go into new places and share the good news with all who would listen. What was the result of their sharing the good news in verse 1? And, then what happened in verse 2?

■ Acts 14:3-5

So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.

⁴The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. ⁵There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them.

■ Acts 14:9-11

Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed¹⁰ and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. ¹¹When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"

■ Acts 12:22-23

They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." ²³Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

■ Acts 14:26-27

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had not completed. ²⁷On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

5. Two steps forward one step back seemed to be the theme of Paul's ministry. It could have been very easy for Paul and Barnabas to get discouraged. They repeatedly faced angry, violent opposition. In verse 3, what did God do to show them their ministry was pleasing to him?
6. Describe in detail what developed in verses 4-5 that caused them to shorten their stay in Iconium?
7. Because of the great hatred for the gospel, Paul and Barnabas moved on to Lystra. Who did they meet there, and how long had this person suffered?
8. The man listened as Paul spoke to all who were gathered that day. Paul's attention was drawn to the man. What did Paul tell him to do?
9. Verse 11 described an amazing miracle that many witnessed, and was certainly not something they had ever seen before. What did the people begin shouting?
10. Unlike Herod in Acts 12:22-23, how did Paul and Barnabas respond to the shouts of the crowd?
11. What evidence of God's great love did Paul draw their attention to in Acts 14:17? This natural blessing had been enjoyed for years.
12. What opposition followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra, and what did they do?
13. Paul and Barnabas were bold for Christ, but they were not foolish. What was the expected outcome of stoning someone? _____ According to Acts 14:20, what did Paul and Barnabas do as quickly as possible?
14. These brave missionary men traveled back through the cities where they had previously shared the good news of Jesus. What was the purpose of their returning in verses 22-23?
15. This first missionary journey was winding to a close. What did Paul and Barnabas do upon their return to Antioch?

Application

James 1:12

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Acts 14:15

Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them.

Acts 14:17

Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your heart with joy.

1. Things were anything but perfect for Paul and Barnabas. For every person who came to faith it seemed there were two more who wanted them dead. Despite all the mistreatment and persecution, Paul and Barnabas faithfully continued sharing the good news. According to James 1:12, what has been promised to those who persevere in faith?

We may not know exactly what is meant by this promised reward, but we know it is a reward given by God to those who serve him. How might knowing this strengthen and encourage you the next time you feel like saying, what's the difference? Why am I even trying to share the gospel?

2. As Paul and Barnabas arrived in Lystra they met a man lame from birth. The Scripture said he had never walked. There was something about this man that let Paul know he had the faith to receive a miracle. When Paul told him to stand up, the man simply did it. Do you have faith to believe God for a miracle? I did not say do you believe God is able to do miracles. I said, do you have *faith to believe that God loves you and that God would do miraculous things for you to further his kingdom and save the lost?*

What are you coming to God for today? Read Hebrews 11:6.

3. The people of Lystra missed the point of this amazing miracle and began to worship and praise Paul and Barnabas. Neither of these men wanted anything to do with accepting praise that rightfully belonged to God. Was there any way that Paul and Barnabas could have performed this miracle on their own? _____ In verse 15, they said, "we are only human like you." Are you quick to point all praise to God?

Share a time this week when you witnessed God's power, authority or mercy in your life?

4. The nation of Israel had enjoyed the blessings of knowing God. Over and over God revealed himself to them. But God had not left the Gentiles out. Nature itself displays acts of the kindness and mercy of the God of creation. What specific natural event and act of God's kindness did Paul point to in verse 17 that the Gentiles would have been very familiar with?

Do you recognize and show appreciation for the every day blessings of God?

Name three natural blessings and three personal blessings God has provided you today?

Natural Blessings from God

Personal Blessings from God

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-
-
-
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With these blessings in mind, write a short prayer in the sidebar of thanksgiving to God.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Proverbs 1:7

The fear (respect and reverence) of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

5. We should be discerning when it comes to who we listen to and follow. The Scripture says men came from Antioch and Iconium and stirred up doubt and confusion. Even though Paul and Barnabas had spoken truth, the crowd began to turn and follow these troublemakers. They went so far as to stone Paul who had only come to share the good news of salvation. Discernment is defined as "the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure; an act of perceiving something; a power to see what is not evident to the average mind." Spiritual discernment is the ability to tell the difference between truth and error—it is basic to having wisdom. Discernment has many benefits. Read James 1:5 and Proverbs 1:7. How can we become more discerning?
6. Matthew 7:20 tells us, "...by their fruits you shall know them." Fruit is always the proof. What were the fruits of Paul and Barnabas' teaching?

Read Galatians 5:22-23, underline each fruit of the Spirit.

You may not see all of these at the same time, in the same measure, but if a person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit they will display some of these fruits (proofs). Which of these fruits are obvious in your life today?

In your small group, discuss the fruits you see in one another. This is not meant to flatter but to encourage.

7. Paul strengthened and encouraged the disciples before returning to Antioch in Syria. They appointed men (elders) at each church. What responsibilities do you believe these men were entrusted with?

Do you consider any of these your responsibility as a believer today?

8. Paul told the disciples, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." Did you endure any hardships to come to Christ?

■ Acts 9:15

"This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

■ Ephesians 1:4

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

■ Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

■ Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

■ Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

■ Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: ¹⁰ If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

■ Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Perhaps you have suffered more after accepting Christ into your life. The name Christian means "little Christ." Are you living up to the name? How might we respond in order to be a reflection of Christ?

9. When Paul and Barnabas arrived back in Antioch in Syria they gathered the church together and shared the report of all God had done through them while they were gone. What was the focus of their report?

Read Acts 9:15, where the Lord clearly stated the call on Paul's life. Have they faithfully carried out the task God had given them? As a believer, in addition to using our gifts as God guides us, we are also all called to share the good news of salvation with those God sends our way. Everyone given the Holy Spirit has been chosen and called by God. Read Ephesians 1:4 and 2:10. What has God called you to do?

10. In studying the beginnings of the church, I would not say it has been all smooth sailing. They have met with great resistance and difficulty, yet they have not quit. What do you believe has kept these men faithful in their service?

Is this the same thing sustaining you as you in your life?

11. Notice how long Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, a long time. How long is a long time? I do not know, but I do know it is different from a short time. Deep and lasting relationships take time. This is often referred to as mentoring, which means investing spiritually and intentionally in another person. Are you willing to invest time in mentoring others and helping them grow in their walk of faith?
12. Jesus came to mentor us, to serve as the perfect example of how our heavenly Father wants us to live and love. Christian mentoring involves more than merely passing on knowledge about God. It involves being an example of love and service. Who are you currently mentoring?

Summarize the below verses that speak to this subject.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Matthew 22:36-40

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Proverbs 27:17

