

I. The Gospel's Continuation and Opposition

- a. *Together* Paul and Barnabas preach in the Iconium synagogue (14:1)
- b. *A great number of Jews and Gentiles believed*, but the opposition Jews poisoned their minds
 1. In spite of shaking the dust (Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13:51) they preached to the Jews in Iconium.
*Note the tenacity of the apostles. (they had the grit and the grace of not giving up)
 2. Wherever the Gospel is preached, there will be division\disturbance. (John 9:16; Luke 12:49-53)
- c. Lystra and Derbe. The Apostles followed a pattern of establishing their work in populated cities.
 1. Lystra was approx. 18 miles from Iconium in the land of Lycaonia, and 100 miles northwest of Antioch Pisidah
 2. Lystra had a temple dedicated to Zeus (Jupiter); Hermes was the god of eloquence
 3. Followers of the two pagan gods believed Zeus and Hermes traveled together
- d. Paul heals a crippled man
 1. The people want to worship Paul/Barnabas and mistake them for Zeus/Hermes
 2. Any religion is empty if it would choose men as gods, men as the healing authority.
- e. Paul was stoned, dragged out of the city, and left for dead. (14:9)
 1. Paul rose up and went back in to the city
- f. On the next day Paul went to Derbe, 60 miles southeast of Lystra.
- g. Paul and Barnabas preached in Derbe and had many disciples.(v. 21)

II. Paul and Barnabas Retrace their Steps for a Purpose (14:21-23)

- a. The essentials of ministries are established in the new congregations.
 1. They "strengthened" the disciples (provided further instructions on faith).
 2. They encouraged them to "remain true to the faith" (conflict and division occurs when one carries the name of Jesus Christ).
 3. They established leadership in the new congregation (they appointed elders).
- b. They returned to Antioch to give a report (14:27-28). **Accountability**. What did they report?

III. Thoughts and Considerations for Action (Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-12)

- a. When faced with opposition the Apostles would not be silenced. They aggressively preached the gospel and made the disciples in the face of great opposition.
- b. Christ was opposed. We too will be opposed, but we must be tenacious.
- c. Whenever we forcefully (*having a strong and confident quality, being convinced*) advance the kingdom we too will encounter opposition. (Romans 8:37-39)
- d. *The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit*. Which means the Kingdom of God is *not* established in sin filled violence. (Romans 14:16-18)
- e. Paul's former persecution of the church was filled with violent and aggressive practices, but as an apostle he was "aggressive" in allowing the Holy Spirit to lead him to bring others to Christ.
- f. A "mission impossible" will become "mission possible" if we trust in God. A life worth saving is a life worth sacrificing for.