

Acts 14 The First Missionary Journey

ICE BREAKER: Tell your group about a time in your life when you got a reaction you were not expecting to something that you did.

In Iconium - Acts 14:1-7

1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. 2 But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 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. 4 The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. 5 There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. 6 But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, 7 where they continued to preach the gospel.

1. Even though Paul and Barnabas did everything right, performed signs and wonders, and convinced many to believe, why did they still experience persecution? Why do we believe that if we do everything right, we won't experience persecution?

2. Why do you suppose that some Jews would refuse to believe? Why did they feel the need to poison the minds of others, and keep them from believing?

a. What do you suppose held them back from believing?

b. What keeps people from believing the gospel today?

c. Do you remember before you became a Christian anything holding you back? What held you back, if anything?

d. What would you have wanted someone to share with you to overcome that

struggle?

e. What can we do to be more effective in helping people come to faith?

In Lystra and Derbe - Acts 14:8-20

8 In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. **9** He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed **10** and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

11 When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" **12** Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. **13** The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: **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. **16** In the past, he let all nations go their own way. **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 hearts with joy." **18** Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

19 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. **20** But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

3. How did the crowd react when Paul healed the man who had been "lame from birth"? What made the crowd change so quickly?

Note: The incident in Lystra is within the city gates and people appear to be Greek

only.

4. Why do you think the people assumed that Paul and Barnabas were gods? Why were Paul and Barnabas so opposed to allowing the people to worship them? How can we remain humble when God works through us to bless others?

5. Given the fact that the people of Lystra were influenced by the Jews from Antioch and Iconium to stone Paul, how do you choose how others will influence you?

6. How would you describe the argument that Paul gave to the people of Lystra who wanted to worship him? (Acts 14:15-17)

The Return To Antioch - Acts 14:21-28

***21** They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, **22** strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. **23** Paul and Barnabas appointed elders^[a] for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. **24** After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, **25** and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.*

***26** From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. **27** On 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. **28** And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.*

7. Why do you think Paul and Barnabas felt it was important to return to the cities where they experienced persecution? What did they do upon returning to those cities? (Acts 14:22-23) How does their example inform how we care for the people we lead to Christ?

8. What does the verse mean that, "We must go through many hardships to enter

the Kingdom of God”? (Acts 14:22) What are some of the hardships that we go through today?

9. Why do you think that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders?

10. What does it suggest that the elders were appointed with prayer and fasting and committed to the Lord?

11. Why is it significant that Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and reported all that God had done in their ministry?

12. What is significant that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles? (Genesis 12:3) How does this 1st Missionary Journey fulfill the commission Jesus gave in Matthew 28:18-20?

13. In his sermon, Pastor Dave said, “People who thrive, trust that their hardships have purpose in God’s Kingdom.” Can you think of a hardship that you have had, and how God used that in your life? (2 Corinthians 1:3-7) Are you able to thank Him for all your hardships?