

2010 ACTS #16 CHAPTER 14 SHARING THE GOSPEL

Acts 14:8-20 Video

What comes after Easter???
 What comes after Super bowl Sunday?
 Or the world Series? Or the Final Four?
 Or our troops returning?

Well there are the welcome home parties,
 The parades.
 The speeches.
 The Family celebrations.
 That's what happened after Easter.
 Jesus came back.
 He appeared to his disciples.
 And 500 people who gathered.
 And after 50 more days he left and ascended into heaven.
 To sit at the right hand of God the Father.

And something big changed with God's plan.

The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:46-47

Note the switch that is taking place.

The first part is what Jesus did,
The Christ will... rise from the dead,,,

The Second part is what we are to do.

And repentance and forgiveness of sins... will be preached to all nations. Luke 24:46-47

Strange isn't it.

Reminds me of a lawyer named Strange who died, the tombstone maker was asked to inscribe on his tombstone, "Here lies Strange, an honest man, and a lawyer."

The inscriber insisted that that inscription would confuse people to believe their were three men buried under the same stone. However he suggested an alternative: He would inscribe, "Here lies a man who was both honest and a lawyer." That way, whenever anyone walked by the tombstone and read it, they would be certain to remark: "That's Strange!"

What is strange is that the progression of the Gospel to the world

Shifts from what God did through Christ

To what God is doing through us.

Whether we are preachers, lawyers, or apostles.

God gave to us the responsibility of sharing the Good News.

I. THEY PREACHED THE GOSPEL

¹At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. Acts 14:1

They preached.

It isn't ours to question God's ways, but to obey.

³So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

IT says they spoke with great success
With sign and wonders.

There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. Acts 14:1

Now

It doesn't always go that well when we obey God?

During China's Boxer Rebellion of 1900, insurgents captured a mission station, blocked all the gates but one, and in front of that one gate placed a cross flat on the ground. Then said that anyone who would trampled the cross underfoot would be permitted their freedom and life, but that any refusing would be shot.

Terribly frightened, the first seven students trampled the cross under their feet and were allowed to go free. But the eighth student, a young girl, refused to desecrate the cross. Instead of running she knelt beside the cross in prayer for strength, she arose and moved carefully around the cross, and went out to face the firing squad. Strengthened by her example, every one of the remaining ninety-two students followed her to the firing squad. *Today in the Word, February, 1989, p. 17.*

It doesn't always go well in the world
That is why it's important to go by Twos.

Both Paul and Barnabas went together into the synagogue of the Jews. Vs. 1

We also should not do ministry alone.

Because there is so much deception and heresy.

Personal attack that we need to go in twos.

Now their preaching and miracles got two reactions.

The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. Acts 14:4

Some believed and
some refused to believe

It will be the same for you today in sharing Christ.

Some will believe you, others will attack you. .

²But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. Acts 14:2

Why is it that people are not content to sin alone or go to hell alone?.

They want everyone to join them in their lust and disbelief.

So they made plans to get rid of them.

There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. Acts 14:5

Greek word here for stone is to molest and vex, to assault them.

What would you have done?

Trampled on the cross?

Rushed home?

Switched teams?

It seems the more they were persecuted,
 The more boldly they spoke up.
 And were not afraid of giving offence to the unbelieving Jews.
 So they go to Lystra,
 And when preaching didn't work
 They moved to a healing mode.

II. THEY MINISTERED TO THE SUFFERING AND SEEKING

⁸In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked

On the one hand they are full of fear for their lives.
 On the other hand they are full of compassion for their people.

It says there sat a man **crippled in his feet from birth.**

Everyone in town knew this man's condition.

He was lame... and had never walked from birth.

Skeptics couldn't say this man had been injured,

And somehow had been healed.

This man had never walked.

The miracle was not contestable

He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed, Acts 14:9

We don't know how Paul perceived or saw

That he had faith to be healed.

Was it his eyes,

His excitement,

His movements?

How good are you at reading faces?

Paul called out, "Stand up on your feet!" Acts 14:10

This is not a silent healing.

This is a public display of the power of God.

Stand up on your feet.

At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. Acts 14:10

Miracles in themselves do not produce conviction or faith.

They must be accompanied by the Word of God.

The Crowd saw the miracle but had not heard the Gospel,

Jumped to conclusions.

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 14:11

They understood the miracles was from the gods

They just didn't know which one.

This set up a difficult situation for the Apostles.

III. THEY ENDURED HARDSHIP.

Persecution or hardship comes in many forms.

Some times it is success and popularity.

Some times in stoning and beatings.

How we react to it is the real test of character.

During the space race in the 1960's, NASA decided it needed a ball point pen to write in the zero gravity confines of its space capsules. After considerable research and development, the Astronaut Pen was developed at a cost of \$1 million. The pen worked and also enjoyed some modest success as a novelty item back here on earth. You could write upside down with that pen. The Soviet Union, faced with the same problem, used a pencil.

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Accts 14:12

They called Barnabas Zeus or Jupiter.

Because he was bigger of the two men.

and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

Hermes was the smaller messenger god.

Then 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. Acts 14:13

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: Acts 14:14

"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. Acts 14:15

How many times are we like the people of Lystra?

we thank the wrong person?

You might ask "When do we do that?"

We do that, every time we give ourselves the credit for the food on our tables, the clothing on our backs, the roof over our heads.

We do that, every time we think it is our efforts, our brains, our skill, our hard work that makes us successful.

We do that, every time we pat ourselves on the back

for our gifts to mission our success in fund raising or our attendance in worship and Bible Study.

We do it as a nation every time we give ourselves credit for

Some new program that is going to save our world,

Bring us economic success,

Or give health care to every person.

We need to keep in mind what God said to Israel through His servant Moses:

You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." (18) But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth ...Deuteronomy 8:17-18

Remember Nebuchadnezzar?

He was strutting around the roof of his palace, looking over the might and glory of Babylon. He said,

(Dan 4:30) "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

Remember how God humbled him by making him

live like a cow for the next seven years eating grass?

Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from his people and ate grass like cattle. Daniel 4:33

Scripture warns us today against thanking the wrong person.

In the past, he let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷Yet 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." Acts 14:16-17

I love to walk at night and look at the starlight sky.

The stars and moon are all in the same place

They appear and move by fixed laws.

I can anticipate seeing the north star, big and little dipper, right where it supposed to be.

But the rain is a different story.

It falls directly from the goodness of God,

We can't trace the laws which regulate it.

It can't be created or caused, and deterred,

Yet without it the earth would soon be desolation and famine.

Nothing indicates God care and wisdom more for his people

Than the refreshing showers of rain.

"Who covereth the heaven with clouds; who prepareth rain for the earth." Psalms 147:8

Even with their urging and preaching.

¹⁹Then 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. Acts 14:19

The apostles went from

worship to whippings.

From Star struck to stoning.

Why is it that men will often travel farther to do evil than they will to do good; and more people will step up to oppose the gospel than to support it?

King Louis the 16th of France, unlike many of his predecessors,

had no mistress, ate moderately, lived within his income,

learned the trade of a clockmaker, abolished forced labor,

ended torture, halted discrimination, stopped the opening of mail,

freed the serfs, gave Protestants the freedom to worship,

built hospitals, and demonstrated compassion for the poor.

The French people responded by chopping off his head.

Ungodly people do not have the spirit of Christ,

or an inner law to live by.

They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city and left him for dead.

²⁰But 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. Acts 14:20

What a miraculous recovery.

The way the Jews stoned someone was first to

Use as large a stone as they could lift

And throw it directly on the head of the victim.

To crush his skull.
 Then they would proceed to pelt him with other stones
 To make sure his life was ended.

But The Apostle Paul had a hard head.
 Stoned, stunned, or stricken
 He got up.

And came into the city.

God healed him and raised him up without concussion
 He walked back into the city.

He probably showed himself to the new converts
 And then the next day.

He left for Derbe.

Don't miss those words.

He left for Derbe

These are sad words for the people of Lystra
 And they are a warning to us that we can resist the gospel too long.
 We can close our hearts to repentance
 We can turn our back on his Holy Spirit,
 To the point that the Holy Spirit no longer tarries with you,
 The preacher no longer calls on you.
 And he shakes off the dust from his feet.
 Moves on to other fields, other hearts that
 Are open to harvest and hearing the word of God.
 Jesus said:

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town... It will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. Matthew 10:14-15

So friends if you have been convicted by the spirit of God.
 And your resisting surrendering to him,
 Beware, Lest he moves on
 And away from you.
 Leaving you in your sin and destruction.
 And takes his spirit to that other person who is ready and willing.
 On the day of Judgment,
 You will have no one to blame but yourself.

Come to Jesus today,
 This is the day of salvation.
 Surrender your life to Christ
 And walk in a new way of obedience