

Acts 14:1-28 Blessings out of Buffetings

Intro: The Christian life is an Amazing life.

A)Forgiven, Justified, New Purpose, New relationship - New Destiny.

B)Amazing life but not an easy life.

V.21-22 Anchor Text

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."** {Repeat last line

We don't like that do we?

**A)Thru many perpetual days of happiness we enter the
Thru many days of great blessings.....**

B)Many tribulations – that is not what I signed up for!

1)Infact there are some in the Church today who preach a message – Christianity is all blessings.

C)If you are suffering – it means that you are doing something wrong – there must be sin in your life or something.

1)**That is not what Paul experienced or taught!**

Not suggesting that God wants us to be poor miserable and sick – not suggesting that God doesn't want us to be happy

A)I believe that happiness comes from following Jesus

B)Happiness is a fringe Benefit – Christianity is about walking with Jesus *in all seasons* { Sky blue / Dark / Sunny and stormy - Not just being a fair weather believer.

C) Parable of the builders – Storms will Come{ Sand Vs Rock

1) Your foundation is Key.

D) Paul went thru some storms -

Paul had his share of Bad days

A) You know it's going to be a bad day when:

- * You wake up face down on the pavement.
- * You call suicide prevention and they put you on hold.
- * You see a 60 Minutes news team waiting in your office.
- * Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.
- * Your twin sister forgets your birthday.
- * You wake up to discover that your waterbed broke and then realized you don't have a waterbed.
- * Your horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell's Angels on the freeway.

Lets consider the Backdrop for this statement found in v.22 It is Paul's first missionary Journey

A) When you read what Paul went thru – in his first missionary journey it is surprising that there was ever a 2nd or 3rd – **BRUTAL!**

B) We saw last time where booted out of Antioch Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas now headed elsewhere.

C) They went southeast some eighty miles through rolling countryside, until they came to a beautiful plateau surrounded by fertile plains a city known as Iconium.

D) More trouble awaited them – It seemed like wherever Paul went –

resulted in Revival or Riot – sometimes – Both

Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.

E) Here we see that Paul & Barnabas met with immediate success { Great Multitude of Jews & Greeks Believed.

1) **ALSO immediate opposition.** unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.

Those who were opposed poisoned the mind of the others by speaking evil things against them.

James 3:6 NLT

“And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.”

Jon Courson Commentary – tells the story of
During a freak electrical storm, a couple was gossiping on the telephone. The storm caused a scramble in the electrical signals and sent their conversation from the phone line to a cable TV line through which close to one million people heard their conversation.

A) Would we say the things we do if we thought our conversation would be transmitted through the TV set? **THE LORD HEARS**

B) Is our conversation honoring to the Lord? Or does it grieve Him as it short-circuits ministry and hinders His work?

C) So it is Déjà vu – Once again there is Persecution. – Paul was not surprised!

1) Jesus promised Persecution: John 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you."

2 Timothy 3:12

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

There is a promise we do not like to claim!

A) The **Circuit riding Preacher John Wesley** believed in this Promise – so much so – 3 days no persecution – Sinned – backslidden.

1) Prayed Lord forgive me Brick Persecution

B) Paul was of the same Caliber { Didn't run - V.4 "Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands."

Note: They Stayed a long time! SPEAKING BOLDLY! WHEN?

A) When the adversaries of the Gospel get radical it is NOT time for the believers to be timid.

B) When the flesh would grow faint, *THEN* God will give boldness. An old seaman said, "In fierce storms we can do but one thing. There is only one way (to survive); we must put the ship in a certain position and keep her there."

C) God was bearing witness of their word – with signs and wonders

1) Result the whole city – Got saved right ?

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles

A) Jesus brings Division – Friends – get saved or Bail on you!

Matthew 10:34-36 NLT

34 "Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword.

35 I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36 Your enemies will be right in your own household!

B) Jesus is not being Downer or Divisive – He is being real –

1) You will get saved and your life might get worse for a while – Abandoned.

2) Husbands left wives – friends abandoned

C) So the City was Divided! -

5 And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, **6** they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. **7** And they were preaching the gospel there.

After staying there a long time - When it got to the point where there lives were in Danger – they left and headed for Lystra.

A) Caesar Augustus made LYSTRA a Roman colony in 6 b.c., establishing it as the easternmost of the fortified cities of Galatia.

B) Lystra was sort of a frontier outpost.

1) Hicksville – People were backwards – uneducated

NO SYNAGOGUE THERE { RD V.8-13

That is quite a reaction: There was a reason for this reaction though

A) The people around Lystra told a story that once Zeus and Hermes had come to this earth in disguise.

B) None in all the land would give them hospitality until at last two old peasants, Philemon and his wife Baucis, took them in.

1) As a result the whole population was wiped out by the gods except Philemon and WIFE who were made the guardians of a splendid temple and were turned into two great trees when they died.

C) So when Paul healed the crippled man the people of Lystra were determined not to make the same mistake again.

1) Barnabas had a noble presence so they took him for Zeus the king of the gods.

D) Hermes was the messenger of the gods and, since Paul was the speaker, they called him Hermes.

Temptation – Lets go with this for a while – Kind of nice change of pace – from persecution – milk it

A) Satan's tactics – Persecution wasn't discouraging these guys – so lets try Flattery.

B) Your life – Persecuted – stand in your face- Your rise up – more bold study more.

1) Satan says – persecution isn't working. – Lets try flattery!

Someone comes along and says You are so wise – you know so much about the Bible – I feel better talking to you.

A) Satan whispers in your ear – You are the man – you are God's man!

B) He knows that Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

1) His story

C) He wants to suck you into it!

D) Well Paul and Barnabas don't fall for this -

RD V.14-19

Talk about Fickle – They go from Worship to War – Stoned and left for dead!

A) That is the way of people.

**B) Paul stoned – presumed dead – disciples are hovered around – praying
- He wakes up -**

C) If I die don't pray for me to come back – Hunt you down –

C) Paul gets up goes back into the city – AMAZING!

1) Next day – moves on “lets keep going more cities....”

D) Storms will come – Your foundation will determine how you handle the storms.

Leo Tolstoy 4 views of life!

#1 Life is all bad so get drunk and forget it.

#2 Life is all bad struggle hard against it.

#3 Life is all bad and by way of suicide we can try and remove ourselves from it.

#4 Life is all bad and yet we live on irrationally accepting it as it comes.

Let me offer a 5th Point of view: There is a God who despite the worst tragedy can bring good out of Bad.

A) That is not to say that God will make Bad good – because Bad is Bad

B) But it does mean that He can work Good out of the bad –

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

C) It is a process – I don't see the good you say.

1) Maybe a month from now you will see some Good.

Another month – more good – six months even more

**D) A year from now – ok that is what God was doing
1) Eternity it will all make sense.**

In Closing today I want to give 4 reasons why we face adversity and how God brings Blessings out of our Buffetings.

#1 Adversity levels us and keeps us humble.

Prosperity has a tendency to make people proud and self sufficient

A) When things are going great – Good Salary – great Job – promotion

B) Buy bigger house – nice car – Toys – WE TEND TO FORGET GOD!

C) But when the economy collapses – the Stock market crumbles – house burns – we turn to God. – 1) We get serious – We go deep

God warned the Israelites when they were going into the land of Promise – not to forget about Him – Weird – blessings – we forget God.

A) So God allows adversity to keep us humble and dependent upon Him

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

C.S. Lewis ‘The problem of Pain’ pg (91)

B) Sometimes we are just not listening – He whispers in our pleasures – He speaks to our Conscience - -not listening –

1) Sometimes – He has to Shout

Psalm 119:67 “Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.”

#2 Adversity teaches us eternal truths – that we would have otherwise not have learned.

A)Our basic objective in life is to avoid pain at all cost – we live to be comfortable. RIGHT?

B)Even dentist know this – offer pain free Dentistry

OXYMORON

1)Offer Novacain – Laughing gas – Gel on Gums

C)Not going to feel a thing – breaks out -Huge Needle poke my Brain – THE Drill – ouch

C)We want to avoid pain – we want to get into shape but we don't want to sweat –

1)100's of diet plans – advertise – no exercise

D)NO pain no gain – True of Getting in Shape – true spiritually

Pain is an indication of a deeper need!

A)Hunger pains – Hunger – get some food down here.

B)Pain of life reminds us of a deeper need – our need for God!

CS Lewis “(Pain) removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul”

C)God wants to plant his flag in your rebel soul.

1))God allows us to go thru the valleys to teach us things that we could never learn on the MT tops

#3 God lets us go thru adversity so we can have compassion on others who are in Pain.

A)Preach to hurting pp never lack for an audience!

B)Sometimes when everything is going great in your life – You can alienate others.

C)How is life: Great – Just got a promotion – buying a bigger house, new car, - kids are 4.0 Harvard

1)Voted the sexiest man alive – How about you?

D)Lost my job – moved into an apartment – Kids haven't graduated HS – 30yr

1)Voted the ugliest man alive – 5th straight year

E)Disconnect – But when you are going thru tough times it makes you more relatable and compassionate

2 Corinthians 1:4-

God allows us to “comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. “

Corrie Ten Boom “If God sends us on stony paths, he provides strong shoes.”

#4 Adversity brings an eternal perspective.

A)Paul's vision: Many believe that Paul actually died here at Lystra –

B)This is the Scene of 2 Corinthians 12 { Turn

Now I am not suggesting that you are going to have a vision of Heaven

A)But I will say this affliction – causes us to see things Clearly.

B)Adversity often brings things into perspective – realize – Eternity is what Matters

C)Life was all about – pursuing stuff – getting

1)Life is about Knowing God

D)Life is about His Kingdom

We learn – Grace is sufficient

Heaven is temporary – Eternity with God or Separated

Your Choice!

Storms inevitable ? With Him or Alone ?

YOUR CHOICE