

Acts 14:1-20 Is it Worth it?

When is the Last time you asked yourself this question: WAS IT WORTH ALL THE TROUBLE?

A) Sand Castles at the Beach this summer with your kids or grandkids - all day building - bucket after bucket

B) Only to see it destroyed by the rising tide - was it worth it?

1) Later on that night looking the pics or videos of the smile on the faces of your kids or GK's - totally worth it

C) A few weeks ago I mentioned how I once took 100 high school kids on a missions trip to Russia - (really 80 kids - 20 adults acted like kids)

D) There were moments on that trip - Asked myself - Is this really worth all the trouble?

E) Last night of our trip - Outreach 2,000 Russia's respond to the gospel -

1) a church gets planted in that city YES totally worth it!

But there were other trips- took a big group to Scotland & Hungary

A) Only saw a handful of people respond to the gospel.

B) Was it worth all the trouble -all the expense? -

C) Absolutely was in God's eyes - Heaven rejoices when one sinner....

1) Jesus leading the celebration - THE CROSS WAS WORTH IT!

D) Who for the Joy set before him - endured the Cross!

E) Pastor Chuck used to remind us all the time - I think this was one of his favorite saying by C.T. Studd

We only have one life to live, it will soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

I wonder if in Acts 14 - if Paul ever found himself wondering - Lord is this really worth all the trouble?

A) Here in Acts 14 Paul and Barnabas are leaving Pamphylia - Turkey amidst great rejection

B) Heading into the area of Galatia - central turkey -see map

C) Travel to 2 new cities - experience 3 different reactions to the preaching of Jesus -

1) Division - Delusion - Death

D) But In the midst of this we will learn some great lessons about - **staying committed to Jesus in a Hostile world**

Division in Iconium V.1-7

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.

Iconium was an ancient city more Greek than Roman,

A) There were no large Roman garrisons in Iconium,

B) so it remained more Greek in attitude and was somewhat resistant to Roman authority.

C) They were a Rebellious Anti-establishment crowd

Paul and Barnabas follow their same strategy in seeking to minister to the people in Iconium

A) They start by going to the Synagogue. - Open door

B) Paul a former Pharisee and Barnabas a Levite- start with the Jews

C) Paul probably preached a similar message to the one that - Tyler took you through last week in Ch 13

1) Chapter 13 records the sermon for us in detail. - Gives us a picture of what and how Paul preached to the Jews

D)Paul was a brilliant preacher -I would sum up the message in this way.

1)What they Know / What... missed / Why it matters

Paul Starts with what they Know!

A)He tells the Jewish people they were God's chosen people - brought into this chosen land

B)Reminds them of How God said he would raise up a Messiah from the people of Abraham

1)who would be a direct descendant of King DAVID

C)He appealed to their unique heritage and the promises that God made to them

Then he tells them something they missed.

A)What they missed was that Jesus was that promised Messiah

B)He was the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies

1)He was the one that John the Baptist pointed to - but they missed it

C)So Their religious leaders Killed Jesus Crucified him - but God raised him from the dead!

Then he told them why it Mattered - ³⁸ Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; ³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

D)God did through Jesus what the Law of Moses could never do - Make a man right with God

1) bring forgiveness of sins! - **THE LONGING**

That in a nutshell is the message that Paul would preach in Synagogue after synagogue throughout the Middle East

A)Always the same reaction -Some Jews believe - but most don't

B)The Jews chase them out - so they go to the Gentiles who gladly receive their message

1)there is sort of a Déjà vu feel to the next several chapters of the book of Acts

C)We see this scenario happening over and over again

So here in Iconium - there is Division

A)Some Jews and Greeks - gentiles who converted to Judaism -

B)which is why they were in the Synagogue - Jews and Greeks - BELIEVED

C)But notice V.2 again -

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.

DIVISION

D)Whenever God moves - Satan opposes

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

E)So the reaction in Iconium to Jesus is Division

The CITY WAS DIVIDED - our CITY IS DIVIDED!

A)Do you know that is what Jesus does - He Divides -

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 a Downer -Not being a Drag - he is just being real!

C)Jesus stated very clearly - there is only one way to God - I am the way the truth and the Life, no man..... Me!

1)Proved who he was - Death and Resurrection

C)Tyler is right everything hinges on the Resurrection! -

Jesus taught there was only one true way to Live.

A)**ONE WAY** to experience abundant life

B)You live to please God - you EXIST to bring HIM GLORY

C) Can't be NEUTRAL on Jesus - Great teacher - prophet - healer

1) Not the only way to God - and certainly not the only voice to tell us how to live

Jesus said: You are either for me or against me

A) You believe that I am who I claimed to be - The Only way to God - forgiveness - life

B) You believe in me - or you DENY ME - those are the only options

C) So the city was Divided over Jesus -

1) Homes Divided over Jesus

2) Marriages Divided over Jesus

Question is What do we do in the face of such Division?

A) Isolate - Huddle together ?

B) So we run from the opposition -

C) What did Paul and Barnabas do? Did they Bail?

D) Nope they dug in - V.3 *Therefore they stayed there a long time-*

1) I so love THIS - They dug their heels in - stayed a long time

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."

E) Paddle Boarding - turn into the wave!

We live in a society that is so used instant results

A) I want it right now mentality

B) Amazon orders - Same day - Next day - "What I have to wait 4 days for something -

1) are you kidding me?"

C) Come on admit it - you have said it before

We have made it so easy for ourselves - Shop in our PJ's delivered to the door

A) Don't have to cook - Door Dash - bring it to your door

B) Culture of Ease - and Convenience -

C) All of this is producing a Culture that lacks perseverance

D) Going gets tough - people bail all the time

1) People prematurely quit Jobs, churches, marriages, friendships - No perseverance

Perseverance = to be persistent despite the difficulties or delays we face.

A) Did you know that Perseverance is a Biblical Virtue

B) Learning to Persevere develops spiritual maturity.

James 1:2-4

² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

James 1:2-4

C) The difficulty you find yourself in today is meant to produce endurance of perseverance in you -

1) Make you more like Jesus.

D) So let it grow!!!!

I love the promise we are given in Galatians 6:9

⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

A) The Christian life is not a Sprint it is a Marathon

B) We have to learn to play the long game

C) 1985 - Youth Pastor/ 2 years - I am going to go and plant a church somewhere outside ca - CC 10min

1) I was challenged at a Conference - Don't look at Youth Ministry as a Stepping stone - Need youth Pastors to stay long

D) I took that as a word from the Lord- I dug in - stayed 7 yrs

1) and you know which years were the most fruitful - the last 3 years - doubled in size - salvations

Paul and Barnabas dig in - *³ 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.

They Stayed a long time! SPEAKING BOLDLY!

A)When the adversaries of the Gospel get radical it is NOT time for the believers to grow faint

B)Don't lose sight of the mission - the mission is seeing lost people come to Jesus

C)Listen Church: I believe with all my heart we are living in the last days -

1)I believe Jesus could come at any moment -

D)He is Coming Soon - but I have no idea what soon really means

1 day 1,000 yrs - 1,000 yrs one day - God is not slack promise

We have to be in this for the Long Haul

A)I was saved in 1974 - Height of the Jesus Revolution - Jesus people Movement -

B)Lot of talk about Bible prophecy - Maranatha - Jesus is coming soon was the Mantra

1)Bumper stickers - Danger in the event of the rapture.... Unoccupied

C)But the rapture didn't happen - And I witnessed a lot of people who were so excited about the coming of the Lord - walk away from Jesus

A)And Get caught up in Carnality - go back to their old ways

B)Problem: They were more excited about the coming of the Lord -

1)than about the Lord who was coming!

C)Friends it is all about Jesus - knowing Jesus - loving Jesus / walking with Jesus/ Serving Jesus

D)We need to be in this for the Long Haul - It will be worth it - **in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.** Galatians 6:9

We need to stand our ground and let Jesus be seen by our words and our actions - Notice V.3 again

³Therefore they stayed there a long time, **speaking boldly in the Lord,** (That is **Words**) - who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

A)Bearing witness with signs and wonders done by their hands - Here talking Miracles

B)But I think our lives can bear witness to the person of Jesus -

1)when practical acts of service and kindness are being done by our hands

C)Matthew 5:17 **Let your light - see what? Good works - those are the signs - the wonders**

D)Good things Done by our hands

E)That is how people live who realize - I exist to bring Jesus glory!

1)Paul and Barnabas dig in - for a long time - not sure how long that was

⁴But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. ⁵And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, ⁶they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. ⁷And they were preaching the gospel there.

Paul and Barnabas were brave but not foolish.

A)The Lord protects his children, but he wants us to use common sense.

B)They stayed there a long time - finally came the point - We need to go - unsafe -

1)God has more for us to do elsewhere.

C)So the missionaries departed.

They come to Lystra - Different reaction - Delusion

A)Lystra was also in the Roman province of Galatia, about eighteen miles southwest of Iconium

B)Lystra was sort of a frontier outpost.

1)Hicksville –sort of Wild, wild west ethos -

C)People were backwards – uneducated NO SYNAGOGUE THERE

Well The ministry got off to a flying start in Lystra with the healing of a cripple.⁸ And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never

walked. ⁹ This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, “Stand up straight on your feet!” And he leaped and walked.

A) Paul is talking to some people about Jesus - and this crippled man is sitting there - ease dropping - listening intently

B) Paul looks at the guy and gets a sense - the guy believes - Paul commands the guy to stand

C) Suddenly the guy feels strength enter his limbs - leaps up - Healed!

D) What happens next is Crazy - exposes the Delusion of the people in Lystra

¹¹ Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” ¹² And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³ Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.

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) No one in all the land would give them hospitality until at last these two old peasants, Philemon and his wife Baucis, took them in.

C) As a result the whole city was wiped out by these 2 gods except Philemon and WIFE

D) They were made the guardians Priest and Priestess of a splendid temple

1) and were turned into two great trees when they died.

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

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

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

1) They worship them

C) Pause here for a minute: Satan is trying a new tactic here -

1) when Division, threats and opposition didn't work to discourage P&B - Let's try flattery - These men are gods

Imagine the Temptation – Lets go with this for a while – Kind of nice change of pace –

A) From the persecution - -

B) If Satan can't discourage us through a full on frontal attack

1) He will often try to distract us subtly through acts of compromise

But Paul and Barnabas reaction to this response we are reminded of this important truth

A) We want to make Jesus famous - not ourselves

B) They do this in two ways:

#1 They expose their flaws and Vulnerabilities

¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out ¹⁵ and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you,

C) What a contrast to the Instagram world we live in where People rarely ever show their worst sides.

D) Instead everything is filtered pics -

1) showing lives looking more cool more fun, more glamorous than they really are.

We live in the Age of Celebrity Pastors who can come across as larger than life

A) And way more spiritual than they really are.

B) What Paul and Barnabas do here - flies in the face of all of that - rip their clothes -

1) We are men like you - not about us

C) We have to be real about our flaws - stories about me and Denise - fighting -

1) or me losing my temper - that is life - we are Humans - sinners - flawed

D) Listen don't put your confidence in me - I will let you down - I will disappoint you - fail

E)Remind you all the time: - None of us is perfect - not arrived - none of us -

1)we are all broken peopleRedeemer

So Paul and Barnabas reveal their Humanity - and 2nd they preach the truth about God.

A)Look this is who we are - we are men just like you - but this is our God

“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, ¹⁶who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.

¹⁷Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

A)Note **THE GOAL** of the message V.15 -we preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God,

B)The goal is to turn people’s hearts from useless things that don’t satisfy to the Living God - who does

C)PEOPLE PURSING USELESS THINGS THAT DON’T SATISFY - 3 P’s

1)Positions - climb the ladder

2)Possessions - get more stuff

3) Pleasure - Experience more new things

D)Nothing brings lasting satisfaction -

E)ONLY JESUS SATISFIES THE LONGING SOUL - PSALM 107:8-9

Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for*
His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of
men!

⁹ For He satisfies the longing soul,
And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

F)Fill the VOID in your heart today!

WELL THE PEOPLE WERE NOT LISTENING

¹⁸ And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

This leads us to consider one final reaction to Jesus in this story - that reveals the fickleness of people

A) Division - Delusion - Death

¹⁹ Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

B)Talk about Fickle - one minute - they are gods - next - let’s kill them!

C)Just shows how Fickle people can be if we refuse to be what or who they want us to be -

D)So they are all throwing rocks at Paul - They only stopped because they thought he was dead -

²⁰ However, when the disciples gathered around him, (in shock -crying -praying) he rose up (and got out of there) and went into the city. (are you serious!) And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Was it worth it?

A)Studying the book of 2 Timothy on Wednesday nights - Timothy is a young Pastor -

B)Paul’s son in the faith - Pass the Baton in Ephesus

1)Guess where he is from? Lystra! -

C)This event impacted him to want to follow Paul - serve with Paul - become his son in the faith!

Listen We often want to experience Resurrection power -

A)Phil 3 I want to know Jesus and the power of his Resurrection

B)In order to experience Resurrection Power - you have to experience a death!

C)Death to your dreams -Me college - Baseball coach

1)Another kind of coach

D)I had never traveled outside of the US

1)Now traveled 27 different countries

Death to our relationships

A) College pursuing girls - find the right one -

B) Done with this - Death to this - trust Jesus

1) Brought Denise into my life - perfect for me

C) Death to our agendas' goals - Let Jesus bring something to life in us

That is what Jesus invites us into today - communion

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

A) Deny Self - It is all about me - my goals, dreams, agenda - surrender that - Link myself to Jesus - His plan for me

²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:24-26

We think that type of life and perseverance is too hard - reminded of this

A) We can endure - He endured for us

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

B) Your race- Run with endurance

² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

C) Endured = Hupomeno - Conquered