

BGCC Community Group Guide



Living The Mission

April 19th 2026

Faithful Through Fear

Key Text: Acts 14:1–23

Introduction

The mission of Christ is clear: make disciples of all nations. Yet the path of obedience is rarely easy. Acts 14 gives us a vivid picture of what happens when the gospel advances into resistant places—fear arises, opposition intensifies, and distractions threaten to derail God’s mission.

This chapter follows Paul and Barnabas as they preach the gospel across multiple cities, encountering both acceptance and hostility. It reveals that fear and opposition are not signs of failure but expected realities in the life of mission.

In the broader story of Scripture, Acts 14 continues the expansion of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). It shows that God’s mission advances not through comfort, but through perseverance.

Section 1: Fear in the Face of Opposition (Acts 14:1–7)

Summary

Paul and Barnabas boldly preach in Iconium, and many believe. Yet division quickly follows—some accept the gospel, while others oppose it. Threats of violence emerge, forcing them to flee. Fear is present, but it does not stop the mission; it simply redirects it.

This passage reveals that fear often arises when the gospel is effective. Opposition is not accidental—it is spiritual resistance to truth (2 Timothy 3:12). As John Calvin noted, “The more faithfully we serve Christ, the more fiercely Satan will assault us.” Jesus and His work often

actually divide mankind more than they unite us. Because when faced with the Gospel and its mission, belief and rejection are both options (for more reading on this, read Matthew 10:34-42 or John 9:16 and its context).

Cross-reference: Joshua 1:9 reminds us, “Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Group Question: When have you experienced fear or resistance while trying to live out your faith?

Personal Relevance

Fear can be a powerful barrier—it can silence our witness, limit our obedience, and cause us to fall away from what’s right. But Acts 14 shows us that courage is not the absence of fear; it is faithfulness in the presence of it.

- **Flow Question:** What kinds of fears most often keep you from sharing your faith or stepping out in obedience?
- **Reflective Question:** How would your life look different if you trusted God’s provision more than your fear?

Section 2: Misplaced Priorities and Distractions (Acts 14:8–18)

Summary

In Lystra, Paul heals a man, and the crowd responds by trying to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods. Instead of persecution, they face a different obstacle: **misplaced praise and distraction from the true mission**. The apostles urgently redirect the crowd to the living God.

Not all barriers to mission are hostile—some are subtle. Success, recognition, and human approval can be just as dangerous as persecution. As Augustine warned, “Pride is the beginning of all sin,” and *it often creeps in through success* rather than failure.

Galatians 1:10—“If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

Group Question: Why can success or recognition sometimes be just as dangerous as opposition?

Personal Relevance

Distractions can pull us off mission—whether it’s approval, comfort, busyness, or even ministry success itself. The enemy doesn’t always need to stop us; sometimes he just needs to redirect us.

- **Flow Question:** What tends to distract you most from staying focused on Christ’s mission?
 - **Reflective Question:** Are there areas in your life where you may be seeking recognition more than faithfulness?
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Section 3: Persevering Through Pain and Fear (Acts 14:19–20)

Summary

Opposition intensifies as Paul is stoned and left for dead. Yet, remarkably, he gets up and continues the mission. This moment captures the heart of Christian perseverance—faithfulness despite suffering.

Fear of pain, rejection, or loss often keeps us from obedience. But Paul demonstrates that the mission is worth the cost. As John Piper writes, “Christ is most magnified in us when we are most satisfied in Him in the midst of suffering.”

Romans 8:18—“The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed.”

Group Question: What does Paul’s response to suffering teach us about staying committed to God’s mission?

Personal Relevance

Many believers are not facing physical persecution in the United States, but we still face opposition. Yet the call remains: follow Christ at all and any costs.

- **Flow Question:** What is one area where following Jesus has felt costly to you?
 - **Reflective Question:** What would it look like for you to remain faithful to Christ even when it’s difficult or uncomfortable?
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Section 4: Strengthening the Mission (Acts 14:21–23)

Summary

Paul and Barnabas return to strengthen the disciples, encouraging them to remain in the faith. They remind them: “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” They appoint leaders and commit the church to the Lord.

Here we see the key to overcoming fear and obstacles: **intentional strengthening, community, and dependence on God**. Perseverance is not a solo effort—it is cultivated through encouragement, leadership, and prayer.

As Charles Spurgeon said, “By perseverance the snail reached the ark.” Faithfulness over time is what sustains the mission.

Group Question: Why is community essential for staying faithful to Christ’s mission?

Personal Relevance

We combat fear and distraction not just through personal resolve, but through shared faith. God has designed the church to strengthen and sustain us in the mission.

- **Flow Question:** Who in your life encourages you to stay faithful to Christ?
- **Reflective Question:** How can you actively strengthen someone else in their walk with Christ this week?

Closing Summary & Application

Acts 14 shows us that the mission of Christ will always face barriers—fear, opposition, distraction, and suffering. Yet none of these can stop the gospel when God’s people remain faithful. Fear may redirect us, distractions may tempt us, and suffering may test us—but Christ sustains us through it all.

To stay focused on the mission:

- Trust God’s presence more than your fear
- Guard your heart against distractions and pride
- Persevere through difficulty with eternal perspective
- Stay rooted in community and encouragement

The call is not to a comfortable life, but to a faithful one.

Final Charge:

“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)