

Putting Feet to Your Faith

Acts 14-28

V1-28

- In chapter 13 the Apostle Paul and his evangelistic team have been run out of Antioch Pisidia and have landed in Iconium, which is located in the Roman province of Galatia. **V1** just like at Antioch Pisidia once the people hear the gospel of Grace a great number of both Jew and Greek believed, but in the midst of spiritual success comes spiritual opposition, as they go hand in hand, for where the Word of God spreads the opposition from the world rises up to oppose.
- In **13:45,50** we are told that the Jews who didn't believe weren't satisfied with rejecting the gospel themselves but fueled by Jealousy stirred up others in order to turn public opinion against the Gospel and those who share it. **V2-3** what worked before you can be sure the enemy will try it again, those who wouldn't believe turn their efforts toward persuading those who would listen and poisoning their minds toward those who are attempting to set them free.
- Here we see Satan break out one of his chief weapons of mass destruction with a guaranteed **100%** effective rate and it worked as people's minds are poisoned against the truth. A weapon that's so menacing that it can cause a mind once fertile toward the truth, become poisoned against the truth, and that weapon is > **Gossip** and **rumors**. They spoke evil against Paul and Barnabas and it caused people to become distrustful of what they were teaching, because people are so quick to believe a lie, it's no wonder folks are so willing to tell lies > **Jn 8:44**.
- Despite the lies and opposition they continue to speak, live and demonstrate the love grace, and power of the Gospel, and the team stayed as long as they possibly could, bearing witness to the Word of His Grace. **V3** explains how > **1st** they abode- they stayed and didn't run away or give up because of difficulty, **2nd** spoke boldly- once their minds were made up to stay God gave them courage to speak, **3rd** they give testimony of God's grace- in words and deeds their lives were not a contradiction but a validation of what they believed and what they taught, and that is so important because many won't read the bible but they will observe our lives.
- **V4-5** finally the opposition grew to the point where they became violent, and despite the Word of God, the signs and wonders, the Godly lifestyle, people still rejected the truth, and the whole city is divided and it gives the enemy the opening he needs to wreak havoc first in people's minds, then in their hearts, and finally directing their actions (they become violent **V5**). Also in **V4** we read for the first time both Paul-Barnabas are called Apostles (one sent out). **V6-8** they flee Iconium and end up in Lystra and Derbe fulfilling **Math 10:23**- when they persecute you in one city flee to another, and they begin to preach the gospel and meet a man unable to walk.

- **V9-10** even when were without strength God will do what's needed for us to hear and receive what He has for us, this man had never walked and yet he is exactly where he needs to be in order to hear a message that will change his life forever. Paul discerned this man was not only listening but believing, producing faith that allows him to be healed. **V11-13** the crowd wrongly think that the false gods of Greek mythology had come down and performed a miracle in front of them, as they call **Barnabas** (Zeus- chief god) and **Paul** (Hermes- his speaker), this proves that miracles by themselves do not produce faith, it must be accompanied by the Word.
- **V14-18** Paul shows us how were to respond to people who give man too much credit for what God is doing, instead of accepting their worship he points them to the One they should be bowing too "**The Lord**". In tearing his clothes this wasn't done in mourning for that was a Jewish custom and these people were primarily Greek, he does this to show that they are human like them, next he tells them how useless and empty pagan gods and worship is, this is in contrast to what were expected to do today which is to honor and respect everyone's way of worship.
- In mentioning the things God has done the Greeks had given the credit to Zeus, Paul tells them these blessings come from the Lord, but even in this the crowds still wanted to lift them up instead of the Lord **V18**. **V19-20** just to show how relentless the enemy is those who kicked Paul and Barnabas out of Antioch weren't content with that but follow him **100 miles** in order to give him beaten, stoning, and then drag him out of the city believing that they had killed him. **V20** as the disciples gather around the Lord raises Paul up, and before he leaves he goes back into the city to say look I am still alive and the gospel cannot and will not be silenced!
- We see **3** different responses to what happened in Iconium > **1st** the cripple man- he responds in faith, **2nd** the crowds respond in past belief- superstition, Greek mythology, **3rd** the Apostles upon seeing their leader killed and their future uncertain respond in courage as they gather around and not run away and for this they witness a miracle themselves. **V21-28** they decide to double back through the cities they had preached before in order to do **4** things
 1. Preach the Gospel- only the truth of Jesus is going to set people free
 2. Make Disciples- those who follow Jesus not tradition or culture
 3. Strengthen believers- encouraged them that in difficulties continue in the Lord
 4. Organize the churches- they appointed pastors and leaders
- As we can see these men had abandoned all consideration for personal safety, and if we're going to be used like this then our minds cannot be on self preservation. The mission field is wrought with danger, and if we call ourselves Christians then we should expect persecution, it's like becoming a surgeon but not wanting to see blood, that's impossible, as that's what you signed up for, so we signed up for opposition, difficulty, people lying on you, persecuting you, as this comes with the territory of being a Christian, and if you doubt that then re-read the chapter.