

CP — 5/7/23

Acts 14:24–28 - “Paul and Barnabas Return and Testify”

Sermon Outline

1. God calls, equips, and sustains. We go. (14:26)

- This passage forms a bracket from 13:2.
- While the mission was not finished, their assignment was done.
- When we are saved, God calls us to partnership.
- All Christians are witnesses.
 - “You *will be* my witnesses” (Acts 1:8)
 - We do not have an option to be a witness.
 - If you profess to be a Christian, you are giving some sort of witness.
- It is God who calls, and God calls us all to spread the gospel.
- God equips those who He calls; therefore, He equips us all to spread the gospel.
- God sustains all who He sends and equips; therefore, He will sustain you as well.
- They were commended to the grace of God. (Antioch)
- They commended the churches to the grace of God. (14:23)
- What better way to live than by trusting in the grace of God?
- How has God called you and equipped you to be used by Him?

2. God accomplishes His purposes. We submit to His hand. (14:27)

- “When they arrived and gathered the church together” (possibly 2-3 years later)
- They did not ask for a plaque or monument
- They testified to the grace of God to accomplish what He sent them out to do
 - First, what God had done “with them”
 - Through them
 - He used them as tools in His hand (hammer, medicine, chisel, etc)
 - Preaching in synagogues
 - Crazy experience with Bar-Jesus and the proconsul’s salvation
 - The departure of John-Mark and crossing the Taurus Mountains
 - God opening the door in the synagogue in Antioch Pisidia to preach
 - Many believing and churches being formed
 - The great number of Jews and Greeks believing in Iconium
 - The lame man’s healing in Lystra, leading to the crowd’s worship and Paul’s stoning. (“What did y’all do after Paul was stoned?”)
 - Churches formed, elders appointed, and the Lord’s faithfulness

- Second, "He opened the door of faith to the Gentiles"
 - Who opened the door?
 - God opened the door that they were not even knocking on.
 - God was and is still seeking all people.
 - God sending them to preach the gospel was him opening the door for them to believe.
 - All people can know God!
- Will you submit to be a tool in the Father's hand?
- You don't have to know how to be used; you just submit to Him to be used.

3. God receives the glory, not us. (14:27)

- They did not seek applause.
- They were giving a report of how God used them and how He opened the door.
- Life is not about getting applause
- We live for His glory

4. God brings His people home. (14:28)

- "they spent a long time with the disciples"
- Could you imagine the scene?
- Picture the three guys heading out a few years before (healthy, excited, younger)
- Picture them returning (a man down, beaten, and bruised)
- Where did they go? They went to God's people.
- It was a picture of heaven for them, I'm sure.
- Acts 14:22b - "through man tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God"
 - I want you to see this picture
 - At the end of our journey, God will get us home.
 - A place of hope, peace, and no more striving
- I'll submit that until that day, the church is our greatest place of refuge in this life.
- When life has been hard, go to the church.
- When you're tired from the battle, go to the church.
- When you've been spent for the glory of God, go to the church.
- And when ultimately, when we've all been spent for the glory of God, God will bring us home to Himself.
- Until that day, keep sharing the good news of Jesus.
- Until that day, keep walking, keep trusting, keep praying, keep striving.

***Application

- And on that day, when our “task is complete” we will hear the words that our hearts should long for: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:21)
 - Be faithful with what you’ve been entrusted with.
 - This verse comes from a parable about a Master who goes away and leaves talents to His servants faithfully use.
 - This servant is faithful over a little.
 - As a result, the man says, “Well done, good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your master.”
 - What a beautiful description of how we want to live as His servants.
 - It should be the longing of our hearts ear to hear Jesus say these words.
 - We want to be faithful with the goodness and grace, talents, resources, time, and everything that He has entrusted to us.
 - And when we do, we will find great joy in our Lord and Master.
 - What does this look like in your life today?
 - How can we live this week in such a way that we go to sleep tonight and experience this joy of our Master saying, “well done”?
 - May we be found faithful with the opportunities, responsibilities, resources, time, money, and attention.
 - May we live each day faithfully to what He entrusts us with.
 - May we lay down at night and experience the joy of our Master, then rise the next day to do the same.
 - Wake up and look at the grace in which we’ve been entrusted with..
 - Pray, “God, by your grace, I want to be faithful and a good servant. I want to steward well all the grace You’ve given me for Your glory in my life.”
 - When we do, we will enjoy His grace and steward it for His glory.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible passage?
2. What's been your biggest takeaway from the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14)?
3. What does it mean that all professing Christians give some sort of witness of Christ, whether good or bad?
4. What does partnership with God look like in your life? How can you be faithful with what you have been entrusted with? List some things that you know that you have been entrusted with.
5. Why do you think that many professing Christians do not actively share the gospel? Can you truly be a Christian and never share the gospel?
6. How is the church a refuge? Does Sunday morning function as more of a spiritual pep rally for excitement or a refuge for weary soldiers? What if we looked at our worship gathering as a place we go to rest after a week of serving the Lord, more than a place that meets all our preferences?
7. Pray for each other to view and act like the church (God's people) is a place of refuge for one another as we work with the Lord in His mission.