

ACTS 14:1-19

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed.² But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.³ So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.⁴ The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles.⁵ There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them.⁶ But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country,⁷ where they continued to preach the gospel.

⁸ In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked.⁹ He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed¹⁰ and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

¹¹ When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"¹² Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.¹³ The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting:¹⁵ "Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them."¹⁶ In the past, he let all nations go their own way.¹⁷ Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."¹⁸ Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

¹⁹ Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How do you normally respond to conflict or criticism by others?

What were some good things that happened as a result of the ministry efforts of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium and Lystra? How do you suppose they felt about the missions work as they got started in each place?

When and how did the trouble begin for these apostles in each city? What caused the crowd to turn against Paul and Barnabas in Lystra, and what happened to Paul?

How did the apostles respond to the opposition? What do you suppose it meant for Paul and Barnabas to “speak boldly” during times of opposition (verse 3)?

How do these stories about Paul and Barnabas help Christians today understand opposition to the gospel and suffering for the sake of Jesus?

How does this lesson stir you to more frequently and earnestly pray for the global workers sent from your church? Take time to do that now.

DAILY READINGS

1. PSALM 62:1-8
2. PSALM 141:1-10
3. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5
4. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16
5. 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17
6. 1 PETER 4:12-19
7. ACTS 14:1-19