

Acts 14: Courage, Selflessness and Sacrifice

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 August 2015

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] As we consider all the works of your hand, as we see the stars, as we hear the mighty thunder, as we stand in awe of the universe, Lord we are reminded and confronted with your creation, the work of your hand.

And Lord we pray that you would give each one of us eyes to see the majesty of God dimly reflected in the beauty of the creation that surrounds us and even the creation that we are part of. Lord God we thank you that even in the womb you knew us. We thank you that we are fearfully and we are wonderfully made and Lord we were made to be with you and to know you. We confess Lord the sin that separates us from you and from each other.

We confess the sin Lord that we see and we feel as such a destructive influence in our lives in this world and such a barrier to our communion with you. But Lord we thank you that you Father sent your son Jesus to die to take away our sin. And Lord we pray again as we have sung that we pray that the Holy Spirit himself may be active in this place and in our own being. And we think that God the Son not spared him sent him to die. We scarce can take it in. That on the cross my burden, my sin, gladly bear it, he bled and died to take away my sin.

Father we find it in. Father we find it in. Father we find it in. And without your help we cannot take it in. And so we pray that the Holy Spirit himself may be active in this place and in our own beings. That we would see the wonder of what you have done for us in grace. Thank you Lord that the Savior died and rose again triumphant over the grave.

And pleads our cause and pleads our cause at God's right hand even now omnipotent to save. So Father if we have never come to Jesus as Savior we pray that even today as we bow and worship and as we open the word and as we come to you in prayer that we would come to you Lord God as Savior.

[2 : 28] Lord God as we pray that we would confess our sin knowing that you are faithful and you are just and you will forgive us our sin as we confess it and as we look for forgiveness.

And Lord God we pray that you would give us that strength and that sustaining grace that we may follow Jesus. That he may be Lord over our hearts and our decisions and our time and our families and all that we do.

That we would seek first your kingdom and your glory and be content with all that you deem fit to add to our life's experience and time.

That we thank you Lord that we thank you Lord that we can come to you as the God who hears and answers our prayers not just for ourselves but for others. And so we pray for those who are in particular need this morning and over the course of these next few days.

We pray for those who are in hospital and who are waiting for surgery. We pray we think especially of Neil Cameron and Kinnon as he is scheduled for a triple bypass on Thursday.

[3 : 39] We ask Lord that you would be with him and that you would give him your peace as he anticipates it. Give skill to the surgeons and the doctors and the nurses who will care for him.

We pray that all would go well. We pray for Neil. We pray also for Joan McCaskill as she waits for surgery too. We ask Lord that you would be with her and be with all those who attend to her over these next few days.

We pray for others in hospital. Others who are recovering from times in hospital. We commit them to you as the God who knows them and knows their needs. We pray for those who grieve, who have lost loved ones in the past weeks.

And we continue to remember them and ask that you would comfort them and strengthen them. We pray Lord for those of our number who are going off to university and colleges over the next few days.

And we ask that you would go before them and that you would direct their paths. And that their lives would be lives lived close with you. And lives where you were glorified in and through.

[4 : 45] We pray for the meeting scheduled for this week. As we come together to pray and study your word at various times. We ask that you would bless us and that you would lead us and guide us.

As we have the opportunity to hear of Nepal and the work that has gone on there and continues to go on there. We pray for Suraj as he travels here.

And we ask Lord that you would guide him. And that we would be encouraged as we hear all that you are doing there. We pray for Nepal, especially today. As a country that struggles to recover from all that they've had to endure through natural disaster over these last few months.

We pray that you would be with them. And that you would bring relief where there is suffering. And that you would bring rehabilitation where there has been breakdown.

And as a country that politically is considering that constitutional change. We pray for your people who are so vulnerable at this time. And we ask Lord that you would protect them.

[5 : 50] And that you would make them strong. That you would make them brave. That they would shine bright for Christ as Saul and Barnabas did. And we will read about in the course of this service.

So hear our prayers and lead us in worship we pray. And we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. Boys and girls would you like to come out to the front please.

Alright. Alright. Alright. Alright. How's your boys and girls today?

All fine? All happy to be back to school? That's good.

You're telling the truth. I wanted to introduce you to three friends of mine this morning. Amman's going to put them.

[6 : 59] Amman knew them before I knew them. That's the Ranish. But Amman's going to put them on the screen. And you're going to have a wee look and see our three friends up at the mat.

You see them? We put lights off for a second. Because you can see them clearly. Do you want to go around a wee bit so you can see them properly?

Because they're going to get a video as well. Do you know what their names are? One of them is called Snap. One of them is called Crackle.

And the third one is called... How did you know that? Which one is Snap? I get confused between Snap and Pops.

So maybe Grace, can you tell us which one is Snap? The one... Which one? That one. That one or that one or that one?

[8 : 01] One, two or three? The one... At that one. The one closest to that door? Yes. So that's Snap. Yes? And one... I'm totally confused, Anna.

The one in the middle is Snap. The one in the middle is Snap. Snap is the one there at the first side. The one in the middle is Pop. And he's the... She's the shy one.

Is that right? And then Crackle. I know Crackle. Crackle's the boy. And he's troubled. So... Three cats that we've got in our house. Not in our house.

Sorry. Not in our house, Peggy. Not in our house. They're in the garage. And they're only going to be in the garage. And outside. So that's them just standing still. I took a video of them last night.

You can maybe watch that too if it works. They're very agile. Maybe a dunk on the hill. You see them? Look.

[8 : 57] Up high. There's one that's always up high.

It stays up there. Other two are nervously looking for something to follow. Oh, there we go. So anyway, you're getting that kind of picture.

Oh, there we go again. There's one where we rampage, I think. And then it's just about done.

That's trouble. Yeah. There he goes. Whoa! Okay. There's Snap and Crackle and Pop. But do you know, tomorrow, tomorrow, is a big day at the Manx.

Because they're only how old? Am I? Three months, maybe? Yeah. They're three months old. Maybe four months old. And they came from Shilabos to our place.

[10 : 15] And they've been in our garage for two weeks. And we've been very kind to them. We've been giving them water. We've been giving them food. And getting to know them. And they've been getting more and more happy with us.

They're not so shy. And we've kept them in the garage for two weeks. But do you know what we have to do tomorrow? Chris?

Let them outside. We have to open the door. And we have to let them outside. And we hope that they'll go outside.

And they'll run around the garden. And they'll go a bit up the hill. And they'll play around. And they'll explore. And they'll eat multitudes of rats. And then they'll come back to our garage.

And have some food. And have some water. And stay with us. But they're cats. And so cats do what cats want to do. And so we're hoping.

[11 : 14] And we're praying. You can all be praying. That these cats will still be with us tomorrow night. And they'll stay with us. And they'll get to know us. But we have to give them their freedom. That's the thing.

And now. Every time you go to the garage door. And you're trying to get back out of the garage door. They're desperate to get out. So we have to give them their freedom. And I was thinking.

It's a lot like how God treats us. Isn't it? Do you know what? A woman used to do cats. And a cat came in.

Cat cages. Just in case. And something bad happens. We could have cat cages. Just in case something bad happens.

Well we've got a cat cage. You know. For taking them in the car. And all that kind of thing. But you can only keep them like that. For so long. And eventually. You've got to say. Listen cats.

[12 : 13] We like you a lot. We love you. We'll look after you. We'll care for you. We'll play with you. You go out and have a great time. And come back. We want the cats to have a relationship with us.

Yes. And have fun outside. And then come back in. But we have to give the cats their freedom. Don't we? Yes. Yes.

I like you. What's your name? I have to have cats in Mogi's room. You've got cats in whose room? Mogi's room.

No. No. I don't have a cat. Okay. No cats. Right. Okay. Let me just get to the point quickly. Okay. I've got five cats.

Five cats. Great. Great. Okay. Let's listen now. Just for a wee minute. Let's listen. Shh. Shh. We'll listen. Okay. So the cats go out. Hopefully the cats come back.

[13 : 09] We give them their freedom. And I was thinking. That's how God treats us. Isn't it? God loves us. How do we know that God loves us? Did you have breakfast today?

Yes. Who gave it to you? Mum and Dad. But where did it come from? It came from God. Everything. The air that we breathe. Where do we get it from? From God.

And when we think about the cross. Where Jesus died. He died to take away our sins. Why did he do that? Alistair. Because he loves us.

He loves us. And he's shown us all this love. And he said. I will care for you. And I will save you. And I will look after you. And I want you to live close to me.

But he gives us. Our freedom. He doesn't keep us trapped in a cage. He says. I love you. I want you to come to me.

[14 : 06] I want you to trust me. I want you to walk close with me. And so boys and girls. And boys and girls. The question.

For us today. Is. How are we treating God? He wants us. To be close with him. Are we walking close with him?

Are we trusting him? What choices are we making? So let's pray. Dear Lord. We thank you.

That you love us so much. And we thank you. That you've given us. Every good thing. Every good gift. Comes from heaven above. We thank you. That you loved us so much. That you.

Sent your son. Father. To die. To take away our sin. Because you wanted us. Not to be far from you. But to be close with you. And Lord. We pray. That as you give us. That freedom.

[15 : 00] And as you call us. To trust you. That we would hear your voice. And Lord. That we would come close to you. We thank you. That Jesus. Has made that possible. And so we pray.

That whether we're very little. Or whether. We're very old. That even today. As we hear you speak to us. That we would run from you. But Lord.

That we would come to you. Thank you. Thank you. That Jesus said. Come to me. All who are tired. All who are weary. And I will give you rest. Thank you. That he cares for us. That he gives us everything we need.

And so Lord. We pray. That he would give us that faith. That we would trust you. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing now. To God's praise. 2-7-5.

The mission praise. And the words that are on the screen. I heard the voice of Jesus say. Come unto me. And rise. Okay boys and girls.

[15 : 58] If you would like to go to Sunday school. And just for the information.

Okay. Your wisdom. The Sunday school goes up to. Fourth year in school. So. If you're up to fourth year in school. You're very welcome to go. Thinkfully. You're welcome to sing. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

I thought the last time would be a well known one. But I live and learn. Oh it's a different tune. Okay. Acts chapter 14.

We've been studying through Acts over the last few months. And we get to Acts chapter 14. And we read from verse 1. At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue.

[17 : 25] There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there.

Speaking boldly for the Lord. Who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided. Some sided with the Jews.

Others with the apostles. There was a plot of fruit among the Gentiles and Jews together with their leaders to ill-treat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lycanian cities of Lystra and Darwin.

And to the surrounding countries where they continued to preach the good news. In Lystra there sat the man crippled in his feet who was lame from birth and had never walked.

He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him. Saw that the man had faith to be healed and called out. Stand up on your feet. At that the man jumped up and began to walk.

[18 : 28] When the crowd saw what Paul had done. They shouted in Lycanian language. The gods have come down to us in human form. Barnabas they called Zeus.

And Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus whose temple was just outside the city. Brought booze and reeds to the city gates. Because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

Though any apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this. They tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd. Saying men why are you doing this? We too are only men. Human like you.

We are bringing you good news. Telling you to turn from these worthless things. To the living God who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past he let nations go their own way.

Yet he has not left himself without testimony. He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven. And crops and the seasons. He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.

[19 : 31] Even with these words they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to him. 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. But after the disciples had gathered round him. He got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derby.

They preached the good news in that city. And won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.

We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God, they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church. And with prayer and fasting committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.

After going through Pisidian, they came into Pamphylia. And when they had preached the word of Pergaon, they went down to Athaliah. From Athaliah, they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

- [20 : 43] On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them. And they had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.
- Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Let us join the team. Lead us in prayer and down with peace. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Coming from the altar,aju'lna wur seaxaka mqey meshiq Welcome here.
- Now ... A CLARED my book isIGNAT.
- Our children are not alone. We are not alone. We are not alone.
- [23 : 16] We are not alone. We are alone. We are alone.
- We are alone. We are alone. We are alone.
- He'd have been doing a bit of conversation aboutAKA and how he can81 he'd have to We've been doing anything We've been doing this without leaving And we've got 14 on with Look that people without speaking Whenever is called the meaning It's■ That name is God to get you!
- That name is Noah Pree, even from Sisa King.
- are going to be a What For those who love sticks they god knows his ears and don what's his shoes are being done.
- [26 : 01] Instead of writing ideas, eachsillon does not the Mack P leads to his relaxed position as he does to the Pjois gemacht Ah■■■■■'s Canyon sections of Mises,■ mice were started during this period of time. Now seeing people emulate looking Genesis, when He says he actually gave me forvo paljon I understand him Himself as we head across Peace be brought in.
- I got aandaag and stuff got there for me and taste belief with us.
- I hope I won't forget Michael Jackson. the Spenter for Welcome, responsibly.
- Until a minute, let us comfort our heart. At the holy pythons, 18 years, our Ammon makan sambandam aho, The red dash will Dieses ■■■■■■ slide.
- the source this is the most problems we can be there ■■■■■■ them■■ in the way We need to prepare to create Holy Amen We sing now to God's praise. We sing from Psalm 1 and we sing in Gareth.
- [28 : 02] That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray, and counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinners' way, but placeth his, nor sitteth in his corner's chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and medicates on his law.
- Day and night. These two standards. We sing in Gareth and we remain seated for this praise. Day and night.
- Day and night. Day and night.
- Day and night. Day and night.
- Day and night. Day and night. Day and night.
- [29 : 33] Day and night.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- [32 : 00] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. If you could turn right please let me to I chapter 14. I chapter 14.

Thank you.

And Lord we pray that as we meditate that you would speak to us, that you would guide us in all our meditations, that we would know the light that comes from your nearer presence even as we think upon these things.

And what we pray for ourselves here, we pray for the children in various classes in the Sunday school, that you would speak clearly to them. Lord that we would hear the voice of Jesus say, come unto me.

[33 : 30] And Lord that we would come and find rest and find fulfillment and find purpose and find everything in that relationship that we can have with you through Christ.

So hear our prayers and guidance in our meditations and pray in Jesus name. Amen.
Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. podcast saying, Adams, so I see it comes over here. And I don't know how many of you follow the films that come out over the course of the summer, but I was reading in one of the newspapers that the film that's due to dominate the screens over this summer and over the last few weeks is a film called Mission Impossible, I think it's number four now. And as we go to Acts chapter 14, there is something of the Mission Impossible about this mission that Paul and Barnabas are set apart from many people as they look at what they were expected to do and where they were expected to go. We have considered this to be a near impossible mission.

And what I'd like to do is just follow their progress as we go through this chapter. The mission, for those who are just joining us this week, begins at the beginning of chapter 13. We read in verse 2 of chapter 13 that while the people, the Christians, were worshipping the Lord and fasting the Holy Spirit, God said, set apart from me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. And so after they fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and they sent them off. And so we read last Lord's Day about their trip to Cyprus and Pisidian Antioch and all that went on there. And we move on in the story this week to their experiences in Iconium and Lystra and Darwin. It seems to be an impossible mission as we follow their progress through. But thankfully, the God who set them apart for it, the God whom they worship and the same God whom we worship this morning, as we gather here, is the God who specializes in the impossible. Remember Jesus' words, chapter 18 and verse 27, Jesus says,

What is impossible with man is possible with God. That's a word of encouragement to all of people. What is impossible with man is possible with God. And so now we follow Barnabas and Saul or Paul on their mission. And I'd like to think in particular today about what they needed for that mission and what God gave them to equip them for the mission that he called them to.

[36 : 35] Three things. The first thing that we see that they needed for this mission was courage. Courage. And I really want to stick close to the text this morning. We're moving at pace and we're not going into real details, I suppose, because of the pace we're going. But let's just read the verses again and note the courage that was required of Paul and Barnabas as the minister in Iconium. First one. At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue.

There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

You ever been in that scenario? Where you face resistance? Where you face opposition? Where your reputation starts to be poisoned? What do you want to do? You want to run straight out that door.

You want to run straight away from where all the conflict and all the trouble is. That's what they were going through. The Jews who refused to believe, verse 2, stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there.

They didn't cut and run. They didn't say it's too hot in this church and let's get out of here. They determined they were going to spend considerable time in the place where there was opposition.

[38 : 07] Speaking boldly for the Lord, verse 3, he confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided. The gospel always does that.

Some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews together with their leaders to mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lyconian cities of Lystra and Darwin and to the surrounding country where they continued to preach the good news.

Now we think about where we are today. In terms of this country and Christianity in this country, I think it's fair to say that most people regard Christians as folks who have no courage.

Christians are often thought of and Christians are very often portrayed in the media, especially soap operas. If you ever see a Christian pop into the plot somewhere, they're portrayed as weak people who have very little in the way of conviction and who need a spiritual or emotional crutch.

Hence the Christianity, just to be able to navigate their way through each day in life. That's the perception. That's where we are today.

[39 : 40] But I think if we go from today back to where Paul and Barnabas were, that would never have been said of them. I don't think anyone could have said that Paul or Barnabas lacked courage and conviction.

I actually don't think anything like that could be said in Syria today or Egypt or many of the countries where the Christian church is growing. There is fierce opposition. There is great hardship.

And yet the Christians are full of courage. And I think probably the allegation that Christians have no courage and conviction will probably be less and less said in the UK over the next few years as things get more difficult for us.

But one point in application from the beginning here is for those whom God is striving with. For those who are here and who perhaps are not Christians but are thinking about becoming Christians.

For those who hear the call of Christ to come to him and follow him. In the light of this passage, I need to say, if you want an easy life, Christianity is not for you.

[41 : 02] From the beginning, Jesus made clear that if you follow Christ and if you proclaim him, as Paul and Barnabas we see did here, you're going to need courage.

You're going to need courage. And Paul and Barnabas had courage. They were given Holy Spirit courage in great measure. And we see that in these verses.

We see the courage that they have in the simple fact that they are preaching in Iconium. Now, if we look back to the end of Acts chapter 13, we see from that passage there that Paul and Barnabas had just been expelled forcibly from the city of Antioch.

They have been forced to leave. They have been treated as outcasts and outlaws. Which must have stunned and been hard to deal with.

Especially for Paul. You need to think about the fact that Paul was a human being with feelings like we have. And Paul in particular, all that he was experiencing now in terms of opposition, it was a brand new experience for Paul.

[42 : 21] Because Paul had been a prominent Pharisee. Paul had been one of the pillars of the community. Paul had been somebody that everybody looked up to. He was a rising star of the world of the Pharisee.

He was a legal expert. He was one that people went to for advice on how to uphold the law. He had lived his life on the right side of the law with great prospects.

And all of a sudden, he feels the full force of the law that he was so immersed in against him.

And that causes anyone, surely, to rethink their actions. Some of you have probably had the experience, as I confess I've had.

When you're driving along, maybe the A9. It's a bright day. Dry road. Car's going well. The speed limit is 60, but maybe you creep up to 70.

[43 : 26] And all of a sudden, you don't realise that you're doing 80. And then, you look in the mirror. And there's blue lights flashing behind you. And when that happens, your heart sinks.

And you pull over. And you're given the stern talking to. And I think the three points and whatever fine it was. And I can remember when it happened to me, getting back into the car.

And driving off. But driving off, not at 80. But at 60. Because a clash of the law usually causes you to rethink how you're going to behave.

But here, Paul and Barnabas, having been cast out of the city. A bar and Ptoch. Having been subjected to humiliation.

And legal disgrace. They just move on to the next place. Iconium. And they carry on doing the very thing that they've just been penalised for.

[44 : 31] And that takes courage. And so we see courage just as we follow their geographical path. And we can hear courage in the way that they spoke.

Because in verse 2 we're told that they spoke effectively. They spoke so much so that many people believe. Verse 3. The way that they spoke. They spoke boldly for the Lord.

They didn't decide that in this hostile culture that they find themselves in the middle of. They were just going to whisper the goods. They didn't revert to preaching a kind of safe and fuzzy non-confrontational seeker-friendly sermon.

To try and save the list again. They continued to proclaim Jesus. And the whole gospel.

That he was and is the Messiah. The promised one of God. That he lived without sin. That he died in accordance with the will of the Father.

[45 : 40] And died that life. That he died sacrificially for their sin and ours. And not only did he die. But he rose again. And he is alive.

And he reigns. And one day he will come back. The whole counsel of the gospel. The whole word of God. They continued to proclaim it. And when the poisoning of their reputations began in verse 2.

They didn't just cut and run. But as I said. They determined. They were going to spend considerable time in that place. Where they were so hated. And that takes courage. And so they were courageous.

But they weren't foolish. They weren't kamikaze. Because in verse 5. We see that they became aware of a plot to stone them.

To kill them. So what did they do? Well they moved on. Sensively. Because they wanted the gospel message to move on with them. And they moved on.

[46 : 40] With that single minded determination. To continue preaching the same good news. In the next place. Verse 7. And that next place would be the Lycanian cities.

Of Lystra and Darby. And the surrounding country. And so Paul and Barnabas. On this mission. That they were sent out on.

Needed courage. And as we seek to follow Christ. Christ. And as we seek to live for him here.

Today. And as we seek. To take every opportunity. That he gives us. To proclaim. The whole gospel of God. In a culture.

That increasingly doesn't want to hear it. We need to have courage. And we need to pray. That God himself. Will give to us that courage.

[47 : 39] So first of all. We see courage. In Paul and Barnabas. The second thing that we see. That was necessary for this mission. Was selflessness. Remember the prayer.

Of John the Baptist. He. Christ. Must increase. I. John the Baptist. Must decrease. There was a selflessness. In that prayer. There was a putting to death.

Of the old man. In that prayer. And we see that same selflessness. In Paul and Barnabas. Verse 8. We'll just carry on through. The text here. In Lystra. There sat a man.

Tripled to his feet. Who was lame from birth. And never walked. He listened to Paul. As he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him. Saw that he had faith.

To be healed. And called out. Stand up on your feet. At that the man. Jumped up. And began to walk. When the crowd saw. That Paul. What Paul had done.

[48 : 35] They shouted. In the Lyconian language. The gods have come down to us. In human form. Barnabas. They called Zeus. Paul. They called Hermes. Because he was the chief speaker. 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. But when the apostles. Barnabas and Paul heard of this.

They tore their clothes. And rushed out. Into the crowd. Shouting. Men. Why are you doing this? We too are only men. Human like you.

We are bringing you good news. He's telling you to turn. From these worthless things. To the living God. Who made heaven and earth. And sea. And everything in them. In the past.

He let all nations. Go their own way. Yet he has not left himself. Without testimony. He has shown kindness. By giving you rain from heaven. And crops and receivings. He provides you with plenty of food.

[49 : 34] And fills your hearts with joy. Even with these words. They are difficult to keep in the crowd. From sacrificing to them. And so here.

In the next phase. Of Mission Impossible. We see that Paul and Barnabas. Encounter a new problem. And it's the polar opposite.

To what they had experienced. In the last place. They have the problem of popularity. They were becoming accustomed. To unpopularity. That had been their recent experience.

But here. Their battle is with. Extreme popularity. And celebrity. And so Paul is speaking. Verse 8. And he sees the man crippled.

And he looks at him. And he sees that he has faith. To be healed somehow. And he calls out. Stand up on your feet. And amazingly. Miraculously. Supernaturally.

[50 : 30] The man does. And the crowd surmised. That this. Must have been the activity. Of. God. Which it actually was. But they make the mistake. Of thinking. These two guys. Must be God. And so.

Verse 11 to 13. They begin to worship. Paul. And Barnabas. Now think a little bit of background. To this place. Is helpful.

In kind of. Explaining the actions. Of the crowd. There was a legend. In Lystra. Particularly. To that place. That. At some time.

In the past. The gods. Zeus. And Hermes. Had come. On a visitation. To earth. And they rolled up. In the city.

[51 : 23] Of Lystra. So the legend went. And they went. In that city. From door to door. And they knocked. In the doors. And they sought entry. In these houses. And they looked.

For some hospitality. And some kindness. From the people. Of Lystra. And they went. From door to door. And they had. No response. And they had. No warmth. And they had. No kindness.

They received. No hospitality. Until they got. To an elderly couple. The elderly couple. The legend had it. Took them in. And gave them.

Hospitality. And so. Zeus. And Hermes. Decided. That they would. Reward. That elderly couple. With great possessions. And Zeus.

And Hermes. Decided. That. As a punishment. Everyone else. In the city. Should be killed. It's kind of warm. Heartwarming story. Isn't it? That was the legend.

[52 : 18] That was something. That was known. In Lystra. And the people. Of Lystra. Aware. Of what. Has alleged. To have happened. In the past. Were anxious.

If Zeus. And Hermes. Ever come back. To this time. We're going to have to. Get the red carpet. Rolled out for them. We don't want to have. The same mistake again. And so then.

One day. They see. Two men. And they see. This. Supernatural. Amazing. Miracle. Some. God. Like. Intervention.

And in the minds. Of the. People from Lystra. They make the assumption. The gods. Are back in time. One must be Zeus.

And one must be Hermes. And they make the assumption. Seeing these gods. Are in time. We don't want to. Attract the same judgment.

[53 : 16] Our forefathers. Attracted. And so we better. Look after them. And hence the worship. And hence the adulation. And hence the sacrifice. But just in passing.

Isn't it remarkable. How quickly. People grasp the lie. And reject the truth. You think about Lystra.

Isn't it amazing. How ready they were. To grasp the lie. And yet in the. Adjacent city. They were so ready. To reject the truth. Last chapter. Acts 13.

Think about Paul's sermon. Paul preaches. About Jesus. The God man. Who left heaven. The realms of glory.

And came to this earth. And who received. No rich hospitality. But who was. As Isaiah predicted. Despised.

[54 : 17] And rejected of men. Paul speaks of. How he was. Crucified. And Paul makes clear. To the people. That they were. Deserving of.

Punishment. And judgment. Because of their actions. The God. And his grace. Was giving them. The opportunity. To turn.

And to repent. And to be forgiven. And be saved. This is the truth. Says Paul. Believe it.

How do the people respond? Do they respond? By believing. No. They say. You're talking nonsense. Get out of our city. We don't want to see you here again.

They reject the truth. Says in Acts 13. That they will not. Not they could not. But they would not. Believe. Contrast that with Lystra.

[55 : 18] Some tall tale. Some tall tale. From eons. Ago. Is peddled. About. Some. Ancient gods. With an unsubstantiated story.

On a visitation to earth. Who were not welcomed. But who were rejected. And the judgment. That followed. As a consequence. And they believe. That stuff instantly. Without hesitation.

They reject the truth of Jesus. Verse 13. And they embrace. The falsehood.

Of. Idolatry. And that's 14. GK Chesterton. Says. When people. Stop believing in God.

They don't believe in nothing. They believe in anything. And that was evident in Lystra. And that's where we are today.

[56 : 19] Because if you want to talk today. About magic crystals. Or mystical waters. Or stones. Or stars. Or cards. Or fairies.

People are. So ready. To listen to you. And so keen. To believe. That nonsense. Talk about Jesus.

And so many. Are so ready. To dismiss it. Vehemently. And reject it. Don't tell me.

That we have to work hard. To get from the Bible. To today. We're there. Anyway. Back to. The section. Acts 14.

Paul. Heals the lame man. Before he can. Stop the people. They're worshipping him. And Barnabas. You got to stop for a second. And try and put yourself in the shoes of Saul and Barnabas.

[57 : 19] I wonder how they felt. I wonder was that momentary temptation there. To actually linger in this newfound approval. If it was. We don't see it. We don't hear of it.

Remember a song that. Was. Famous in the 90s. By a band called. The Stone Roses. One of their. Famous songs. Was entitled.

I want to be adored. That was. Perid's anthem. At the end of chapter 12. That's the anthem of so many people. Today. In the culture that we're in.

But it wasn't Paul. And Barnabas' song. And they might have had. Stardom in their grasp. They might have had. Their moment of celebrity. Just ready there. For the taking. But they reject it.

And they will not accept. The adulation of the masses. They will not allow themselves. To be lifted up and exalted. They bury self. And they point to God. Verse 14 to 15.

[58 : 14] Don't worship us. They're saying. We're just humans like you. Look away from us. Look away from all these worthless. Dead idols you're clinging on to. We have good news for you.

They say. We have good news. Of the living. And the true God. The God. Who created all this stuff. The God. Who shows kindness to you. And sending rains.

And growing crops. Look to him. They say. And that's a. Really instructive. Little sermon. For us to start preaching again today.

Because in Lister. They knew. Virtually nothing about the Bible. So Paul doesn't say. Let's turn to Psalm 16. Or let's turn to Psalm 22.

They didn't know about it. And today. Most people. Have very little grasp. Of. Scripture. And so.

[59 : 12] How do we preach to them? How do we reach out to them here? We can say. Look at creation. Look at all this stuff around us.

There is a living. Creator. God. Behind all this. And look at how kind he's been to you.

And look at his beauty. Reflected. And the wonder of the creation. That we see so. Purely here. Look to the creator God.

Worship him. That's a sermon we need to start preaching again. The creation. Is stunning here.

Something to talk about how. Over there yesterday. When you're up in the top of a hill. Looking across. All the wonders of creation. It must. Take a lot of faith.

[60 : 14] To say there's no God. Wrongly placed faith. But faith. Nonetheless. Not atheism. Faith. Faith in atheism.

Creation is. Stunning here. So why not say. This is creation. To people. There is a creator. And he is kind.

And he is gracious. And he wants to know you. And through Christ. He has made it possible. For you to know him. Why do you think the secularists.

Want creation out of schools. Because Satan. Wants creation out of schools. Because it terrifies him. Because he knows. That we are wired.

To understand and know. That someone made this. And he is calling out ducks. Don't believe.

[61 : 11] All this. Secularist propaganda. That creationist. Theory. Is nonsense. The idea. That this is.

Random. And chaotic. That is nonsense. Even Darwin. Is a putative. Said. Quotes. I cannot believe.

With my mind. That all this. Was just created. By chance. And so. In Lystra and Darby. They point away.

From themselves. And they point. To. The creator. They point. To Christ. So we see.

Courage. We see. Selflessness. And very. Very briefly. To finish. We see. Sacrifice. Look at verse 19. And following. I haven't got time. To get to the end.

[62 : 08] Here. But. It says there. In verse 19. Some Jews. Came from Antioch. And Iconium. And won the Cairober. They stoned Paul. And dragged him. Outside the city.

Thinking he was dead. But after the disciples. Had gathered around him. He got up. And went back. Into the city. The next day. He and Barnabas. Left for Darby. They preached the good news.

In that city. And won a large number. Of disciples. Then they returned. To Lystra. Iconium. And Antioch. Strengthening the disciples. And encouraging them. To remain true. To the faith. We must go through.

Many hardships. To enter. The kingdom of God. They said. And so on. Just. Scan the verses. It is not hard. To see. Sacrifice.

In these verses. Verse 20. Paul has been stoned. He's left for dead. He's assumed to be dead. For preaching. The good news. About Jesus. And against all the odds.

- [63 : 04] As the apostles. Gather round him. And God is at work. Paul gets up. And what does he do? Does he go for six months. Of rehab? He gets up.
- And he goes back. Into the same city. And verse 21. Makes clear to us. That they returned. To Lystra. And Iconium. And Antioch.
- Which were all the danger zones. Where they had gone through. Such brutal hardship. But they go back there. And they carry on. Teaching. The same good news. And that's.
- Sacrificial preaching. Preaching that they knew. Very well. Would probably cost them their lives. Yeah.
- That's what he did. And God blessed him. And we know that he blessed him. Because verse 21. Tells us. Many more disciples were added. And verse 22. Tells us. That many disciples.
- [64 : 02] Were encouraged to remain. True. To the faith. Here's a question. As we bring. This all to. A conclusion. Do you and I.
- Ever. Sacrificially. Preach. Jesus. Do we. Ever. Leave.
- Our comfort zone. And risk. Our reputation. And risk. Sometimes. Our friendships. And even.
- The. Calm. Culture. That we. Within our families. Do we ever. Risk. These things.
- For Christ's sake. And speak. About. Jesus. Even. When. There's a good chance.
- [65 : 03] That we may suffer. Badly for. Verse 22. We must. Go through. Many. Hardships. They say.
- To enter. The kingdom. Of God. And they did. The apostle. Paul. Writes. In 2. Corinthians 11. Of his. Hardships. He says this.
- Five times. I received. From the Jews. The 40. Lashes. Minus one. Three times. I was beaten. With rods. Once. I was pelted. With stones. Three times.
- I was shipwrecked. I spent a night. And a day. In the open sea. I have been constantly. On the move. I have been in danger. From rivers. In danger. From bandits. In danger.
- From my fellow Jews. In danger. From Gentiles. In danger. In their city. In danger. In the country. In danger. At sea. And in danger. From false believers. I have labored.
- [65 : 57] And toiled. And have often gone. Without sleep. I have known hunger. And thirst. And have gone often. Without food. I have been cold. And naked. And so on he goes.
- Why do you appall? For Christ's sake. Because it's true. Their ministry was.
- Sacrificial. Their ministry was. Selfless. Their ministry was. Courageous. And what we see.
- In Paul and Barnabas. They first saw. In the saviour. Whom they were following. And preaching.
- They saw all in Jesus. Who had the courage. To take on. Our sin. And Satan. And death. And death.
- [66 : 58] And hell. And overcome. They saw all in Jesus. Who was so. Selfless.
- That he. Made himself. Nothing. Philippians 2. Taking the very nature. Of a servant. Being made in human likeness.
- And being found. In appearance. As a man. He. Humbled himself. And became obedient. To death. Even death.
- On a cross. They saw all in Jesus. Who in love. Laid down his life. Becoming.
- An atoning. Sacrifice. For our sin. They were pointing to Jesus.

[67 : 57] They were following Jesus. And the challenging question. I will finish with. Is our name. We'll pray.

Lord God.

We pray. That as we. Read that word. And as we meditate. Upon that word. And as we listen. To the. Sermons.

That Paul and Barnabas. Preached. As we read. Records. Of all that they went through. Because of. What they believed. As we consider.

What they went through. So that we. Could be pointed to Christ. We pray Lord. That we would see Christ. And Lord.

[68 : 55] That we would follow him. That we would trust him. And we pray. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. And we sing. We sing to conclude. From. Mission praise. 1-1-4-1. Mission praise.

1-1-4-1. You are the word of God the Father. From before the world began. Every star on any planet. Has been fashioned. By your hand.

all creation holds together by the power of your voice that the skies declare your glory that the land and seed rejoice you're the author of creation the Lord of every man and your cry of love rings out across the land and I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore Amen Amen