

Acts of the Holy Spirit #16, On Mission Together with Jesus
Acts 14, Week of Oct 29, 2017
Bay Park Life Groups – Leader

The era in which we are now living, between these two advents, is “the day of salvation,” the intermission in which the Spirit is bringing a remnant from all nations to Jesus Christ. It is therefore a universal mandate, precisely because the kingdom is identified not with any nation on earth but with God’s heavenly mission to all peoples. There is not something called Christianity and then missionaries who spread it. Christianity is in its very essence is a mission to the world. If it is not reaching teaching, baptizing, and multiplying disciples, it is not Christianity.¹

What a privilege and joy it is for us to be on God’s kingdom mission together! May God use your time together to grow our faith, hope and love for all things Jesus!

1. Finish one of the following:
 - A funny thing happened to me this past week . . .
 - What I love about our times together is . . .
 - My favourite family tradition is . . .

Read Acts 14:1-20

2. Picture yourself as Paul (Paulette), Barnabas (Barnetta) or one of the new converts. How might you have responded to the events as they unfolded? In what way might you have been like those in Acts 14? In what ways different?

Here’s a great opportunity to remind people that it was the power of the Holy Spirit at work in ordinary people that won the day, not the power of who they were as humans. Too often we get down on ourselves as though we could never be like those we read of in scripture because our focus is on us not the God who redeems, calls, indwells and empowers. A couple great follow-up questions might be: How might your Monday to Sunday life be different if you were more Spirit led? What can you do to experience more of God’s indwelling and empowering presence? Cf Acts 13:2-3, Galatians 5:13-26.

Note: If you end up spending most of your study time here you have not wasted your time! Discipleship is about knowing where the itch is and working it through with people. Discipleship is not finishing all the questions just because. So pray that the Holy Spirit would grant you wisdom as to what’s best for your group discussion.

3. How would you describe the people of Lystra given their reaction to the miracle of a healing?

¹ Michael Horton, *The Gospel Commission*, (Baker Books, 2011) p 87

Some have argued that educated people tend to be sceptical of miracles and the supernatural. The crowd's reaction certainly shows that they were probably not educated Romans but more superstitious pagans. This is reinforced by a local legend that also helps explain their response: *According to the legend, Zeus and Hermes once came to "the Phrygian hill country" disguised as mortals seeking lodging. Though they asked at a thousand homes, none took them in. Finally, at a humble cottage of straw and reeds, an elderly couple, Philemon and Baucis, freely welcomed them with a banquet that strained their poor resources. In appreciation, the gods transformed the cottage into a temple with a golden roof and marble columns. Philemon and Baucis, they appointed priest and priestess of the temple, who, instead of dying, became an oak and a linden tree. As for the inhospitable people, the gods destroyed their houses.*²

Note that Paul & Barnabas likely didn't understand the subtleties of the local dialect until they saw the crowd about to sacrifice to them (14:11).

Here's a great resource should some of your people want to talk about the miracle of healing and how it applies to us today.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/adrianwarnock/2017/10/top-ten-healing-dos-donts/>

4. Read the quote below and answer:

- Have you experienced or practiced this?
- Who in your sphere of influence might you try this with and how?

*To Jews, Paul starts his communication of the gospel with their Scripture (Acts 13). To philosophers Paul starts with the truth in their philosophy (Acts 17). With religious people, Paul starts with the truth in their religion (Acts 17). And with unsophisticated, uneducated people in Acts 14 Paul starts with nature and their own inner experience. Obviously, before we speak, we need to listen. Before we become teachers, we need to become students – not only of Jesus, but of those we wish to love in his name.*³

~ Bruxy Cavey

Read Acts 14:21-28

5. Throughout acts we see that being a Christian is a commitment to joining Jesus' life, Jesus' community, and Jesus' mission.
- Can you find the parallels to this definition of a Christian in Acts 14?
 - How might the story been different if one of the commitments had not been followed through in Acts 14? Give examples.
 - Which of the three core commitments to you find most enjoyable? Least?

² Gangel, K. O. (1998). *Acts* (Vol. 5, p. 233). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

³ Bruxy Cavey, *Plot Twist – When God Surprises His People*, (The Meeting House, March 2010)

6. Sunday's Acts 14:1-20 sermon ended with these 4 observations:
- Christianity is being on mission together not in the majority together. The early Christians were in the minority, never in a position of power. This never stopped them from being on mission of proclaiming God's grace to both the afflicted and the persecuting.
 - The gospel of grace is both glorious and scandalous. If people of other religious and world views can affirm and agree with everything we believe it's probably not the gospel we're preaching! Cf Mtt 10:34.
 - Hardship isn't our enemy, apathy is. Joining Jesus' life, community and mission is not about being except of trials, or going around them, but by God's grace going through them to his glory. Cf 14:22
 - You don't have to be a martyr to be on mission. When news of murderous plots surfaced, the disciples moved on.

Which of the four observations spoke/speaks to you most and why? How has God been challenging and encouraging you through them?

Read 14:27 and let it guide your prayer time together.