

Acts 14:7-28 A Decision... A Division

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[0 : 0 0] Father, again, we just want to ask you to bring insight, bring light, bring edification to your word, Lord. Lord, you say you've given us the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of you. And Lord, that's not something we need to strive for, to earn, to practice. It's something you say you give us by your Holy Spirit. And so we ask you to teach us through the Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen. So my theme tonight is of like passions, and that's a phrase in here.

That Paul will say that they are men of like passions. But misplaced passion is an uncontrollable fire. Misplaced passion is an uncontrollable fire.

So we left Iconium, and they have left there because of the persecution that was stirred up by the Jews. And in verse 5, it says, And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews with their rulers to use them despitefully and to stone them, they were aware of it and fled unto Lystra and Derb, cities of Lyconia, and unto the region that lies round about.

What did they do there? They preached the gospel. Now, I would think Paul would have a good excuse to, you know, lay it back and take it easy. You can imagine, you know, the guy traveling with poor Paul.

Here the guy's saying, no offense, Paul, but I'm thinking of requesting a mission transfer. I mean, everywhere he went, it was a ruckus. And so now they're going to get out of this area, out of Iconium, and so they don't get stoned, so they don't get persecuted, and they're heading to Lystra, and you think, hey, Paul, you know, take it easy, buddy.

[1 : 4 6] Kind of slow your roll there. But, and there they preached the gospel. There was no question as to their purpose in going to Lystra and Derb. That persecution just resulted in a greater distribution of the gospel.

And so for Paul and Barnabas, there was no question that, okay, if we're leaving one area and we go into another, that's fine. We know what we're going to do there.

We're going to preach the gospel. And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb who had never walked. And so they get there, and here's this guy who can't walk.

He's not been able to walk ever, no matter how hard he's tried. He's been this way since he was a child. You know, it's interesting, the gospels, and especially as we get into Acts, it's put in front of us a lot of times, these people that have a complete lack of something we would expect to be pretty normal and pretty basic in their life.

That we see the Holy Spirit use the apostles and use the people, use the church, the people in Acts to heal. And then to also use those signs to bring about a greater witness to the gospel.

[3 : 0 3] So here's this man. He's in Lystra. Lystra means ransoming is the name. And he's impotent or without strength in his feet. He's completely deprived of mobility.

Cripple actually means, the word means deprived of foot. So he's a cripple. He's deprived of the ability to use his feet. He's never walked.

The word walked there. Well, what does walk mean? Well, it just means to progress forward. Also means to regulate. Has the idea of regulate a walk, like a regulate because it's a regular thing. And so here's a man who he can't walk. He's never walked. He's never had the ability to progress forward. He's never had the ability to regulate his own life and his own direction, his own mobility. And he hears Paul, the same heard Paul speak.

What was Paul speaking? Well, we know from verse 7, he's going to preach the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. There's no other one. Paul didn't come with a bunch of funny stories.

[4 : 05] He didn't come with a bunch of life lessons from, you know, his childhood or whatever. He came with the gospel. And now Paul will, as we're going to see as we go on further on into the chapter, he fits the gospel to the audience, but the truth is the truth, like we said before.

And so he heard Paul speak. And Paul, who steadfastly beholding him and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, stand upright on your feet.

And he leapt and walked. The word there where Paul says, it says that he's steadfastly beholding him. Well, we've seen that before, where if you remember with Elimus the sorcerer, Paul fixed his eyes on him.

And he perceived that you were in the gall of bitterness. There's those same words. But the word perceive means to be acquainted with by experience. So he perceives because he's acquainted with this by experience.

Like, oh, okay, because Paul before had perceived about Elimus the sorcerer. Well, no, because that's the same word. Perceive, to be acquainted with by experience.

[5 : 12] So when he understands that Elimus the sorcerer is in the gall of bitterness, well, where's this experience coming from? Well, it's his experience with the Holy Spirit. It's experience with the Lord.

So he can perceive because of experience. He's like, hey, I know because I have experience in my relationship with Jesus. I know when the Lord is speaking to me. And I'm not going to just randomly pick a guy from the crowd and be like, you, you're going to be healed, you know, triple tithe Sunday. No, he knew. Hebrews 5.14, though, tells us that strong meat belongs to them that are of full age.

Just kind of likening maturity to your ability to process food as opposed to milk.

Even those, just like, in other words, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. So discernment, discernment in the spirit is a gift, yes, but it's also something we have to exercise.

Remember, gifts cannot be learned. They're given, but they're expected to be exercised. And so we gain experience in how we use our gifts through exercising them, through the use of them.

[6 : 25] You may have a gift of maybe you can perceive whatever about people, but that the use of that gift and how to properly use it and the timing to use it, hearing the Lord's voice in using that comes through exercising it.

So Paul perceives this. He looks at this man and he recognizes what? That this man had faith, but he had no walk. He was a man with faith, but he had no ability to walk.

And so he says with a loud voice, you know, Paul was confident in what the Lord was telling him to do. He wasn't like, hey, buddy, hey, do you think you could walk?

I mean, it seems like you believe. You want to try it? Okay, come on. No, it was with a loud voice.

And what does he say to him? Stand upright on your feet. He says, buddy, get up.

It's time to get up. Paul asked this man to do what he'd never done before. And what this man knew by experience was impossible. Because faith always asks the impossible.

[7 : 28] But here's this man who by experience knows I've tried. I've tried every way to walk and I can't. I can't do it. And sometimes it's possible where we find ourselves or someone we know finds themselves with faith.

They trust the Lord. But man, they are not progressing. They're not walking. We're just not moving forward. And the Lord uses a brother, a sister, someone to come along and say, hey, stand up and walk.

Just do it. He says, stand up on your feet. And it says, and the guy leapt. It means gush. Gush up like a well, like a spring. And the guy leapt and walked.

He was just waiting for someone to say, you can do it. Go. Do it. And that's what the body's for.

Because so many times we have faith. We may have giftings too.

And we're kind of like, oh, I don't know if I should use that here. I'm not sure. You know, the Lord speaks to me through his word. I've said this before. I'm not a dreams and visions person. I've never met an angel that I know of.

[8 : 35] Well, except my wife. But the Lord speaks to me through his word. And I've had people say to me, oh, man, you know, the Lord's given you a gift of prophesying forth his word.

I say, I don't know. All I know is I don't have anything else other than his word. If you ask me for advice, I don't have any. Because I've made a lot of dumb mistakes. You know, I was thinking there's the scripture in John where Jesus says, I only do what I see my father do.

I think, man, that'd be a great line, like, for teaching, like, a parenting seminar. You know, like, with Henry. Him and I as we're doing yard works or living life, he's observing.

And he's learning by observation. But I was thinking, man, I don't know what I'm doing. It's only the Lord that I have any knowledge or wisdom in that area. And I think all the experience I've gained has been off Lily's back, has been through the trial and more error that she had to go through. As I learned, like, whoops, that's not a good way to do that. So without the word, I don't have anything. That's all I've got is just the word.

[9 : 52] And so the Lord, you know, began to just kind of like, and in moments when I'd be talking to someone, like, a scripture would come to mind. And I'd think, oh, well, I'm not going to say anything.

I would come across really arrogant, like, super spiritual. Oh, sure, you've got a verse for everything kind of guy, you know. So I wouldn't say anything. Like, oh, this kind of seems like would apply. But I don't know. I'm probably just, you know, whatever.

But the Lord began to speak to me and just be like, hey, if I'm giving you that, just speak it. Speak it in faith. And, you know, sometimes it's a little rough. Sometimes it doesn't come out right.

Sometimes, as my kids tell me, Dad, now's not the time I need a verse.

Oh, okay. But through exercising and realizing, okay, Lord, that's, you know, that's not Satan giving me a scripture. And it's not my flesh. And so I was just like, hey, I'm just going to speak forth the word.

And I'm blessed and thrilled that the Lord speaks through his word. And I get to be the recipient of that and that he can use me to do that. But that's through taking that step.

[10 : 52] And there's sometimes where it's like, I don't want to do that. I'm not sure. I've got the faith, maybe. The gift, possibly. The walk, no. And then that person comes along and says, hey, stand up right on your feet.

It's time to make some progress here, buddy. And so what do we see? God does not help those who help himself. In fact, God helps those who cannot help themselves.

And more importantly, I think, God helps those who recognize that without God, it's impossible. It's not just that, well, I can't help myself, so God help me.

But it's those who are recognizing, man, this is impossible except the Lord do this. And that's where this man is at this point. Jesus said in Matthew 19, 26, he said, without men, this is impossible.

But with God, all things are possible. There he's referring to the rich entering into heaven because the disciples were so shocked when Jesus said how hard it is for the rich to enter to heaven.

[11 : 52] So what is our part in this? What is our part in the impossibility in faith? I think it's this. We're expected to act upon what we believe God's able to do.

So whatever it is you believe God is able to do based on his word, based on what he's doing in your life, you are expected to act upon that. If you don't, you're like this dude who's got no progress, no walk, maybe a lot of faith, but what good is it doing him?

If Paul had not said to him, stand upright on your feet, would he still be sitting there? Maybe. Maybe he would have got to heaven as a believer, a man of faith, but who never got to experience any progress in this area of life.

That's the same for us. God expects us to act upon what we believe that God is able to do. Not what we're able to do, not even what he's able to do in us or through us, but what he's able to do.

So that's this guy, and he's up, he's excited. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lyconia, I don't know what that sounds like, the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

[13 : 07] Like, wow, this is clearly a God in disguise. Definitely. But it's interesting, it says they saw what Paul had done.

They correctly saw what was done, but they incorrectly attributed it to Paul. Don't let people, don't let what people perceive to be true affect what you know to be true.

So they perceived, just as Paul perceived that this man had faith to be healed, they perceived what was done, what they thought they knew was true, but it wasn't.

And so here's an opportunity, a huge opportunity for pride in Paul and Barnabas' life. And they called Barnabas Jupiter and Paul Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

Then the priests of Jupiter, which was before their city, I like that. I mean, I just think, I kind of picture that comically. I mean, I'm sure that's where the temple was, but I just kind of like picture

like, well, it just so happens the priest of Jupiter just hangs out in front of the city.

[14:14] Come here. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates and would have done sacrifice with the people. I think it's too much VeggieTales, where all of a sudden a character just pops into sight.

You know, that's what I picture this priest of Jupiter, like, hey, I've got an ox. What do you want to do with him? And so there's a great opportunity for pride here for Paul and Barnabas. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

Okay, I say, well, it wasn't me. I mean, the Lord used me, but it was the Lord who did this. Now, he used me because of my faith and my knowledge in the word, but it was God, not me.

They didn't do that. But what we see is desperate and deceived. Man attributes to men what should only be attributed to God because they are desperate. What are they desperate for?

They are desperate to believe because it's in each of us to believe. It's within man to believe. And here, when man is desperate, then that desperation leads to being deceived because they reject the truth.

[15:15] When desperate man rejects the truth, they become deceived man. It's interesting, though. One other thing before we pass by this verse. It says they called Barnabas Jupiter and Paul Mercurius because he was the chief speaker.

So Barnabas' role, if you remember in the beginning, the church in Antioch sent Barnabas. Or no, church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, sorry, to see the work of the Lord that was going on there.

He was the man. He was the one sent. And then he goes out and finds Paul, finds Saul, and realizes, hey, this works too big for me. And the two of them go on this missions trip together, Paul and Barnabas.

Well, then we saw how it shifted to Paul and those with him. And now again, it seems like Barnabas is taking this back seat. Barnabas' role is diminishing, but his calling is not.

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. So as Barnabas' role appears to diminish, you can think, oh man, poor guy. But if he's walking in the calling that God has given him and called him to, and to the fullness of that, I don't think Barnabas is having a problem at all.

[16:22] We're going to find out Barnabas doesn't get stoned. Paul does. So Barnabas is like, hey, you know, keep talking, Paul. Eventually, we're going to see Barnabas is what I believe is kind of the role he has in all of this.

And so the priest of Jupiter comes out and he's got garlands they're going to put around their neck. You know, you just picture him. They're trying to put these things around their neck. And Paul's like, give me that thing and ripping it apart. And flowers are flying everywhere.

And then they're ripping their clothes open and everything. It's like, wow, what in the world? Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul heard it, they rent their clothes and ran in among the people crying out and saying, sirs, why do you these things?

We also are men of like passions with you. And we preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities unto the living God. And so here are these people thinking that the God men are among them.

I like how the scripture points out when the apostles, when men who have actually seen the God men, these are men who did experience, who did know and did see the God man, Jesus, saying, hey, no, no, no, no, no.

[17:34] And they left no doubt. They left absolutely no doubt about where they stood on this matter. And they removed all opportunity for pride. They ripped their clothes. They ran in and said, no, no, no, no.

They didn't leave any opportunity for the flesh or pride or for anybody to misconstrue where they stood in this matter. This is not us. This is the Lord. And then in verse 15, they say, sirs, why do you these things?

We also, and there's our phrase, are men of like passions. They're essentially saying, guys, we identify with you in your sin, in your deceit, in your desperation for belief.

And then they're going to ask them and essentially say, will you identify with us in the truth? Will you? And here's the truth as they present it. Very different than what we've seen presented by Peter and Paul so far to the Jews.

We are men of like passions with you. And we preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities. The word vanities means devoid of force, something that's devoid of force, something that's useless.

[18 : 42] So it has no, there's nothing behind it. It's just deflated. You know, it's like they're putting their trust in this vanity. It's like giving someone a popped balloon.

Hey, it's really cool. It's a balloon. It has this devoid of all force. It's useless. We are men of like passions.

Turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are therein, not Jupiter, not Mercury.

Turn to the living God. And he says this, who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. So there was a time saying where it was not so much acceptable, but it was understood that the time had not yet come of accountability for all nations.

Right now is that time. He's saying to these guys, hey, all roads don't lead to heaven, but all roads lead to the cross. And you have to decide what you're going to do with the true God man.

[19 : 47] In times past, you were left alone. You were left alone. Essentially, all nations were left alone to walk in their own ways. Nations there, again, it's ethnos, families, like we looked at in Genesis.

That God doesn't see nations like we do. He doesn't see race. He sees people groups divided into families, ethnically, as Shem, Ham, and Japheth spread across the earth.

Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness. And that he did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

And so it's an interesting presentation of the gospel. They don't have the background that the Jews have. It's kind of like where our world's getting. You don't have that background anymore of people who grew up in church, who know the word, who know Jesus.

Jesus, right? When you look back at, like when Billy Graham, when he was out in L.A., when he first started his tent preaching, and the people that were responding, when you look into the great awakenings and the response, you had people that they knew the Bible.

[21 : 05] They had grown up in it. They were taught it. And it was almost like Paul coming to them and saying, Hey, I see you have faith. Do this now. Stand and walk in that faith.

And there's like this great response, this revival. We're at a point where we're almost like where Paul's here, where you have to start at such a low basement level with people.

Be like, Hey, God's good. Let's start there. Oh, I don't think God's good. You know, my dog died and I got in a car accident. Why didn't God stop me? You have to start with the basics and see that God is good.

But I like what Paul says. If you look at some of the words here, He did good. He gave fruitful, filling, food, gladness. He says, Hey, all of these things, things that we take for granted, rain, rain from heaven, fruitful seasons, the seasons.

You know what that means? It means good. Good is not natural. Good is divine intervention. It's not something that's natural. We look at that as natural phenomena. Paul's saying that's not nature.

[22 : 07] That's God's goodness. That good is a divine intervention by God. And Paul says, Rain is good. That's God's goodness in the life of man.

And with these sayings, scarce restrained they the people. In other words, the word scarce there means with much work. And with these sayings, with much work, they restrained the people that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

So truth is not passive, is it? In the face of deception, truth isn't passive. Paul and Barnabas could have just been like, Hey, you know what? You believe what you want to believe about me.

Whatever.

But they worked hard to stop this. I mean, they're ripping their clothes. I've never ripped my clothes on purpose. But they did. You know, they're running it among them. They're working hard to convince them not to do this.

I don't know what is going on in the minds of the crowd at this point. Because they're eventually, like the next verse, going to stone Paul. I don't know if they're disappointed, if they're a little angry, a little frustrated.

[23 : 16] And I think the world's like that a lot. They get frustrated with us. Because we point out the obvious and the truth. And they almost want to be like, Leave us alone in our deception and our

lie. It makes us feel good.

And now I don't feel good. Because you brought the truth into my life. And I have to accept that something like the rain came from God. Now what am I going to do? I don't want to accept the truth. And so I don't think they're super, super excited about this.

That they're being restrained from this. So I don't know how much longer this is now between verse 18 and verse 19. There's something going on here. There's some time passing that these Jews are going to show up.

But before we jump to there, I want to kind of touch on some of these things about, we're looking at men of like passion. Because it's going to say here in verse 19, there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium who persuaded the people.

And so they're going to come and start to persuade these people. These people, Paul and Barnabas have worked so hard to persuade, not to stone, I mean, not to sacrifice to them. But look where they come from. Antioch and Iconium.

[24 : 25] I mean, guys, how far a trip was that? From Antioch of Pisidia and Iconium. You know, from Antioch, that's a hike and a half. That's a couple days walk.

And then from Iconium. All that way. Just to put the kibosh on Paul and Barnabas here. The enemy will not rest until he has silenced the truth.

His desire is for the truth to be silenced. Now, his solution to that, he thinks, is putting someone to death. Remember, the enemy believes his own press.

And he believes lies. He's the father of lies and only speaks lies. And he must, because you think he would learn that the more Christians I put to death, the more this gospel is spreading.

But the enemy doesn't rest until the truth is silenced. And so here we see these men of passion.

Proverbs 25, 28 says that he that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that's broken down and without walls.

[25 : 31] So there's no defense, no ability to guard yourself. And here, these men that were ruled by their passions, because Paul says we are men of like passions. We understand where you're coming from.

But they're being ruled by that. Men that are ruled by their passions, verse 19, are easily persuaded by the passion. And so here comes the Jews from Antioch.

They are passionate. And they're like, listen to us. These guys aren't gods. In fact, they're against God. And we're here to put a stop to them. Join us. And they're like, yes! Proverbs 22, 24 says, Like we said in the beginning, Misplaced passion is an uncontrollable fire.

So unregulated passion as well. Romans tells us there is a passion, a zeal, Scripture calls it, which is a positive thing. Romans 10, 1 through 3, Paul says, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.

For I bear them record that they have a zeal, a passion for God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

[27 : 05] You say, wait, where's the positive part in that? Well, if he says to them that they have a zeal, but not according to knowledge, because they're ignorant of God's righteousness, they're trying to establish their own righteousness, and have not submitted to God's righteousness, that means if you reverse all that, then there is a passion and a zeal, which is according to knowledge.

According to God's righteousness, establishing my righteousness on God's righteousness and submitting myself to God and his righteousness. That means then that there is a zeal and a passion that's according to knowledge, the knowledge of God and his word.

But these men, they are of unbridled zeal and passion, and so they're being easily persuaded here.

In verse 19, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. We're going to find out that a bunch of the disciples are going to stand around his dead body, kind of stand there.

I always wonder in these moments, where is everybody? Right? They grab Paul, they're going to stone him. There's nobody willing to be like, take me too, I'm coming with you, Paul. And Barnabas is like, see you, Paul.

[28 : 21] Finally got this ministry back to myself. No, he didn't say that. Not at all. For whatever, whatever was happening, the mobs grabbed Paul, and before you know it, before anyone could do anything, they've stoned him, and they supposed him to be dead.

The word supposing there, it says they are supposing he had been dead, means to hold by custom or usage, or to own as a custom or usage. In other words, we can tell you're dead, because according to all the other dead people we see, according to the custom of the dead, and the usage we've had in that way, you're dead.

You're not breathing. You're not moving. Your eyes are rolled back. You're dead. We are supposing you're dead. But what do we walk by?

Faith, not by sight. Which is why I kind of like the fact that it says, how be it, as the disciples stood round about him. I kind of like, like to think, maybe there's a couple of them standing there going, get up, Paul.

You know, come on, Lord. You're not done with him yet. They're standing around. The world's walked away. Remember, like we said, where we said that, back where it said, that they supposed them to be the priests, that what the world supposes to be true should not influence on what we know is true.

[29 : 41] Well, here, they're supposed he had been dead. They were, they were dead wrong. He wasn't dead. He was just taking a little nap. And when the, and how be it, as the disciples stood round about him, he arose up, came into the city.

Isn't that interesting? He, that when Paul asked this man who has never walked to stand and walk, they're ready to make him a God. Now he's actually come back from the dead and nobody cares. Moments passed.

Who cares? Whatever. But I think you also see that, that the Lord has, has his specific use for signs and wonders. You know, when Jesus says that signs and wonders will follow those that believe. That when he uses signs and wonders throughout the book of Acts, it's, it's always in context of furthering the gospel. So he knows. And this, this was for Paul and the disciples. This wasn't for the world being raised from the dead.

And so then it says, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derb. You know, Paul went back into the city and he was ruled not by passion, but by purpose.

[30 : 47] Paul had a purpose and he knew what it was. It was to preach the gospel. So he came back into the city. He's not all hyped up. It's like, all right, next day I'm going to keep with the plan. We preached at Lystra. Let's go to Derb.

I'm like a stone there too. But hey, guess what? I just found out. Stoning can't keep me down. Stoning can't take me out. It hurts, but it couldn't keep me down.

Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names hurt worse. And when they had preached the gospel to that city and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch. They had taught many. I like that. When they preached the gospel, and what? They called and made many disciples. That means follow up. They didn't just throw the gospel at them. Follow up. You don't just, you know, shotgun the gospel and think, well, let's see what happened.

Like, you see right here that they were to make disciples because that's what Jesus said to do, to go and to make disciples. The idea is to make mature believers who are able to progress in their walk.

[31 : 54] And so they're coming back through all of these cities, confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith and that we must, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom of God.

Confirming, the word confirming the souls means to render more firm. So they're coming back through and they're rendering more firm the souls. Hey guys, look, I was stoned. Here I am. I'm still here. Think of the news that may have come back to these cities. Paul was killed. Oh, the ministry's falling apart. Oh my word, he's on the run. He's kind of like, he said, no, stand firm. Be more firm in this. And exhorting them to continue, the word continue, to remain, to persevere, to be true to. He says, hey, be true to this.

Don't turn from this. Continue in the faith and that we must, oh, this is a tough one, through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God. I don't usually preach that.

[32 : 54] You know, it's not like, oh, how can I edify you? You having a hard week? Let's pray. Lord, just lift this hardness and this burden. You know, we don't usually say, Lord, just let, let sister so-and-so know that this tribulation is how she gets into the kingdom of God.

Wow, thanks. Going to a new church now. But, the word tribulation there, it just means to be pressed. That through much pressing, we must enter into the kingdom of God. Paul's desire is the

truth and for these people he built up in the truth.

It's not going to do him any good to be like, hey, don't worry, this will never happen to you. It only happens to me, this persecution. Jesus said in John 13, 16, he said, truly, truly, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that sent, that is sent greater than he that sent him. Speaking to his disciples there. And then he repeats that in John 15. He says, if the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love his own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. I.e., the reason you cannot be part of the world system and why politics, Christian politics, is never going to save America.

[34 : 10] Because it's the world system. And the world will hate you when you're in their system because you're not part of the world. If you're of the world, the world would love his own, but because you're not of the world.

But I've chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you in John 13, 16, the servant's not greater than his Lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

If they've kept my saying, they'll keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake because they know not him that sent me. What's the upside to that?

Well, the upside is that Jesus has taken us out of the world. The world is the one who's persecuting. Which do you want to be part of? Which do you want to get along with? And so Paul is kind of warning them and saying, don't worry about this world.

They're going to persecute you, but so what? They can't kill you. If God wants to raise you up, he'll raise you up. And the end is heaven. And this is Paul's heart.

[35 : 09] And Timothy, if you remember, he writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3.10. He says, but you've fully known my doctrine. You've known my manner of life, my purpose, my faith, long-suffering, agape love, and patience.

You've known my persecutions and my afflictions. And they came unto me, here he references where he is, at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

I would like to experience the Lord's deliverance in my life, but that means I have to be in a place I need to be delivered from. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Guys, through much pressing, we must enter the kingdom of God. We must, through much pressing. It's not an option. It's one of those mandatory things.

Verse 23. And when they had ordained or appointed them elders in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed. And so this section, this is where I think Barnabas comes in.

[36 : 12] What's Barnabas' name mean? Son of consolation or son of comfort, right? I think he's a back-end guy. I think Paul's the front man. He's doing the gospel preaching and he does teaching for sure.

I mean, hello, our entire doctrine is based off of his writings. We know when he was in Corinth, he spent years teaching in the school of Tyrannus. But here where it says confirming the souls, exhorting them, I think that was Barnabas.

I think he was right there. I think that was kind of where he shined the most. Unseen, unheard of. But without him, these churches would have floundered. We need people that are willing to not just be the pizzazz guy, but the one who's willing to come and support.

And so they appointed elders in every church. And when they prayed and with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed. So the selection process for the church, very different than how the world selects its people, isn't it?

The selection and preparation for position in God's kingdom, it's very much different than how the Lord would select and prepare. What do they do? They prayed and fasted. Fasting.

[37 : 25] Fasting is what? It's removing ourselves from this world to partake in the next. It's purposely saying, I want to partake in more of the world to come and the world of the Spirit than in this world. And for the position these men were stepping into, there was nothing they could do in this world that could prepare them.

2 Corinthians 3, verse 5, 6, and then verse 12. One of my favorite sections. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who's also

made us able ministers of the New Testament.

Not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. We are not sufficient of ourselves.

Our sufficiency is of God. There's nothing we have in ourselves that makes us sufficient. So it is right and proper that these men would seek preparation through prayer and fasting.

And then it says, and they commended, literally means to set before, and they set before them to the Lord. In other words, they set them before the Lord. So Lord, here they are. What do you want to do with them on whom they believed?

[38 : 39] So after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. Let me look at our map again real quick to round this out. They're kind of coming back through now. After they had passed through Pisidia, that's where Antioch is, they came to Pamphylia.

They're down in the region now. Pamphylia is not a town. It's a region, and it's down along the coast of the Mediterranean. And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Atea.

So here they're continuing to preach. We don't get a lot of information about what's happening here, but we know Paul's method. He's going to go to the synagogue. He's going to go to the Gentiles.

And from thence, they sailed to Antioch, where they're going back home, from whence they had been recommended, literally given into the hands, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

That is a cool verse. They've been recommended, they've been given into the hands of God's grace for the work which they fulfilled.

Paul and Barnabas, they made full the work, right, that God had given them to do by making full use of God's grace. There was a work to do, but they recognized it was God's grace.

[39 : 55] And then Paul's going to come back now and he's going to give this little missionary update to the church in Antioch. And he says, when they were gathered, when they were come and had gathered the church together, when they assembled them.

Now this is interesting, right? There's a movement today among some people and within the church in the West that like we should have home churches. Because that's how it was in the book of Acts. Well, this isn't a home church. This is when they were come and had gathered the church together, when they had assembled the entire church in Antioch together in one place.

They rehearsed all that God had done with them. Cool phrase. All that God had done with them. All that they had done for the Lord? Nope. All that they had done with the Gentiles?

Nope. All that God had done with them. Because why? They've been given into the hands of God's grace. So when they were sent, there's a really cool picture, when the church sent them, they recognized we're just handing them over to the Lord for the Lord to do with them what He will.

[41 : 03] They're going to come back and tell us all that God did with them. Very different perspective than we're sending you out to go and do something effective and productive and I hope you come back and have a good report. It's expecting the Lord to take them up and to use them.

They rehearsed all that God had done with them and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. God opened that door. Nobody else could. And they there abode a long time with the disciples.

Or in other words, Paul and Barnabas were getting filled back up. How was it that God filled them back up? Through fellowship, wasn't it? They abode there a long, that word again, long, we looked at it before, to wear away time.

Like that. So they wore away a lot of time with those disciples. They were getting filled up with fellowship. But only the cross could fit the lock to the door of faith.

Right? Only the cross fits the lock to the door of faith that opened the door to the Gentiles. There was no other way that they would be saved or brought in. And what an awesome testimony to come back to this church and tell them all that God had done.

[42 : 14] Unfortunately, as we go into the next chapter, well, fortunately and unfortunately, God uses these things to move forward his work, even when it looks like maybe disagreement or maybe division or something here with those that are going to say that, oh, you must be circumcised.

And then they're going to have to go up to Jerusalem and have the first church council. But if you remember that verse we looked at in Romans 10 where he says that Israel had a zeal but it was not according to knowledge.

And so there's a zeal that is according to knowledge, right? Paul and Barnabas had this zeal. They had a passion. And it came through knowledge of God by faith in his word.

So their desire and their zeal to serve the Lord, it was according to the correct knowledge that, hey, this is God who's doing this and we want to be part of that.

And then I liked where we had read at the end of 2 Corinthians, not that we are sufficient of ourselves. In the verse 12, Paul then says, seeing then we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.

[43 : 25] And so that's all it is. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word. Great plainness of speech. Very simple. All of these things that have come out of it, the Gentiles coming to faith, Paul coming back to life, it's all because they believed the word of God.

God desires us to be passionate and zealous in our faith. He also expects us to act on what we believe to be true about God.

And when we don't, we get stuck like that man in Lystra. He's stuck there because he believed God. He believed much about God, but he was not acting upon it.

And that's what we have one another for. So, you know, if there's an area in your life you need to move forward in, hey, get prayer. Let God speak into your life that zeal and that passion that's according to the knowledge of his word.

Lord. So, Father, thank you. Thank you for this picture, Lord. Thank you for Barnabas, Lord. I've just been thinking about this guy. I would have liked to have met him and I will someday. Such a humility, such a willingness to take a back seat when, Lord, he sees your work being done and recognizing it's you doing it.

[44 : 46] I think that's the key. So, Lord, here we are. I pray that, Lord, you'd use us, Lord, to help one another progress in our walks. Use us, Lord, to apply that key, the key of the cross of Jesus Christ to open the door of faith.

And, Lord, I pray you'd give us a zeal and a passion for you that whatever the world thinks, we would not be passive with the truth, but, Lord, we would, like Paul and Barnabas, work hard against deception.

We love you and we thank you and in Jesus' name, amen.