

Bible Study Group Notes

Acts 14.1-7

THE BIG PICTURE

Paul and Barnabas are on their first missionary journey. After opposition in Pisidian Antioch, they travel to Iconium and speak about Jesus in the synagogue. Many Jews and Gentiles believe, but others stir up hostility.

Luke describes their message as the word of God's grace. The Lord confirms it through signs and wonders, yet the city remains divided. God's work and human opposition are both present.

Paul and Barnabas stay and speak boldly. When they learn of a plan to attack them, they move on and continue preaching elsewhere. Their circumstances change, but their commitment to sharing the gospel continues.

INVESTIGATE

Read Acts 14.1-7.

1. In verse 1, where do Paul and Barnabas begin speaking, and how do people respond?
2. What do the unbelieving Jews do in verse 2? How does this affect the situation?
3. Look at verse 3. How do Paul and Barnabas respond to the opposition? What is striking about their decision to stay?
4. Why is the description "the word of his grace" important? What does it tell us about the message they are proclaiming?
5. What does the Lord do in verse 3? What are the signs and wonders intended to confirm?
6. How does the opposition develop in verses 4-5? What prompts Paul and Barnabas to leave?
7. What do verses 6-7 show about their priorities? How do staying in verse 3 and leaving in verse 6 both serve their mission?

REFLECT & APPLY

Feel free to choose the questions that will be most helpful for your group, allowing time for prayer.

8. What makes you hesitant to speak about Jesus? Which part of this passage challenges or encourages you?
9. How would you explain the good news of God's grace to someone who thinks Christianity is mainly about being good enough?
10. What is the difference between speaking boldly and being argumentative or insensitive? How can grace shape both our message and our manner?
11. How do you tend to judge whether sharing the gospel has been worthwhile? What does the range of responses here teach us?
12. What might help us distinguish between a situation in which we should persevere and one in which it is wise to withdraw? What can we learn from the decisions here?
13. How can we support Christians who face serious opposition, without assuming their circumstances are the same as ours?
14. Who could you pray for and look for an opportunity to speak with about Jesus? What might a faithful next step be?

PRAY

- Thank God for the gospel of his grace and for those through whom we heard it.
- Ask for courage, kindness and clarity when we speak about Jesus.
- Pray for Christians facing hostility, that God would give them endurance, wisdom and protection.
- Pray for people known to the group who do not yet believe, and for opportunities to share the good news with them.

NB The Church Prayer Pointers for October are available in church or on the WhatsApp group.