

Bible Study Group Notes

Acts 14.19-28

THE BIG PICTURE

Paul has been stoned in Lystra and dragged outside the city, assumed to be dead. Yet he gets up, returns to the city, and then travels with Barnabas to Derbe, where they preach the gospel and make many disciples. They then retrace their steps through places where they have faced hostility. They strengthen the new believers, encourage them to continue in the faith, and explain that entering God's kingdom involves many hardships. They appoint elders and commit the churches to the Lord with prayer and fasting. Back in Antioch, the church that sent them hears what God has done through them and how he has opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. Mission includes both bringing people to faith and helping churches grow in faithfulness. Throughout it all, the missionaries and the churches depend on God's grace.

INVESTIGATE

Read Acts 14.19-28.

1. What happens to Paul in verses 19-20? What does he do afterwards, and why is that remarkable?
2. What happens in Derbe in verse 21? Where do Paul and Barnabas go next? Look back at Acts 13:50 and 14:5-6 to recall what they faced in those places.
3. In verse 22, what do they do for the disciples? What does this suggest new Christians need after first believing?
4. How do the call to continue in the faith and the warning about tribulations fit together? What future hope is held out in verse 22?
5. What provision do they make for each church in verse 23? What do prayer, fasting and committing believers to the Lord show about their dependence on him?
6. Look at verses 24-26. Where do they finish their journey? What does verse 26 remind us about how their work began?
7. When the church gathers in verses 27-28, what do Paul and Barnabas report? Who receives the credit, and why is the opening of faith to the Gentiles significant?

REFLECT & APPLY

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

8. What expectations do we have of the Christian life? How does verse 22 challenge the idea that trusting God should make life straightforward?
9. When following Jesus is costly, what helps you continue in the faith? How does the hope of God's kingdom strengthen us?
10. What is the difference between offering someone general reassurance and strengthening them as a disciple of Jesus?
11. Who might need encouragement to keep following Christ at present? How could you or the group offer that encouragement this week?
12. How can we support and pray for those who teach and care for our church? How does verse 23 guard against depending on leaders as though everything rests on them?
13. What can St Peter's learn from the missionaries' concern both to make new disciples and to strengthen existing believers? Where might we need to grow?
14. What could we share with one another about God's work that would encourage faith and gratitude? How can we do this honestly, including the difficulties?

PRAY

- Thank God for his grace, for bringing people to faith, and for sustaining his people.
- Pray for Christians facing hardship, that they would continue in the faith with their hope fixed on God's kingdom.
- Pray for church leaders and for our group, that we would strengthen and care for others while depending on the Lord.
- Ask God to open doors for the gospel and help us recognise and give thanks for what he is doing.

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