

PAUL AND BARNABAS IN LYSTRA

Acts 14:8-28

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Paul and Barnabas

Key-location: Lystra

Key-repetitions:

- Reactions to Paul and Barnabas: treated as gods (Ac 14:11-13,18); persecuted (Ac 13:45, 50; 14:19).
- Facts about God: God created (Ac 14:15); gave testimony of his existence (Ac 14:17); showed kindness (Ac 14:17).
- Paul and Barnabas' activities: they traveled (Ac 14:6, 20, 21, 26); Paul healed (Ac 14:10); they spoke the gospel (Ac 14:14-17); strengthened believers (Ac 14:22); appointed spiritual leaders (Ac 14:23); reported to Antioch (Ac 14:27).

Key-attitudes:

- Crowd's excitement over Paul healing the crippled man.
- Paul and Barnabas' desperation to prevent the crowd from worshiping them.
- Non-believing Jews' antagonism toward the preachers of the gospel.
- Paul and Barnabas' concern for new believers in the new churches.

Initial-situation:

Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark left the church at Antioch of Syria to begin their first missionary journey. They first went to the Island of Cyprus where the governor was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. Saul and Barnabas took a ship from the Island of Cyprus to Perga where John Mark deserted them and returned to Jerusalem (Ac 13:13).

Paul and Barnabas traveled to Antioch of Pisidia. (*Saul was his Hebrew name and Paul was his Roman name. When the team began to deal with Romans more than with Jews, Saul switched to the name Paul. Also, at this point, Paul replaced Barnabas as the leader of the missionary team.*) Many believed and the Lord's word spread through the whole region. But some Jews stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. They traveled to Iconium and the people of the city became divided; some opposed the team and others supported them. A plot developed to stone Paul and Barnabas, so they fled to Lystra.

Initial-problem:

In Lystra, Paul healed a crippled man. The crowd shouted, "The gods have come down to us."

Final-situation:

Paul and Barnabas then headed back to Antioch of Syria, the starting place of their missionary journey.

BIBLE STORY

Paul and Barnabas escaped from towns that had persecuted them and traveled to Lystra. A man crippled from birth lived in Lystra. Paul looked at the crippled man and saw that the crippled man had faith to be healed. Paul shouted, "Stand up on your feet!" The man jumped up and began walking.

The crowd shouted in their language, "The gods have come down to us; the gods look like humans!" The priest of the god Zeus brought bulls with flowery wreaths around their necks to the city gates to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas.

But Barnabas and Paul tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, "Men, why are you doing this? We're only men; we're human like you. We bring you good news. We're telling you to turn from these worthless gods to the living God. The living God made heaven, earth, and the sea and everything in them. In the past, God allowed all people to go their own way. Yet he gave testimony of his existence. God showed kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons. God provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." It was difficult for Paul and Barnabas to keep the crowd from sacrificing to them (Ac 14:8-18).

Some Jews came from other towns that had persecuted Paul and Barnabas. Those Jews persuaded the people in Lystra to turn against Paul. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city when they thought he was dead. Those who followed Jesus gathered around Paul. Paul got up and went back into the city. The next day Paul and Barnabas left the city (Ac 14:19-20).

Soon afterwards, Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, where they had visited and preached. In those cities, they strengthened the believers and encouraged them to remain faithful. They warned the believers, "It's necessary to suffer many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God." They appointed spiritual leaders (*or elders*) for each church. They prayed, fasted, and entrusted the spiritual leaders to the Lord (Ac 14:20-24).

Paul and Barnabas then headed back to Antioch of Syria, the starting place of their missionary journey (Ac 14:25-28).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 4. What problems did the characters face? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |

7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened when Paul healed the crippled man in Lystra?
2. What has been the biggest misunderstanding about Christianity that you have dealt with in your life?
3. How have you observed people misunderstand the gospel because of their prejudices or beliefs?
4. What did Paul emphasize about God in his speech?
5. Where did the opposition originate against Paul and Barnabas in Lystra?
6. What lesson do you gain from the fact that the crowd at Lystra first called Paul a god, but in the end tried to kill Paul?
7. What did Paul and Barnabas do in the towns they had previously visited?
8. Why is it important to encourage fellow believers in their walk with the Lord?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **People who refuse to believe in Jesus may deteriorate and oppose the gospel.** Many times in Acts, those who refused to believe in Jesus, soon became active in opposing the messengers of the Good News (Ac 13:45, 50; 14:19; 17:5-8, 13; 18:6, 13; 19:9; 28:24).
2. **God's servants cannot always trust human praises, because those who honor them may turn against them.** After a crippled man's cure in Lystra, the crowd wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods (Ac 14:8-13). That same crowd later stoned Paul and left him for dead (Ac 14:19).
3. **Failure does not make God's servant a failure.** Paul constantly followed the same tactics. Paul shared the Good News first with the Jews and, only after their refusal, he went to the non-Jews (Ac 13:14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:10-17; 18:4, 19; 19:8; 28:17). Paul failed in his attempt to evangelize the Jews; however, he was successful in evangelizing non-Jews.
4. **Christians have a responsibility to support and encourage new believers.** Paul and Barnabas returned to visit the new believers in the cities where they had been threatened and physically attacked. It was dangerous for them to return to those towns; however, they had a responsibility to encourage the new believers (Ac 14:21-22).
5. **Churches need Holy Spirit-led leaders.** One of the reasons Paul and Barnabas risked their lives to return to cities where they had been physically attacked was to organize the churches' leaders (Ac 14:23).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. **Chant:**

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

ALL	
“I have told you these things, so that in me you <u>may have peace</u> . In this world <u>you will have trouble</u> . But take heart! I <u>have overcome</u> the world” (John 16:33 NIV).	
GROUP 1	GROUP 2
I have <u>told</u> you these things,	so that <u>in me</u> you may have <u>peace</u> .
In this <u>world</u>	you <u>will have</u> trouble.
But <u>take</u> heart!	I <u>have overcome</u> the world.
ALL	
“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33 NIV).	

2. **Pantomime Retelling of the Story:**

The storyteller tells the story one time. Then the storyteller:

- Asks for a volunteer to pantomime the story as the storyteller tells the story of Paul and Barnabas in Lystra a second time. As the storyteller retells the story, the volunteer pantomimes it.
- Invites a listener to retell the story.
- Asks listeners if the one who retold the story left out or added to the story.