

PREPARED FOR THE SENT LIFE

Acts 14:1-20

Notes

Living the sent life will have many ups and downs as
we share the gospel with a lost world

Have you ever entered a situation, relationship, job, or activity thinking it would go one way, turn out this way, only to realize that you were in no way prepared for what was happening?

Many believers are falling away because we are ill prepared for this world.

Many enter the Christian life unprepared for the journey ahead.

Whether from a lack of basic discipleship or a skewed view of how easy following Christ is, many believers are not prepared for the ups and downs of living a sent life.

We often think of the Christian life as one mountain top after another, not realizing that between each mountain top is a torturous journey of jagged rocks, deep valleys, and hidden snares.

Think about your own walk with Jesus.

How often do we go into a situation with one set of expectations knowing God is going to do “this” and instead having our world turned upside down because he did something else?

My hope today is that we can see that living for Jesus has unexpected experiences and, in order to follow Christ through those experiences we need to be prepared so we can grow in Christ and bring him glory.

Paul, Barnabas, and crew are run out of Pisidian Antioch and travelled 90 miles southeast to Iconium.

Iconium was a strong Roman city with Greek influences. The city was an agricultural and trade center. The city was a cultural amalgamation with a mix of several Gentile cultures and little to no Jewish influence.

This story shows us there are several things in which we need to prepare for if we are going to be serious about living a sent life in a dark world.

The first thing we need to be prepared for is:

BE PREPARED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN WORD AND DEED (1-10)

In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. ² But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the

brethren. ³ Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands. ⁴ But the people of the city were divided; and some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. ⁵ And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, ⁶ they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; ⁷ and there they continued to preach the gospel.⁸ At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹ This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and began to walk.

Paul and Barnabas arrive in town, and they preach the gospel in the synagogue and many people come to faith in Jesus.

Some Jews who did not believe didn't like what was going on, so they stirred up the people.

Notice what happens in verse 3. You would expect a "so they left," but Luke says "therefore."

Paul and Barnabas stayed in the town even with a level of persecution and difficulty and evidently stayed for a while.

Verse 3 tells us their message was confirmed through signs and wonders.

Their gospel message of life was supported by a life-giving lifestyle.

Through the signs and wonders more people came to faith in Christ.

Then in verse 4 we see the people were divided. Some liked the message and others hated the message.

There was a plot to stone them. Paul and crew discover the plot and head out to a small town called Lystra and Derbe to continue their ministry.

Lystra was a small country town with no Jewish synagogue which lay about 20 miles south of Iconium.

While there Paul sees a man crippled from birth. Luke tells us the man heard Paul's message and Paul saw the faith in his heart displayed on his face.

In response, Paul healed the man and he jumped up and began to walk.

Notice two crucial elements here which are the bedrock for the rest of our time together.

- They preached the gospel
- They lived the gospel

What about you? Are you actively making and growing disciples? Sharing the gospel? Are you actively growing as a disciple? Are you actively serving Christ-in the church? In your family? In your community?

We must, must be a people who not only share the gospel, but also display the gospel in our lives.

The second way we need to prepare for the sent life is to give God the glory.

BE PREPARED TO GRIEVE OVER SIN (11-17)

¹¹ When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us." ¹² And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³ The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. ¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out ¹⁵ and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. ¹⁶ In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; ¹⁷ and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

The crowd sees the miracle and then the people began shouting in their native tongue that Paul and Barnabas were actually the gods Zeus and Hermes.

Can you imagine Paul and Barnabas's surprise? They performed a miracle then suddenly, the people began shouting and they see temple priests begin bringing out bulls and wreaths.

They realize what is going on and they are heartbroken over this.

They tore their clothes, signifying their dismay and sorrow over this misunderstanding.

They did not make the same mistake King Herod made in Acts 12. In Acts 12 the people attribute God's glory to Herod and Herod accepts it and revels in it. Consequently, God struck him dead for stealing his glory.

In contrast, Paul and Barnabas realized that only God deserves glory, and they were horrified that people thought they actually were the source of the miracle.

Imagine their shock. They truly thought things were going to go one way, only to have them turn out another way.

In their response we see an honest truth- the world will not always respond to the gospel appropriately.

Be quick to give God the glory. One of our greatest temptations is to think that our accomplishments, promotions, talents, and achievements come simply through our hard work and dedication.

Another principle comes here and that is that we are to be grieved by sin.

Paul and Barnabas were legitimately grieved over the sin of the people.

In response to their sin Paul shared the gospel with them and he shared in a way they could understand.

They did not have the background to understand a Messiah. Paul had to start where they were at in their understanding.

Their grieving over sin led them to share the gospel.

Sin should grieve us. We should hurt at the sin of the world.

We should look at the world and be hurt by its sin, not because we are better than the world, but because we know the truth of the end of sin-death and hell.

Might I add that as much as we are grieved by the world's sin, we should grieve over our own sin all the more.

What about you? Are you grieved over your sin?

Part of living a gospel-centered sent life is allowing the gospel to wash over you daily. As the gospel washes over you it brings sin to the surface.

Once we see our sin in light of the gospel, we are grieved at our sin, we repent of our sin, and we are restored through that same gospel.

The next thing we need to be prepared for is opposition and pain.

BE PREPARED FOR OPPOSITION AND PAIN (18-19)

¹⁸ Even saying these things, with difficulty they restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.¹⁹ But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

Jews came from over 100 miles away to oppose them.

People will go out of their way to shut down the gospel

God will give u more than u can handle

2 Cor. 12:9-11- And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

BE PREPARED TO GET BACK UP (20)

²⁰ But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

You will be knocked down. You will be tried. You will experience troubles. Be prepared to get back up.

Christians in jail memorizing scripture so they have the Bible in their hearts. Guards can't take that away