

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide  
SB 03.14.2021



GOSPEL FIRE SPREADS

**BREAKTHROUGH – Acts 14:1-18**

## Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

The Jews were still angry about the response to the gospel and so they finally chased Paul and Barnabas out of the city. However, a large group of Christians were left behind that were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. Meanwhile Paul and Barnabas went on to the next city which was named Iconium. There a large number of both Jews and Greeks became Christians. The city of Iconium was more Greek than Roman (Modern day Turkey). Paul's ministry in the synagogue was extremely blessed and multitudes of Jews and Gentiles believed. Iconium means "Images." What a great contrast. There is the image which a man will make of himself. But there is the Image of God, in whose image we are made! The Gospel recreates a man in the image of God spiritually. You become a supernatural man, born again, but it is a process. The more clearly we see God in the mirror of our soul the more like Him we become. So Paul and Barnabas are facing opposition in Iconium. Rather than fleeing from the opposition, they stayed there a long time in order to really Root and Ground those who believed God. This also enabled the men to perform Signs and Wonders as their evidence of their "credentials," that they were indeed servants of the True and Living God. Let's get into our study...

1. What struck you or stood out to you during this week's study?
2. Over the course of the last week or two, what was your highest high and your lowest low?
3. Looking back, how do you see God at work during both the high and the low? Did you notice how He was working at the time or only in hindsight?

## Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 14:1-7

1. What opposition did Paul and Barnabas face? How did the missionaries respond to being opposed (v. 3)? How did the Lord help them?
2. What opposition have you faced doing mission/evangelistic work today? Share a story about that experience if you have one. How well did you handle it? What did you learn about God through the experience?

Verse 3 seems to be a sort of parenthetical declaration of the gospel's power even in the midst of opposition. Although their enemies sought to do Paul and Barnabas harm, God gave the missionaries a long and effective ministry. The Lord demonstrated His power by confirming the message of His grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

1. How did Paul and Barnabas respond to the growing opposition against them? What does this tell us about their relationship with God?
2. What factors likely motivated Paul and Barnabas to press on? What motivates you in your ministry efforts?
3. How can we know whether to continue to serve in the face of violent opposition or to move on to

other areas of service?

**Paul and Barnabas were driven by their devotion to Christ and the lostness of people. These two factors also motivate us to persevere in evangelistic involvement. Our devotion to the Lord, coupled with a burden for the world's lost people, will prevent us from giving up when times get tough. Ministry in the face of growing opposition is never easy. Even though God placed His stamp of approval on the missionaries' ministry at Iconium, controversy continued to mount.**

**HAVE ANOTHER VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 14:8-18.**

1. Based on these verses, what can we conclude religious life was like in Lystra? How is it similar to or different than our community?
2. The people Paul and Barnabas encountered along the way interpreted the gospel through their own lenses, even calling them Hermes and Zeus. How do people you know interpret the gospel by their own prejudices and beliefs?
3. What was one of the biggest misunderstandings about Christianity you had to overcome before you could believe?
4. How might we be misunderstood as we do good deeds to prepare for proclaiming the gospel?

**When people praise us for our ministry efforts, we are tempted to accept that praise and take pride in the good work we've done. But as we see from Paul and Barnabas's example, this praise should be reserved for God alone. When people misunderstand us or our presentation of the gospel, we must tactfully, patiently, and lovingly explain the truth to them.**

**Applying God's Word**

**What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.**

**Paul's normal routine was to enter a synagogue (at least 10 Jewish men). Because there people at least knew the Scriptures, Prophecies, and the Messiah. Paul needs to Build a cultural Bridge. So Paul begins with Creation, with Nature. Paul uses the Creator God! We do well to remember the world is the garment of the Living God. As man in made in the image of God, so earth is in the image of Heaven! "God has given you fruitful ground." Lystra was the Corn basket, like the Nebraska and Iowa of the area. God has given you fruitful seasons, given abundant crops; God has given you the rain and made Himself known through nature. Paul says, Turn from your myths and legends, listen to the Truth! Listen to the living God!**

1. What are some circumstances that might tempt us to "quit" the Christian life? When and why?
2. Seeing Paul and Barnabas's courage, faith, and endurance, how are you challenged to serve the Lord more completely? Which of those three traits do you most struggle with?
3. With what attitude should we face difficulties that come because of our faith? Read John 16:33. How does looking toward the ultimate fulfillment of our salvation help us?
4. What resources have helped you cope with difficulties you have because of your faith?

**PRAYER-** Close in prayer, asking God to give us the courage, faith, and endurance we need to persevere during the lowest of lows we face as we carry out His work in the world. Thank Him for Jesus' work on the cross, which brings us peace and hope in the day when all our hardships are removed.

***"To make the Gentiles obedient — in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." (Rom. 15:18-19)***

## **GROWTH GROUP MINISTRY**

### **VISION STATEMENT:**

To love God and love others by:  
seeing a movement of thousands of  
committed believers meeting in small  
groups all over the county, transforming  
lives, families and communities  
for the glory of God.

Matthew 28:19-20

## **GROWTH GROUP MINISTRY**

### **MISSION:**

To reach out and connect people  
into small groups where they  
can grow in Christ-likeness, get  
equipped and disciple others  
also.

2 Timothy 2:2

*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.  
"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son  
and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even  
to the end of the age." Matt. 28:18-20*

*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses;, entrust these to faithful men  
who will be able to teach others also." 2 Tim. 2:2*