

Approaching God

Read this portion Psalm 27 and begin with an opening prayer

Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.
 (Psalm 27:7-9)

Take a minute to make these words from Psalm 27 your own prayer this morning. Offer the Lord your trust and dependency. Ask him to guide you, teach you and lead you today. Ask God to give you a heart that seeks his face. Praise him that he is your Savior and hope.

Acts 14:1-18

Passage Introduction: Paul & Barnabas at Iconium

Here the pattern of events which marked Paul and Barnabas' visit to Antioch of Pisida unfolded itself afresh. They ministered effectively in the local synagogue and made many converts, not only among the Gentiles but among Jews also. But their preaching of Jesus was not appreciated by some influential members of the synagogue. A demonstration was stirred up against them, but fortunately they received advance warning of it and avoided a violent attack by leaving the city

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

Acts 14:1-18 - **1** At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. **2** But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. **3** So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. **4** The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. **5** There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. **6** But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, **7** where they continued to preach the gospel. **8** In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. **9** He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed **10** and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. **11** When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in

Notes:

the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” **12** Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. **13** The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. **14** But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: **15** “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. **16** In the past, he let all nations go their own way. **17** Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” **18** Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2-3 things you learn about God in this passage and the mission of the Gospel?
- How does the Lord confirm the word which the disciples spoke?
- In Iconium there is once again a mixed response to Paul’s preaching, similar to what occurred in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisida that we saw in Acts 13. In view of such strong opposition, why do you think Paul & Barnabas remained in Iconium a long time? (vs. 3)

Key Takeaway:

As Paul & Barnabas get wind of a plot against them, they decide to leave Iconium. In your own experience, how do you know when to hold your ground & when the battle is not worth pursuing?

Close in Prayer:

Take a minute to pray through the answer to your “Key Takeaway.” Ask God to give you discernment to love and relate with humility and boldness and patience where its needed.