



Message #31
“TRUTH & CONSEQUENCES”
(Acts 14:1-20)

The first missionary journey of Paul, accompanied by Barnabas and John Mark (until he left the others in Perga and returned to Jerusalem) was an incredible venture for many reasons, including:

- It was the first intentional missionary outreach to foreign peoples
- It was the continuing fulfilment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8)
- It was the developing realization of God’s purpose for (and through) Paul as His voice to the Gentiles

It was also an early indication of the extraordinary versatility of the apostle Paul in adapting himself to different situations; he appeared to be equally at ease with individuals and crowds, Jews and Gentiles, the religious and the irreligious, the educated and the uneducated, the friendly and the hostile.

The experiences encountered during this first missionary journey will be replicated many times over in Paul’s following years of missionary endeavour.



It is obvious that Paul had the abilities and necessary qualifications for the task that God had called him to.

There is a simple saying you might have heard: **“God doesn’t call the qualified, He qualifies the called.”**
Do you agree, or disagree, with this statement?

Discuss this statement generally and, also, specifically in relation to Paul and his call from God.

Paul and Barnabas arrived in Iconium (modern-day Konya) having been kicked out of Pisidian Antioch. Upon arriving in Iconium they followed their pattern of going to the local synagogue to meet with the Jews. It was a fruitful time with many Jews (and Gentiles) responding positively and believing the message of the Gospel. However, we then see another emerging pattern unfold....

- There was initial interest and response (Acts 14:1)
- Then some angry people stirred up some trouble (14:2)
- This was followed by persecution, threats and enforced departure (14:2-6)

This pattern, to be repeated many times over, indicates that when the gospel of Jesus Christ goes forth in power, Satan will always find ways of opposing it....either directly, or very subtly.

Acts 14:2 tells us that “the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers”.

How does Satan “poison minds” against the truth (and those who proclaim it) today?

Why do we find it so easy to use our tongues as a poisonous weapon? (see James 3:8)

Luke records that there was division in Iconium over the message of the gospel proclaimed by Paul and Barnabas. That should be no surprise...not everyone is going to respond positively to it. Unless a person is convicted by the Holy Spirit, they will be offended to hear they are sinners in need of a Saviour. Paul and Barnabas heard of a plot by opponents to stone them and so they left and went to Lystra.

In Lystra they encountered a lame man and Paul healed him (through the power of God). This brought about an embarrassing situation where Paul and Barnabas were then worshipped by the locals in the belief that they were two of their gods (Zeus and Hermes) come to pay a visit!

Once Paul and Barnabas understood what was happening, they immediately tried to urge the locals to stop this superstitious worship.

Paul took the opportunity to explain that they were just men, but that they worshipped and served the one “true God”, the Creator and Sustainer of life.

Unfortunately, things were stirred up again when a group of anti-gospel vigilantes arrived from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium and they stirred up the people to turn against Paul and Barnabas. One minute they were worshipping them, the next they started to stone them, wanting to kill them! People can be very fickle. In telling the truth and witnessing to the gospel, we should never pander to popular opinion!

We, like Paul and Barnabas, are called to proclaim the truth of the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

This will often invite opposition from others. There will always be consequences associated with the sharing of the gospel truth.

Have you ever experienced opposition from others because of your faith and gospel-sharing?

Do you find it easy to “give up”? How do you find the strength to persevere?...to keep going like Paul?

Idolatry was common in the ancient world. What “idols” do we worship today?

How would you like to have Paul as a member of your church? What difference would it make?

In what ways are we faced with the temptation to be “god” in another’s life, or to take credit for what God has done?
