

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 13TH–14TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

DIVIDED (ACTS 14:1–7) ABOUT 95 MILES AWAY

After they “shook the dust off their feet” in Pisidian, Paul and Barney went to Iconium. As usual, they went to the synagogue, and a “great number” of Jews and **Greeks** believed.

- Iconium was an interesting city. It was very pretty, affluent, and resistant to Roman culture; it favored more Greek influence.

ALSO AS USUAL, THEY RECEIVED OPPOSITION

Though his focus was shifting, Paul hadn't given up on the Jews. But as much as he tried, he continued to face strong pushback.

- We see a **pattern of success and struggle**. In wisdom, Paul stayed “for a long time” in Iconium, and God enabled him to do “signs and wonders” to give the people evidence.

A POISONING OF THE MIND

Luke says, “The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds.”

What we allow to influence us is very important.

- Matthew 6:22 tells us, “**the eye is the lamp of the body,**” 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “**bad company corrupts good morals,**” and Proverbs 13:20 says, “**a companion of fools will suffer harm.**”

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

The word brought—and will always bring—strong division (Matthew 10). The ones who rejected the gospel became violent and attempted to “mistreat and stone” Paul and Barnabas.

- **Willing ignorance of truth often leads to verbal abuse and physical violence because no rational argument exists.**

MOVING OUT TO MORE RURAL AREAS

Because it became violent in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went to the surrounding towns and preached the gospel.

- Paul was patient and displayed evidence through miraculous signs. But because they were not welcomed, they left and found people who wanted to hear truth.

GODS? (ACTS 14:8–20)

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN...

Lystra was a pagan area that didn't know anything about Hebrew religion or Greek philosophy, and they practiced very primitive idol worship. The majority of the population was also retired Roman soldiers.

- There was no synagogue, so God orchestrated another opportunity to teach.

“LAME FROM BIRTH”

There was a man who had been disabled his entire life who listened to Paul teach. After Paul **discerned** that the man believed the gospel, he told him, “Stand up on your feet!” and the man began to walk for the first time.

- Paul was a master at **meeting people where they were**. We should do the same.

WE HAVEN'T SEEN THIS REACTION BEFORE

The miracle produced a reaction previously unseen by the early church. The community proclaimed, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” They wanted to offer sacrifices.

- *An idol is an object of worship. In our spiritual confusion, we've become good at making idols out of virtually everything.*

“TORE THEIR ROBES”

When Paul realized what was happening, he quickly deflected the praise to the true “living God.” **Praise should make us uncomfortable.**

- Also, **people can have good intentions but be confused and misaligned**. In this, we must **remain humble, be kind, and direct them to the real power source.**

“TURN FROM THESE WORTHLESS THINGS”

Paul told them that there is only one God, who created all things and provides the things we need, including joy and contentment.

- **One of the greatest things we can do is politely point out that the idols of the world are “worthless” and lead to dead ends.** Just look at the evidence.

PAUL BEATEN TO NEAR-DEATH

Some prominent Jews from Antioch teamed up with some in Iconium, stoned Paul, and dragged him out of Lystra, “thinking he was dead.” But he came back into town and left the next day.

- Some believe that Paul died and was miraculously revived. More than likely, he was unconscious and left for dead.

PLANTS (ACTS 14:21–28) CONTINUING THE TOUR

Paul and Barney went 30 miles to Derbe and “made many disciples.” After this, they backtracked and “strengthen[ed] the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith.”

- **Discipleship is a command from Christ. We're not to just accept salvation but to grow and evolve to be more like Jesus.**

“NECESSARY TO GO THROUGH MANY HARDSHIPS”

Nominal Christianity is easy (and worthless), but to actually follow Jesus and “enter the Kingdom of God,” **we must walk and live similarly to how Jesus did** (1 John 2:6). This involves **sacrifice** and **suffering**.

- **True Christians find it an honor to sacrifice and suffer for Jesus.**

PLANTING CHURCHES

Paul and Barney appointed elders (pastors and leaders) in the new churches in the region and prayed, fasted, and empowered them.

- The local church is the **Bride of Christ** (Ephesians 5). It is not and will never be perfect, but it is **an integral part of the Christian faith** (Hebrews 10:25).

BACK TO ANTIOCH WHERE THEY BEGAN

Once this leg of their mission was completed, they **celebrated successes** with their church family and **took some time to rest and recharge**.

- **We can only spill what we contain. We are to pour out, but we must also intentionally get filled up.**

CAUTIOUS OF WHAT WE CONSUME

- We are not to live in isolation. To be in the world but not of it (John 17), we must be **full of the Spirit and be careful as to what influences how we think and live**.
- Remember, the Bible is the anchor of our faith. **If we will let the Word and discernment be our filters, we will be ok.**

CAUTIOUS OF RECEIVING PRAISE

- Though compliments and accolades are ok, we must be cautious not to let others make us more than what we are. **All of our success is by God's grace!**
- We have become an insecure, selfish, and affirmation-addicted society. **Christians must consciously fight this.**

CAUTIOUS OF WHAT WE WORSHIP

- **Wherever our time, money, and talent go is where our hearts are** (Matthew 6:21). In essence, this is what is most important to us.
- We must be honest with ourselves about where our deepest allegiances really lie. **It is so easy to place things above Jesus and commit the sin of idolatry.**

CAUTIOUS OF “GROWING WEARY”

- **Being a Christian isn't easy, and the pressure will only intensify** (Matthew 24).
- We're to love, minister, and “not grow weary in doing good” (Galatians 6:9, NIV). But **if we're to endure to the end** (Matthew 24:13), we must take the time to **rest, recharge**, and get **filled up** through **prayer, study, and church family**.