

Qualities of a Great Missionary, Part 2

Scripture: Acts 14:10–21

Code: 1748

INTRODUCTION

Acts 14 contains the continuing story of Paul and Barnabas, companions on the first missionary journey to the Gentiles. The good news of Jesus Christ started in Jerusalem, spread to Judea and Samaria, and now the first two missionaries, Paul and Barnabas, are carrying it to the Gentile world. It is here that we can see the pattern for being a missionary. Acts 14 narrates their journey through the area known as Galatia. Within the region of Galatia there were many states and many cities. In their travels through Galatia, as recorded in Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas exhibit the characteristics or qualities of a truly effective missionary. This chapter does not list the principles; Paul does not preach on what makes a good missionary, but in the flow of the ministry of Paul and Barnabas are revealed the qualifications. It is not a lecture; it's a living illustration.

As I read through this chapter, I said, "Lord, how do You want me to put this all together? What do You want me to say out of this chapter?" I continued to become excited about all of the things that Paul and Barnabas exhibited in their lives that make for effective Christian service. I found at least eight qualifications of an effective missionary that are on exhibit in Acts 14. These qualifications are on exhibit for all time, for every church and for every Christian in every age who serves Jesus Christ, as the keys to success in the ministry.

We have looked at the first three which I want to briefly review. The first quality of an effective missionary is...

I. THE MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. An Explanation of Spiritual Gifts

Having studied the Word of God, we do know that Christians serve most effectively when they serve through the gifts that the Spirit has given them. If I didn't have the gift of teaching, but spent all of my time teaching, that wouldn't make much sense. For me to have the gift of teaching and not spend my time teaching wouldn't make much sense either. In other words, the operation of your spiritual gifts is basic to any ministry.

B. The Exhibition Of Spiritual Gifts

1. The Permanent Edifying Gifts

Paul and Barnabas had certain spiritual gifts which are very apparent as gifts characteristic of the apostles. I also think that they are the dominant gifts that belong to the evangelists and teaching-pastors today. They exhibited the gifts of...

a. Prophecy b. Teaching c. Exhortation d. Administration

I don't know what your gifts are, but I do know that every believer has gifts to be ministered. You cannot function with the ultimate success that God has designed in areas where you're not gifted. In order to have any kind of effective service we first desire to be using people in accordance with their gifts. I imagine that that is a problem for much of the work on the mission field and in the church-- people are ministering in areas where they are not gifted or they are not ministering the gifts they do have. In 1 Peter 4:10 Peter said, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." In other words, God has given everybody gifts, and they are to be ministered. Whatever your gift is, minister it. Truly effective Christian service begins with the ministry of your spiritual gifts. You say, "I don't know what mine

are." Then you are one step removed from effectively ministering it. You say, "How do I know what my gift is?" Pray about it, ask God about it, be filled with the Spirit and He will automatically perform it through you...if you're available. God wants you to know and minister your gift.

The Apostles had the basic permanent gifts of preaching, teaching, exhortation, and administration. I believe those four gifts belong in the main to the teaching-pastors and evangelists of today. If a man is a teaching-pastor or an evangelist he needs to preach, to follow up his preaching with instruction, to exhort and encourage people to take action that is consistent with their profession of faith, and to administrate the body so it will function as a unit. Those are the gifts that the Apostles had and which are still exhibited in the leadership of the church today.

2. The Temporary Sign Gifts

C. The Execution of Spiritual Gifts

D. An Exhortation on Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:6-8 says that if you have the gift of ministry, minister; if you have the gift of giving, give; if you have the gift of administration, administrate. Use your gifts. Whatever success you experience in Christian ministry is based on the effectiveness of the ministry of your spiritual gifts.

The second characteristic of effective ministry we saw is...

II. BOLDNESS (vv. 1-7)

The key verse to this characteristic is verse 3, "A long time, therefore, abode they speaking boldly in the Lord...." Paul and Barnabas knew there was a persecution brewing in the town of Iconium. Verse 2 says, "But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren." Even though Paul and Barnabas knew that was going on, it never deterred or hindered them from preaching because they were bold. They didn't hesitate to declare what they believed to be true.

Boldness is the key to success. Once you begin to minister, Satan is always going to resist you. If you don't have boldness, you will quit at that point; and if you quit at the point of resistance, you quit before victory. Boldness helps you to push through. An effective ministry demands boldness.

Paul and Barnabas were bold. The city of Iconium had been polarized and was a powder keg, the persecution was brewing, but they continued to preach boldly. When the persecution in Iconium got so hot that they finally had to leave, they traveled only eighteen miles and continued to preach, which again is indicative of their courage and boldness.

The third thing we saw that is so necessary and basic to Christian service is...

III. DIVINE POWER (vv. 8-10)

Paul and Barnabas didn't do things in their own energy, they did them in the power of God.

A. The Position of the Cripple (vv. 8-9a)

B. The Perception of Paul (v. 9b-c)

C. The Power of God (v. 10)

1. Displayed

2. Discharged

a. The Experience of God's Power b. The Expression of God's Power c. The Energy of God's Power
Men don't have the ability to heal, neither did Paul, but God's power flowed through him. Now God's power will not flow through you in the area of healing, that was an apostolic gift that Paul had. But God's power also flowed through Paul in the area of preaching, teaching, exhorting, and administrating as he ordained the elders.
1) The Strength
The power flow was obvious in the life of Paul and the life of Barnabas. They did everything in the power of God and not in their own strength.
a) 1 Peter 4:11 -- "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth...." Don't ever minister in your own strength.
b) Ephesians 6:10 -- "...be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." We cannot minister

effectively in our own energy.c) Acts 1:8 -- "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you...." The Apostles had received all the knowledge, all the information, all the promise, and all the orders. Yet with all of that information, Jesus says, "Don't take one step until you have the Holy Spirit. With all that you know, all that you've seen, and all that you've experienced, you aren't worth anything without the energy of the Holy Spirit."d) Ephesians 3:20 -- "Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." That great verse says that we can do what we can ask; that we can do what we can think or ask; that we can do all that we can think or ask; that we can do above all we can think or ask; that we can do abundantly above all we can think or ask; and that we can do exceedingly abundantly above all we can think or ask. That's a lot of power!2) The Sourcea) Spirit-filledYou say, "Where do you get that power?" Ephesians 3:16 says, "That He would grant you...to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." In other words, the strength comes from the Spirit in the inner man. The believer cannot do anything in his own strength no matter what he knows. As Paul was filled with the Spirit of God, he saw power flow in his life, and it flowed unrestricted.Now, that power can't be bought. In Acts 8:18-20 Simon, a magician with a bag of many tricks that he had probably bought off of many magicians, saw the laying on of hands and the arrival of the Holy Spirit. He said to Peter, "How much do you want for that?" Peter said, "...Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (v. 20).b) Spirit-controlledYou obtain that power when you are saved. Second Timothy 1:7 says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." God gives you His Holy Spirit at salvation, but the power doesn't flow until you live under the control of the Holy Spirit. Some people are like a complete automobile engine with the supercharger, but they haven't found the ignition switch. The only way to turn on the power is to learn how to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.The Apostle Paul and Barnabas were under the control of the Holy Spirit so that the power flowed everywhere they went. Lame people walked, people were saved, saved people grew, people evangelized, the believers came together, and the church was organized so that it became an organism. The Spirit of God was free to do what He wanted. While Paul was in the middle of his sermon, the Holy Spirit interrupted his sermon to tell the crippled man to stand up and walk. Paul didn't have to spend eight hours in prayer to perform that miracle.Most Christians, when given an opportunity, say, "Now I've got an appointment and I might have a chance to share the gospel. I better get my life straightened out." That's not living in the fullness of the Spirit, that's preparing for the crisis. That is what is known as remedial Christianity--just shape up at the crisis times. But Paul and Barnabas lived in the fullness and under the control of the Holy Spirit. They lived spiritual lives rather than carnal lives. When it came time for great events to take place, they did because the power flow was unrestricted. You can go out to the mission field or you can approach some Christian service in your own strength, but you will not have spiritual results from carnal effort.We have now seen the ministry of spiritual gifts, boldness, and divine power. The fourth characteristic is...

IV. HUMILITY (vv. 11-18)

When someone is really functioning in their gifts, and they have boldness, and the divine power is really flowing, the temptation is to come away from that ministry and be proud. When I preach and maybe some people come forward to receive Jesus Christ, I can be tempted to say to myself, "That was really good." And just then someone will come up to me and say, "My, that was a wonderful sermon." And I will think, "I know." That's a real temptation because when you minister in the Spirit there will be results. When you see the results it is very difficult to say no to self and totally acknowledge that it is a result of God's power. The great temptation that immediately follows the effective ministry of gifts with boldness and power is pride.

The Ministry of Humility

Every effective ministry is the ministry of humility. Humility isn't a wishy-washy, spineless attitude that says, "I'm nothing. I'm lower than the scum of the earth." Humility is knowing that what happened for the good was God, and everything that happened for the bad was you. For example:

1. 1 Peter 5:5-6 -- "In like manner, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Get your perspective right.

2. James 4:6, 10 -- "...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.... Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

3. Matthew 18:4 -- Jesus said, "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Immediately after great success Satan hits you with pride, and he hit Paul and Barnabas with the problem of pride. They were in Lystra preaching when God healed the crippled man. The crowd was amazed and the temptation follows.

A. The Praise of the People (vv. 11-13)

1. The Tradition (v. 11)

"And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia [Paul and Barnabas couldn't understand them], The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."

You say, "Where did they ever get the idea that the gods had come down?" There was an old traditional story that had been around Lystra for many years. On one occasion, the two gods, Zeus and Hermes, came to earth in disguise. They came to the town of Lystra, which was a Roman colony outpost in Asia Minor. They asked for some hospitality--a place to stay and something to eat. But everybody refused them except for two people: an old man named Philemon, and his wife Baucis. They took in the gods not knowing they were anything but strangers, and fed them and kept them. The result was that the whole town of Lystra was wiped out by those two gods, but Philemon and Baucis were made the guardians of a splendid temple outside the city. When they died, they had the honor of being turned into two great trees. That story was in the tradition of Lystra. So when Paul and Barnabas pulled off that miracle, the people immediately thought that Zeus and Hermes were back.

2. The Temptation (v. 12)

"And they called Barnabas, Jupiter [Latin for Zeus]; and Paul, Mercurius [Latin for Hermes], because he was the chief speaker."

The people had witnessed the healing and they were determined not to make the same mistake and ignore the gods again. Barnabas must have been a big handsome man because Zeus was the king of all gods, and Paul they called Mercury (Hermes), the god of speech, since Paul was always the one doing the talking. Of course those two gods don't exist--they were just a part of the pagan idolatry. So they started a big celebration, but at this point Paul and Barnabas didn't have any idea of what was happening. In verse 11 the Spirit adds, "...saying in the speech of Lycaonia...." Paul and Barnabas couldn't speak that language, so they had to wonder about what was going on. The place went wild, and the people were babbling in their native tongue.

a. The Deception of Satan I am sure that Paul and Barnabas must have been tempted by this approach of Satan. They could have rationalized the situation. Paul could have said to Barnabas, "If we play this right, we could put ourselves in a position to be heard. If we are glorified and exalted, what a terrific opportunity we would have to preach the gospel." But Paul was too smart for Satan's subtle approach. In the previous town the people wanted to kill them, now in this town they want to make them gods. Satan's approach covers both ends of the spectrum; if persecution isn't successful, he will exalt you. There are two things that a Christian has to learn to handle: persecution and pride. Sometimes pride is more devastating than persecution. Pride is a disaster. If Paul and Barnabas had

succumbed to that temptation, it would have been the end of their ministry. When you start to think that what you want is exaltation in order to give you an avenue for the gospel, you're kidding yourself, but not God.^b The Disaster of PrideWhen a person seeks to be glorified in the world's eyes, that is a disaster. You don't need to be popular in the world to be successful with God, all you need is the energy of the Holy Spirit. Many people say, "If some famous person became a believer, what a ministry he would have!" But the Holy Spirit does what He wants to do through the vessels He has by the way that they are spiritually gifted and by His sensitivity. Paul and Barnabas were successful in city after city and they weren't anything special in the world's eyes.

3. The Turmoil (v. 13)

"Then the priest of Jupiter, whose temple was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people"

The people were going to make sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas. They probably wondered why the city was in such a turmoil. The priests decided that they were in fact the gods Zeus and Hermes, so they were going to sacrifice oxen.

B. The Proclamation of Paul and Barnabas (vv. 14-18)

1. The Recognition of Blasphemy (vv. 14-15a)

"Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they tore their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things?..."

Outside the city was the temple to Zeus. If the gods had descended, they were to be honored, so they got the oxen ready for a sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. But when they discovered that the town was planning a ceremony to honor them as gods, they became upset. A holiday spirit had gripped the city, the sacrificial oxen were being paraded through the streets with garlands around their necks, and when the word about what was happening reached Paul and Barnabas, they couldn't believe it. Not having understood the Lycaonian language up to this point, they rushed back into the market place and yelled, "What are you doing?" They didn't want anything from the world at all.

a. The Desecration SignPaul and Barnabas saw the priests' attempt to exalt them as blasphemy. Verse 14 says, "Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they tore their clothes...."

You say, "What does that mean?" That was a Jewish sign of desecration--that something was blasphemous.^b The Descriptive SceneIn a powerful scene in Matthew 26, Jesus is before Caiaphas. Jesus didn't say anything in response to the questions He was asked. Isaiah said, "...and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Is. 53:7b). Finally the high priest said, "...I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy!..." (Mt. 26:63b-65a). The Jews customarily tore their clothes in horror when they thought someone had spoken blasphemy. That's exactly what Paul and Barnabas did on this occasion. Only where Caiaphas did it in stupidity, Paul and Barnabas did it correctly. They tore their clothes and said, "Stop this desecration. We don't want to be exalted. We don't want to be deified."

Who is a false teacher?

A false teacher wants to be exalted and deified. Inevitably, a false prophet wants to build a cult around himself so that he might be exalted. In John 7:18, Jesus gave a test. The leaders were saying, "Why should we believe you, Jesus? Give us a reason. What gives You the right to make all these claims?" This is what He said: "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true...." You can tell who a true prophet from God is because he seeks God's glory. You can always determine who a false prophet is because he is continually exalting himself. Jesus said, "That's why you should know who I am. I have never asked for anything for Myself, I have continually given glory to God." Paul and Barnabas were true prophets

because they didn't want any glory. They could have had all they wanted. That is the false prophet's ultimate dream--to be mistaken for God. But it wasn't theirs.

2. The Revelation of God (vv. 15b-17)

a. Plain Men (v. 15b)"...We also are men of like passions with you..."Paul doesn't mean that he and Barnabas were lustful, evil men; he is saying, "We feel the same things you do. We feel pain, and hunger, and thirst; we suffer sickness; and we die. We are just mortal men. What are you doing all of this for? We are just plain old, everyday, common, ordinary human beings."b. Preaching the Good News (v. 15c)"...and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God..."Paul is saying, "We preach (Gk. euangelizo) the good news. Turn from these vanities. Paul calls their whole idol worship vanity. That word literally means, "No things." You know who they worshiped? No things. They worshiped nothing! The Greek word for "vanities" is mataion. That's what idolatry is--worshiping nothing. Can you imagine the heathen bowing down and saying, "Oh, nothing. Vain, worthless, useless nothing."Paul says, "We have been telling you the good news; stop worshiping no things and turn to the living God." Anybody who doesn't worship God, worships nothing. Whatever he substitutes for God is nothing...which is usually self. Turn to the living God as opposed to the dead nothings. Which God? Paul didn't say the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because these people weren't Jews.c. Proclaiming God (vv. 15d-17)1) Through His Creation"...who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them" You say, "They don't know that God." Yes they do. Every man knows that God. In Romans 1:18-20 Paul said, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen...." They know it from inside and they know it from what they can see "so that they are without excuse" (v. 20b). No man can say, "I don't know God," he can only say, "I reject the God whose knowledge is innate." That is exactly what happened in Romans 1:28-29, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not seemly, being filled with unrighteousness...." Every man born into the world has the knowledge of God. Paul said, "Turn from the no things to the God you know to be--the God of creation and the God of conscience.2) Through His Allowance (v. 16)"Who in times past allowed all nations to walk in their own ways." What does he mean by that? God didn't give them any written law, He didn't give them any ceremonial law, and He didn't give them any specific religious law. You say, "Then they didn't have anything." Yes, they did. You say, "If they didn't have a ceremonial law, a written law, or a religious law, what did they have?"3) Through His Providence (v. 17)"Nevertheless, He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." That is known as providence. They had no excuse. You say, "But they didn't have any written law." They had the law written in their hearts, they had the visible creation, and they had the providence of God. Every man in this world is responsible for the knowledge of God because God has written it in his conscience, revealed it in the creation, and continues to reveal it in providence.a) Acts 17:30 -- According to Acts 14:16, God did allow the Gentiles to walk in their own ways. Acts 17:30 says, "And the times of this ignorance God overlooked...." In other words, God did not fully pour out judgment on the Gentile nations because they did not have the same revelation as Israel. The principle is, "...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required..." (Lk. 12:48b). So all through the Old Testament we see Israel being judged. Sometimes we see Gentile nations being judged, but to a certain extent, God held His judgment back. But since Christ has come God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Ac. 17:30b). So Paul says, "The God that you know to be is the God that conscience tells you is, that creation tells you is, and that providence tells you is." That's a sermon on faith. Paul really believed in his heart that they did know the true God. You say, "But they didn't have the written

law."b) Romans 2:13-15 -- "(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves" (vv. 13-14). A heathen, not having the written law, can still do the things in the law. You say, "How?" Verse 15 says, "Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness..."). Israel had a codified law written on tables of stone and a sophisticated law written down by Moses, and they still ended up in sin. It didn't do a bit of good to have a law...they didn't obey it. The Gentiles didn't have the written law, but they lived up to the conscience that God had placed within them. Many Gentiles saw God in creation, in conscience, and in providence. And as Paul talked to this group, he reaped some of those ripe Gentiles, like Cornelius, who had lived up to that law. So Paul preached a sermon to Gentiles. It's the first sample of one of his Gentile sermons, and I am sure that it is only a portion. You say, "What happened as a result of the sermon?"

3. The Response of the People (v. 18)

"And with these sayings scarce [with great difficulty] restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."

Paul's sermon worked--the ceremony came to a screeching halt, reluctantly, but they did it. Paul had already preached the gospel in that town, and the addition of this sermon tied all of the truth together. What did Paul and Barnabas do? They disclaimed any honor or glory for themselves. They didn't want any. That is a characteristic of effective service to Christ.

The Humility of John the Baptist

John 1:6-8 talks about John the Baptist, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light." Who was the Light? Jesus. In John 1:15 John said, "...This was He of whom I spoke, He that cometh after me is preferred before me...." John was humble. Jesus said that John was the greatest man who ever lived. Matthew 11:11 says, "...Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist...." John's time was finally over after Jesus arrived. What happens to an introductory prophet? In John's case, he was beheaded and taken up to glory. He was through with his ministry so the Lord chose him to be a martyr. His spirit is expressed in John 3:28, "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ...." Some of John's disciples were saying, "John, we love you, we've been following you, what happens now? Everybody is going to the Messiah. What about you?" So he says, "I told you that I wasn't the Messiah to begin with." In John 3:29 he says, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled." John says, "I am like the best man at a wedding. I love the man who is getting married...he's my friend. When the wedding comes and the bridegroom takes the bride, I'm happy for my friend. This is my joy, and it's fulfilled. I don't want anything for myself; I'm just happy that the bridegroom and the bride are getting married." Then he says this, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30). That's humility. John had been the greatest prophet that ever lived, and he was ready to go. That takes a great man of character, to be at the top and just fade.

Paul and Barnabas didn't want any of the world's accolades. What are the important characteristics? First of all, the ministry of gifts, boldness, power, and humility. There is another:

V. PERSISTENCE (vv. 19-21)

This is the "never say die" attitude. It is a great quality. Apparently Paul and Barnabas stayed around Lystra for awhile.

A. The Fearful Moment (v. 19)

"And there came there certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead."

Paul and Barnabas had been kicked out of both of those towns. You can imagine that when those Jews arrived in Lystra and found them at it again that they were really upset. The stoning indicates that the Jewish antagonists had brought about the execution because Gentiles didn't stone people. They threw Paul off a little ledge and crushed him with stones. Thinking he was dead, they hauled him out to the dump and threw him in, hoping nobody would discover his body. Even though Lystra was a frontier town, there was still enough Roman law to scare them. You say, "That's enough to discourage anybody in the ministry."

Isn't it interesting how fast the fickle crowd changes? The same bunch that threw the rocks was the same bunch that said they were gods. How soon they forgot the miracle. Disillusioned fanatics are easily led into contradictory action. They grow sullen and sour, and usually they take out their resentment on the one who spoiled their illusion. Some skilled rabble-rousers appeared and whipped the crowd into a frenzy. The mindless mob was thirsty for blood, so they stoned Paul. You can imagine the scene: a mob surging through town screaming and yelling, grabbing Paul, and then smashing him to the ground and pounding rocks onto him. Then they hauled his body out of town and threw him in the dump.

B. The Fruitful Ministry (v. 20a)

"Nevertheless, as the disciples stood round about him..."

What disciples? Where did those disciples come from? They were the product of a fruitful ministry. Three of the disciples were Lois, Eunice, and Timothy. They were saved out of that community. And they grew. Acts 16:1 says, "...Timothy, the son of a certain woman, who was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek. Timothy was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium" (vv. 1-2). Timothy became a dear and precious friend to Paul, and to all of us. Those disciples who stood around Paul were about to see something exciting.

C. The Forceful Miracle (v. 20b-c)

1. Paul's Immediate Return (v. 20b)

"...he rose up, and came into the city..."

You say, "Was that a miracle?" I don't know what else you could call it. It certainly was a miracle. If I were writing this as a fictitious story, I would say that he rose up and headed for the hills, where they nursed his wounds. But Paul got up and went back into town. Now that is persistence. He was not finished yet. That slight interruption had only delayed him a few hours. He had apparently communicated a certain amount of courage to those disciples, or they wouldn't have been standing out there with him.

2. Paul's Immediate Departure (v. 20c)

"...and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe."

You say, "Now, anybody knows that he needed a couple of days to recover." Not Paul. Barnabas probably couldn't believe it, "Paul, you must be out of your mind. You were just stoned yesterday. Why don't you take a week to rest?" It was a thirty mile hike to Derbe, but they went the next day. Now that's what I call persistence. You say, "But he will rest when he gets to Derbe."

D. The Faithful Management (v. 21)

"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch."

Paul didn't rest at all. But there was a certain kind of rest-- Derbe was one of the few cities they had been to that hadn't started a riot, so God did give him a little rest. But Paul didn't rest; he never lost a day. If the Holy Spirit didn't say "the next day" in verse 20, we would have assumed that Paul rested. The next day he went to Derbe.

1. Of Time

a. The Passages 1) Ephesians 5:15-16 -- "See, then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time...." Wise people know how to maximize time. 2) Colossians 4:5 -- "Walk in wisdom toward them that are outside, redeeming the time." 3) Psalm 90:12 -- "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." b. The Profit I believe that spiritual maturity has a lot to do with how you use your time. The word "redeeming" is in the middle voice in Ephesians, and it means "buy up for your own profit, buy up for your own advantage, buy up for yourself, time." It is not clock time (Gk. *chronos*), but opportunity (Gk. *kairos*). Buy up opportunity. We call a man a fool who throws away money, but the Bible calls a man a greater fool who throws away time. Paul was stoned, but he was up and back in town to finish the job. I have known different people who have said, "I think I would like to teach a class." And they do it. But then they say, "I didn't like the way the superintendent looked at me, I'm going to quit." There are a lot of people who go to a special class, but six weeks later when it's finished and attrition has occurred, there are a few faithful remaining. What happens to persistence? Where is that "never say die" commitment that says, "No matter what happens, I believe God wants me here. I'm going to go against all odds." Melancthon, the great reformer, kept records every day throughout his ministry of lost time not spent for the Lord. Most of us don't keep records because we wouldn't dare. What do you do with your time? Are you persistent? Are you redeeming and buying up every opportunity?

2. Of Resources

Paul was never side-tracked or distracted; he just redeemed every opportunity. It didn't matter if he was beaten within an inch of his life. The people of Lystra thought he was dead-- that's how bad off he was--but that didn't stop him. You say, "How could he do it? Everybody needs a rest." Philippians 4:11-13 is Paul's secret, "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, in this to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Nothing daunted him; he was persistent. That is a great quality in Christian service.

There are five of the thrilling features of the life of two missionaries: Spiritual gifts, boldness, divine power, humility, and persistence.

Pondering the Principles

1. What is one of the main problems that occurs on the mission field? How can each Christian function with the success that God has intended?
2. In addition to having power to heal, what other gifts did Paul and Barnabas have that God empowered?
3. Why shouldn't Christians minister in their own strength? Where does the strength to minister come from?
4. When does a Christian obtain the power of God? When does the power flow in the life of the Christian?
5. When you approach Christian service in your own strength, you will not have _____ results from _____ effort.
6. What is the great temptation that will come to Christians when they are functioning in their gifts with boldness and power?
7. What is humility? What does God do for those who are humble?
8. What does Satan do to Paul and Barnabas immediately following their great success?
9. Why did the people of Lystra think that Paul and Barnabas were gods? What was the traditional story that the people based their thinking on?
10. Why weren't Paul and Barnabas able to understand what was happening in Lystra?
11. In what two ways will Satan tempt Christians? What would have happened had Paul and Barnabas succumbed to Satan's temptation?

12. What did Paul and Barnabas do when they understood that the people wanted to exalt them as gods? Why?
13. How can you distinguish a false teacher from a true teacher?
14. What was the good news that Paul was preaching to the people of Lystra? What were they to turn from? Explain.
15. How does Paul identify God for the people at Lystra? Support your answer.
16. Since the Gentiles didn't have a written law, or a ceremonial law, or a specific religious law, what was the witness that God gave to them?
17. Why didn't God pour out full judgment on the Gentile nations? What does God command all men to do since Christ has come?
18. What was the result of Paul's sermon to the people of Lystra?
19. How does Paul reveal his persistence in Acts 14:19-20?
20. What does "...redeeming the time..." mean (see Eph. 5:15-16)?
21. What was Paul's secret for his persistence (see Phil. 4:11-13)?

Pondering the Principles

1. Read Ephesians 3:14-21. Like many Christians, you probably are not sure how to turn on God's power in your life. According to Ephesians 3:16, what is the starting point of turning on spiritual power? Read Ephesians 5:18 and Galatians 5:16. What must you do in order to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Read Psalm 119:11 and Colossians 3:16. According to those verses, what is the prerequisite to being controlled by the Spirit? Read 2 Corinthians 4:16. Is your inward man being renewed and refreshed every day? How much time each day do you spend on your outward man? How much time do you spend on your inward man? By spending an increasing amount of time on your inward man-- through prayer and the study of God's Word--your inner strength will increase and you will experience more of God's power. According to Ephesians 3:17-21, what are the benefits of the strengthening of the Spirit in the inner man? What will you do today so that you can begin to turn on spiritual power in your life?
2. Does Satan tempt you more through pride or persecution? Examine the ways in which Satan attacks you. What are the weaknesses in your life that he attacks? In what ways has Satan brought persecution upon you? In what ways has Satan tempted you through pride? Which has had the most devastating effect in your life? How do you try to combat his attacks through pride? Read 1 Peter 5:5-6. In what way does God enable you to combat pride? What must you do first? In order to maintain a humble perspective, memorize 1 Peter 5:5-6: "In like manner, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."
3. If you could change anything in your life right now, what would you change? Why? Are there things or circumstances in your life that you are discontented about, but would not change? Why are you discontented? What do you think God wants to do with those things or circumstances? Read Philippians 4:11-19. Is that characteristic of you? Based on those verses, how should you evaluate your circumstances? Spend this time in prayer. Confess your discontent to God. Ask God to show you how to be content in the circumstances in which He has put you. Then you can be persistent in your walk.

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