

## Through Many Hardships | Acts 14:21-28 | Dave Cover Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

**Icebreaker:** What is the hardest work or sport training that you have gone through?

### Recap

#### Read:

Our big theme in Acts is from Acts 1:8: *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Starting in Acts 13, Christianity is spreading into some new territory through the efforts of Paul and Barnabas. They have gone through Cyprus and the cities of Psidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. We don't know all that happened to Paul in these cities, but apparently the sufferings he went through were so severe that Paul mentions them to Timothy near the end of his life even after all his other suffering:

### 2 Timothy 3:10-11

<sup>10</sup> You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, <sup>11</sup> my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra-which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

Luke doesn't tell us all, but does report about what happened to Paul in Lystra:

### Acts 14:19-20

<sup>19</sup> Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. <sup>20</sup> But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Acts 14:21-28 tells us about Paul and Barnabas' last stop on their first journey (Derbe). You can imagine he must have been quite the sight. Derbe is the end of the line for this first missionary journey as they head back to where they started, Antioch.



## Discussion

### Read:

#### [Acts 14:21-22](#)

<sup>21</sup> They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

1. What dangers remained for the churches in the cities that they had already preached in?
2. How might we, as 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians in America, need to hear this?
3. How have you seen hardships grow you or wake you up spiritually?

### Read:

#### [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#)

<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.<sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

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## Romans 8:17-18

<sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. <sup>18</sup> I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

4. Why is it worth it to go through those hardships for following Jesus?

## Acts 14:23-28

<sup>23</sup> Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. <sup>24</sup> After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, <sup>25</sup> and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. <sup>26</sup> From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. <sup>27</sup> On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. <sup>28</sup> And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

5. Why was it important they appointed leaders in those churches?
6. Why return to Antioch in Syria?

## Read:

What we can say to ourselves when we face suffering:

- Will suffering last forever? No (See Revelation 21:4).
- Are we suffering because God doesn't love us? No (see Romans 8:35).
- Will we always know why we are suffering? No (see Job).
- Is it okay to let God know we don't want to suffer? Yes (see Psalm 13)
- Will God be with us and mourn with us when we suffer? Yes (Isaiah 41:10).
- Will he mourn with us as we suffer? Yes (John 11:35).
- Can we expect good to come from our suffering even if we don't know what that is? Yes (Romans 8:28).

## Sharing and Prayer:

Part 1:

Dave mentioned the Egyptian Christians, who were killed for their faith in Jesus, falling on their knees and praying, "Jesus help me." What is a suffering or hardship

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you are going through where you need Jesus' help to walk through? Go around, and have everyone pray their own short prayer "Jesus, help me \_\_\_\_\_."

Part 2:

Who are people you know going through suffering? Is there someone who doesn't yet believe in Jesus going through something hard? Is there someone who does believe that needs help to go through it well? Go around, and have everyone pray their own short prayer, "Jesus, help \_\_\_\_\_."

**Passages for the next two weeks:**

- February 15: Acts 15:1-35
- February 22: Acts 15:36-41

*Feel free to do your own study to prepare for our next study.*