

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

No Other Name, In Control, The Lord is My Salvation, Build My Life, In Christ Alone

WELCOME

What are you living for? What motivates you to wake up each day?

WORD

ACTS 14:1-7

In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. ² But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren. ³ Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands. ⁴ But the people of the city were divided; and some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. ⁵ And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, ⁶ they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; ⁷ and there they continued to preach the gospel.

Continue reading the whole chapter of Acts 14.

People with no clear mission have already given up on life even before they have started. Missing our mission is like living with no purpose. But for Christians, we know we are here not just to survive.

1 Corinthians 8:6 says, “yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” Our reason for existence is not for ourselves but for God who created us.

Furthermore, it's not about trying our best to accomplish God's purpose for our life. It is the life of Jesus in us – living our life through Him – for we cannot do it on our own strength (See also **Galatians 2:20**).

God made it clear in the book of Acts that we are to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our lives should be testimonies of the living Christ! Fulfilling this mission is not a walk in the park. Our spiritual journey will be full of challenges like a rugged terrain. But we should persevere because truth matters! This means that we are not to give up — we need to be persistent and tenacious. It means abiding in Christ to the very end.

PERSEVERE EVEN WHEN MISTREATED

In **Acts 11**, Paul and Barnabas started a ministry in Syria, Antioch. In **Acts 13**, they proclaimed the word of God in Salamis and Paphos, sailed to Perga then to Antioch in Pisidia where some Jews responded wisely and some unwisely to the gospel. In **Acts 14**, they

traveled to Iconium and entered the synagogue, persevering in spite of their experience in Antioch. They continued to spread the gospel. We see the heart of Paul in **Romans 9:1-4**, where he said he was willing to be accursed for the sake of the Jews. This motivation can only come from God's overflowing love and grace.

In **Acts 14:2**, we see persecution once again. So Paul and Barnabas spent a long time in Iconium, speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord (**Acts 14:3**). They did not shrink from proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God (**Acts 20:20-21,24**). In the midst of persecutions and distractions, we should focus on our mission – the mandate God has given us which is to make disciples wherever He brings us. We should keep on praying and loving the people around us, holding on to God who will fulfill His promises.

In **Acts 14:4-6**, Paul and Barnabas fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, Derbe, and the surrounding regions when they learned that some of the Jews and Gentiles wanted to mistreat and stone them. We can see here that perseverance does not mean that we are to be naïve. We also need to be prudent (**Proverbs 27:12**). Here, Paul and Barnabas continued to spread the gospel (**Acts 14:7**).

PERSEVERE EVEN WHEN MISUNDERSTOOD

Lystra was a Gentile, pagan city. When Paul through God's power healed a lame man, the people, being superstitious, thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods and wanted to offer sacrifices to them

WORD (cont'd)

(Acts 14:8-13). Paul and Barnabas stopped them, telling them to turn away from these *vain things* which are worthless idols, and to worship the living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them (Acts 14:14-17). Whatever we live for becomes our master. If God is not the center of our lives, we will always end up empty no matter what other things we pursue.

After restraining the crowd, we learned that the Jews won over the people and Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city (Acts 14:18-19).

PERSEVERE EVEN WHEN THE MISSION SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE

Still, Paul and Barnabas continued to persevere. The next day, they went to Derbe and after preaching the gospel to that city and making many disciples, they went back to Lystra, Iconium, and to Antioch — even if they

experienced persecution in these places! They knew that they are not just to make converts – they are to make disciples! They did not take the easier route but went back to the places they have been to strengthen and encourage the disciples to continue in their faith (Acts 14:20-25). We see here the importance of being part of a local church, for there is no real discipleship unless we are connected to one where we can grow together.

When Paul and Barnabas finally reached Antioch, they reported all these things to the church and spent a long time with the disciples (Acts 14:26-28). We are one body, and like the church in Antioch, we are to support and encourage one another to persevere.

Don't quit! God has called us to finish the race. No matter what happens, we are to persevere for we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. When people look at your life, can they say that Jesus is alive? Why or why not?
2. Do you sometimes feel like quitting? In what ways has this message encouraged you to persevere?
3. Are you taking the mission of making disciples seriously? How can you fulfill this mandate in your current sphere of influence?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Don't quit! Ask God to give you the strength and the grace to persevere and keep on loving and praying for the people around you even when you are mistreated or misunderstood, or even when the mission seems impossible. Pray for opportunities to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends