

Book of Acts Study, Part 58 – Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Acts 14:1-7

¹ At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. ² But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³ So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. ⁴ The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. ⁵ There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. ⁶ But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, ⁷ where they continued to preach the gospel.

Psalms 17:6, 10-12

⁶ I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

¹⁰ They close up their callous hearts,
and their mouths speak with arrogance.

¹¹ They have tracked me down, they now surround me,
with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.

¹² They are like a lion hungry for prey,
like a fierce lion crouching in cover.

Genesis 4:7

⁷ ...sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.

God sent the apostles into the world to preach grace.

Grace: God's freely given unmerited favor.

Galatians 1:6-9

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

Galatians 3:1-4 (The Message)

¹ *You crazy Galatians! Did someone put a spell on you? Have you taken leave of your senses? Something crazy has happened, for it's obvious that you no longer have the crucified Jesus in clear focus in your lives. His sacrifice on the cross was certainly set before you clearly enough.*

2-4 Let me put this question to you: How did your new life begin? Was it by working your heads off to please God? Or was it by responding to God's Message to you? Are you going to continue this craziness? For only crazy people would think they could complete by their own efforts what was begun by God. If you weren't smart enough or strong enough to begin it, how do you suppose you could perfect it? Did you go through this whole painful learning process for nothing? It is not yet a total loss, but it certainly will be if you keep this up!

Grace can't be controlled.

In our flesh, we want to make grace equitable.

"We may do a lot better than "that other guy," and that measure of comparison makes us feel good about ourselves--but that's not the way of grace."

Without grace, all we have is behavior modification.

In this state, we won't even recognize the Healer when He comes to heal.

With self-management, life's circumstances then become the barometer for how we are doing spiritually at any given time. Our obedience and hard work only feed our pride and push us further from God's heart.

Is your Christianity about deep communion with God, or about religious activity?

With legalism, we can dispense our own spirituality.

Isaiah 44:22

²² *I have swept away your offenses like a cloud,
your sins like the morning mist.*

*Return to me,
for I have redeemed you."*

*God has removed the only true barrier between us and Him - our sin!
God is calling us back to relationship, not religion.*