

## **Faith to Persevere – Teaching Notes**

(Acts 14:8-11, 19-23; 12/17/17)

**Introduction:** A key idea in today's Sunday School material is that Paul sets a great example of being faithful, despite being mistreated. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to be faithful, despite being mistreated along our journey.

### **Body:**

#### **Read Acts 14:8-11**

**I. Miracle and Misidentification.** Paul was ministering in Lystra. A lame man has the faith to be healed. Paul calls for the man to be healed. The surrounding people call Paul a god.

#### **Applications –**

- **Faithful ministry and God's miracles.** Notice in vs. 9-10 that Paul was faithful in ministry and God healed a man. First, we should be known for being faithful in ministry. Despite Paul's previous mistreatment, he is being faithful in this text. And despite the mistreatment he will suffer in this chapter, he will continue to be faithful in ministry. We should strive to be faithful in serving as God has called us to serve, no matter how badly we are mistreated. We may have to change locations and even ministries, but we should keep on ministering. Second, God can do what seems so impossible to us. He can heal the lame, provide financial blessings, give peace and joy, smooth out relational problems, and use us to do mighty works for Him. He may use us as instruments like He did with Paul. But it is the Lord who is still able to do great things. Thus, we should not nurse a sense of discouragement. God is still able to turn things around. *Let's work on being faithful in ministry and trusting God to do what is best.*

- **Zeal and knowledge.** Notice in vs. 11 that the people had great zeal but were wrong. It is dangerous to have excited people whose excitement is built on the wrong thing. On one hand, we should be cautious around people who have zeal without knowledge. On the other hand, we should strive to be people who have zeal based on knowing God's word and trusting God to work things out for His people. *Let's work on being people of informed zeal.* Worship and service are great places to start.

#### **Read Acts 14:19-20a**

**II. Attack and Aid.** Some Jews had followed Paul. They won the crowd over to their way of thinking. They stoned Paul and thought that he was dead.

#### **Applications –**

- **Hostile and gullible people.** Notice in vs. 19 that the religious people were so hostile, and the crowd was so gullible. First, we should be careful about allowing the devil to use us to cause harm to others, in the name of our religion. The greatest characteristic of the Christian faith is not knowledge but love. Even when the church disciplines trouble makers and offenders, it does it in love and is ready to accept back those who repent. Second, we should make sure that we are not like the crowd who went from calling Paul a god to being a part of stoning him. We should always exam what and why we do what we do. The devil does a great job of using us to carry out his demonic plans – with our without our knowing it. *Let's work on learning from the mistakes of the hostile and gullible people in the text.*

- **Getting up and moving forward.** Notice in vs. 20 that Paul got up and moved forward with God's will for his life. First, we need to work hard on getting up from wherever we feel as if we have beaten down to. Sometimes it is more in our minds than in our physical circumstances. We should fight the temptation of staying down, feeling sorry for ourselves, and waiting for someone to come and pick us up. Second, we should move forward. We should not allow a bad situation to cause us to give up on God. Since Jesus suffered Calvary for us, we are called to do some suffering for Him and His will. *Let's work on getting up and moving forward from being mistreated.*

### **Read Acts 14:20b-23**

**III. Departure and Return.** Paul got up and went forward with his ministry. He and Barnabas are noted for their preaching and strengthening the disciples. Elders are appointed with prayer and fasting.

### **Applications –**

- **Life after being mistreated.** Notice in vss. 21-23 that so much was accomplished, after Paul was mistreated. In like manner, God can turn our pain into praise material. He can turn our stories of suffering into testimonies and stories that give strength to others. However, this is the case, when we don't quit. We must press through being mistreated with working faith in God. In this text, it was a matter of preaching, building disciples, and building leaders. In your life, it may be a matter of carrying out family duties or work responsibilities, despite all that you have been through. *Let's work on trusting that there is more to us than the current trouble.*

- **Trusting the Lord.** Notice in vs. 23 that Paul and Barnabas committed the newly appointed leaders to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. In like manner, after we have done our best, we need to learn how to commit our work and the people we have poured into to the Lord. The same God who has been taking care of us can take care of those we care about. God can take care of our family members, friends, communities, work teams, and more. *Let's live like we trust God to take care of what we have worked on.* This kind of living should be known for confidence, expectation, and joy.

**Conclusion:** Let's work on being faithful, despite being mistreated along our journey. God has much for those who obey His will.