

Thoughts on the Sunday School Lesson

by Pastor Artee Williams

Sunday, December 17, 2017

Subject: Faith To Persevere/Persevering Through Opposition

I. Key background scriptures: 1/2 II Corinthians 4:16-17 Romans 8:31; 1/2 II Timothy 1:7 I John 4:1-3 I John 4:4

II. Introduction

Paul and Barnabas left the city of Antioch because of pressure from the Jewish elders who encouraged some influential men and women to act in a hostile manner toward these men of God.

Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet, left Antioch and headed for Iconium, which was a chief city in the province of Galatia.

Jews who lived in the area of Iconium worshipped in the synagogue which afforded an opportunity for Paul and Barnabas to preach the word to them.

Paul and Barnabas spoke with such authority that a great multitude of Jews and Greeks believed and converted from their religion.

Later certain Jews caused trouble for Paul and Barnabas in Iconium, they rejected the truth and stirred up Gentiles and made their minds "evil affected" against these men of God. The term "evil affected" means to put someone in a bad mood, to cause animosity. These Jews were more opposed to the message than the messengers (Paul and Barnabas).

The pressure on Paul and Barnabas continued until the Jews sought to assault these men of God and stone them. Paul and Barnabas became aware of the planned attack and left for Lystra.

Today's lesson focuses on the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in Lystra.

III. Points to ponder

In spite of opposition in Lystra, we note that Paul and Barnabas accomplished a great deal:

1. They preached the gospel.
2. Paul exercised spiritual discernment.
3. Paul exercised faith in God to heal the man crippled from birth.
4. Paul demonstrated confidence in the power of God to heal the crippled man.
5. Paul and Barnabas rejected the worship of men who thought they were gods.
6. Paul experienced the grace of God in that he was stoned outside the city and left for dead, but rose up instead because it was God's will for his ministry to continue.

The next day Paul and Barnabas left Lystra to go to the city of Derbe. After preaching the gospel in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch.

It speaks volumes about the courage, conviction and boldness of Paul and Barnabas that they returned to the very cities from which they fled opposition.

What did these men of God accomplish:

1. They confirmed the disciples/believers.
2. They encouraged the disciples /believers to continue in the faith.
- 3.They ordained elders in every city after prayer and fasting.
4. They commended the new elders to the Lord who would be their provision and protection.

IV. Compelling challenge

Paul and Barnabas provide a compelling example for bold, courageous, Spirit-led ministry.

Paul and Barnabas made a difference in the impotent man's life.

Will you be like Paul and Barnabas who were , bold, courageous and Spirit-led.

Are you willing to be the difference that makes a difference?