

Sept 13, 2026 - Acts 14:1–23 — Small Group Questions

1. Read Acts 14:1–7. What do you notice about the different responses to Paul and Barnabas?

Who believes? Who opposes them? What do Paul and Barnabas do in response? What does Luke seem to regard as a successful outcome?

2. Why do you think the proclamation of the Gospel produces such sharply different reactions?

Is opposition in this passage simply hostility toward Paul and Barnabas, or is something deeper happening when the Gospel is proclaimed?

3. Read Acts 14:8–18. What happens when the crowd sees Paul heal the man who had never walked?

Why do the people conclude that Paul and Barnabas are gods? What does Paul do to redirect their attention? What does this tell us about the temptation to confuse God's work with the person through whom God works?

4. Look carefully at verses 15–17. How does Paul describe God to these pagan listeners?

What does he emphasize about creation, providence, rain, food, joy and human life? Why might these have been particularly appropriate things to say to this particular audience?

5. The crowd moves from wanting to worship Paul and Barnabas to stoning Paul and leaving him for dead. What does this extraordinary reversal tell us about crowds, public opinion and the nature of Christian witness?

What, if anything, in contemporary culture reminds you of this kind of instability?

6. Verse 20 simply says, “But when the disciples surrounded him, he got up.” Why do you think Luke includes this seemingly small detail?

What might we learn from the fact that the disciples surrounded Paul before he continued his ministry?

7. Read verses 21–23 slowly. What do Paul and Barnabas actually do when they return to the churches?

Make a list of the verbs Luke uses. What does this tell us about what a Christian community is supposed to do for people who are learning to follow Christ?

8. Paul tells the disciples, “It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God.” How do you understand this statement?

How is it different from saying that Christians should simply expect God to remove their difficulties? What might Christian perseverance look like in ordinary life?

9. Looking back over the whole passage, where do you see the Holy Spirit at work—not merely in dramatic miracles, but in the formation and strengthening of the Church?

What does Acts 14 suggest about why we need one another as disciples of Jesus?

A final question I particularly like

“When you are knocked down—spiritually, emotionally or simply by the circumstances of life—who are the people who ‘surround’ you? And whose life might God be asking you to surround?”

That question gets very close to what I think is the heart of the sermon. The remarkable thing about Acts 14 is not merely that Paul gets up. It is that he gets up surrounded by disciples—and then goes back to strengthen them.