

## Morning Overview

**Lesson:** *Why People Thought Paul Was God*

### Lesson Objective:

In our story today, we pick up with Paul's missionary journeys. With Barnabas, the Apostles travel to Iconium and Lystra. In both places the men experience death threats and eventually bodily harm. As the Apostles continue to take the Good News to more places, they encounter those who reject the Good News, those who accept the Good News, and persecution from those who reject it. Any other movement would have crumbled under the weight of persecution; however, because the Holy Spirit is empowering the Apostles to take the Good News far and wide, the Church continues to endure. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can the Good News be preached, the Church grow, and followers of Jesus endure persecution.

### Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God has promised to always be with His people. He is with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is growing, but also experiencing persecution. Because of the persecution, followers of Jesus scatter.
- The scattered Church takes the Good News and tells others about Jesus.
- Paul and Barnabas are on missionary journeys to Iconium, Lystra and Debre.
- The city of Iconium is divided among those who believe the Apostles and those who do not. Those who do not believe attempt to kill the Apostles, so the Apostles flee to Lystra.
- In Lystra, Paul heals a crippled man. This brings a fervor to the city. The crowds believe the Apostles to be gods.
- The crowds try to offer the Apostles sacrifices, but the Apostles reject the gifts telling the crowds about the true living God and His Gift.
- Jews followed the Apostles from Iconium and convinced the crowds in Lystra to kill Paul. The crowds stone him, drag him outside the city, and leave him for dead.
- But Paul is not dead. He gets up, goes back into the city, and leaves Lystra with Barnabas.

**Scripture:** Acts 14:1-20

**Story:** Vos Child's Story Bible, Pages 352-353

**Scripture Memory for July:** Acts 26:17b-18 (ESV)

**I am sending you** (*point up to God and then to yourself*)

**to open their eyes** (*close your eyes with hands closed beside them then open hands wide as you open your eyes*)

**so that they may turn from darkness to light** (*turn around and lower your head covering it with your arms and then face the front again raising arms, lifting your hands to the light*)

**... that they may receive forgiveness of sins.** (*open wide your hands out in front of you*)

**Craft:** Heart

**Supplies:** Black cardstock, 2 heart pieces (left and right), verse sticker

**Instructions:** 1. Place verse on black cardstock

2. Glue 2 heart pieces to black cardstock fitting two pieces together

3. Color heart if desired



If child has already done craft first hour, have them work on a coloring sheet

## Story

### Transition

Boys and girls, what would you do if someone gave you a gift you did not want? Would you take it anyway and be nice, or would you say “No thank you! I do not want that” and try to give it back? Well in our story today, Paul and Barnabas are given gifts, but they had to tell the people they did not want them. Let’s find out why...

### The Church Is Growing

The Church was growing. The Bible tells us every day more and more people believed the Good News! They believed that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from our sins and He rose from the dead! More and more people believed in Jesus – the Church was growing! But as the Church grew, there were people that wanted to hurt and even kill followers of Jesus. Followers of Jesus had to run, hide and live in different places and cities. As they scattered they took the Good News with them and told others about Jesus.

Followers of Jesus went to tell others about Him. Paul and Barnabas went to many places to tell the Good News – that Jesus, God’s Son, came to save them from their sins. Some people believed Paul and Barnabas, and some people hated them. This did not stop Paul and Barnabas from telling others about Jesus.

### People Thought Paul Was God

In Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went as usual to the Jewish synagogue. The synagogue is where the Jewish people learned from teachers about the Old Testament. Paul and Barnabas taught so well that a great many Jews and Greeks believed their words. But there were those who wanted to cause trouble. They did not believe Paul and Barnabas’ words and they told lies about those people who did believe Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas were not afraid. They stayed in the city and spoke bravely for the Lord. The Lord showed that their message about his grace was true by giving them the power to work miracles and signs. Some in the city believed Paul and Barnabas, and some did not. The whole city was divided.

Those that did not believe Paul and Barnabas wanted to kill them by throwing stones at them. When Paul and Barnabas learned about this, they left Iconium and went to Lystra and Derbe, and to the areas around those cities. There they told people about the Good News!

In Lystra there sat a man who had been born crippled; he had never walked. This man was listening to Paul speak. Paul looked straight at him and saw that the man believed God could heal him. So, Paul told the man, “Stand up on your feet!” The man jumped up and began walking around. When the crowds saw what Paul did, they shouted! The crowds said, “The gods have become like men! They have come down to us!” And the people began to call Barnabas “Zeus.” They called Paul “Hermes,” because he was the main speaker. Zeus and Hermes were idols or false gods. The people of Lystra worshipped Zeus and Hermes and not the One, True God.

Near the city of Lystra was the temple of Zeus. The priest who was in charge of the temple brought some bulls and flowers to the city gates. At the city gate the priest and many people wanted to offer the bulls and flowers to Paul and Barnabas. The people thought they were giving gifts to gods. But when Paul and Barnabas saw what they were trying to do, they tore their clothes in anger! The Apostles ran into the crowd of people and shouted, “Men, stop!!! Why are you doing this? We are only men, human beings like you! We are bringing you the Good News. We are telling you to turn away from these worthless things and turn to the true living God. He is the One who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them.” The Apostles knew if they accepted the offering, this would make the people believe they really were gods, which they were not. The Apostles rejected the gifts! The Apostles wanted to give something to the people instead – the Good News!

Paul and Barnabas wanted the people to know about the true living God, not false gods like Zeus or Hermes. Paul and Barnabas told the crowd that the true living God has proven he is real: "He shows kindness to you. He gives you rain from heaven and crops at the right time. He gives you food and fills your hearts with joy." Even with these words, the Apostles were barely able to keep the crowd from offering the gifts to them.

Some Jews had followed Paul and Barnabas from Iconium. They persuaded the people who thought Paul and Barnabas were gods to turn against Paul. And so the crowd threw stones at Paul and dragged him out of town. They left Paul outside the city gates thinking he was dead. But other followers of Jesus gathered around Paul, and he got up and went back into the city. The next day, he and Barnabas left and went to the city of Derbe.

### **Questions for Review**

Have children answer "yes" or "no."

- Is the Church growing – adding more and more people? (Yes)
- Paul and Barnabas told people from other nations about Jesus (Yes)
- Some people tried to hurt Paul and Barnabas by throwing *marshmallows* at them? (No, stones)
- Paul and Barnabas left before they could be hurt? (Yes)
- Paul and Barnabas healed a man who was crippled – could not walk? (Yes)
- When the people saw this they thought Paul and Barnabas were gods? (Yes)
- The people brought bulls and flowers to Paul and Barnabas as gifts? (Yes)
- Paul and Barnabas ran into the crowd of people and told them *to bring more gifts*? (No! To stop the offering)
- The people were convinced by others from Iconium to hurt Paul? (Yes, they threw stones at him)
- Paul was dragged out of the city and left for dead? (Yes)
- Paul was dead and did not *get back up*? (No, he got up!)