

Acts 14 – Living Sent

Hey good morning church and welcome to church at the beach. You know, somewhere in our country people are probably shoveling snow. Man, I love Bradenton. It's my city – and one of the things I love about Bradenton is we can worship Jesus at the beach in December.

Just so you all are aware – we plan to keep our beach services going on a monthly basis – probably through April until it starts getting really hot. So those of you that are uncomfortable in crowds, this gives you an opportunity to come out to the beach for our corporate worship time and be with the family.

Also – another reminder of our Christmas Eve service. At the school, Thursday 12/24 at 6PM. We will be out by 7PM. You won't want to miss it. If you're in town, make plans to be with us on Christmas Eve at 6PM.

God bless you church. Welcome to church at the beach – Nicole, lead us through our call to worship this morning and opening prayer.

Hey Thanks Band – James, Nicole, Grace, Victoria – thank you for leading us so well in our time of musical worship. As we continue worshiping through the Word of God this morning – we will be in Acts 13-14.

For the kids this morning – who remembers (1 word) – what we talked about last week in Acts 13:1-5? Anyone? We talked specifically about SENDING – both the corporate (or church-wide) dynamic of sending out missionaries, church planters, church planting teams, but we also talked about living SENT lives personally. That God has already sent us to a place for a purpose – to share and to show Jesus with every family around us. I hope you spent time this week praying through where and to whom God has sent you.

This morning – I want us to consider a main idea – **Living Sent isn't easy, but it's worth it.** Living Sent isn't easy, but it's worth it.

BACKGROUND – Acts 13

We pickup in Acts 13 – Barnabas and Saul and John had been sent out

- They traveled from Antioch and started preaching – first in the Jewish synagogues
- And before too long, they ran into opposition – But remember, Living sent isn't easy
- And Saul – also called Paul – spoke the Word of God anyway, directly to the opposer
- God would blind this dude – and 13:12 When he (the proconsul aka governor) saw what happened the proconsul believed, because he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Remember – Living sent isn't easy, but it's worth it. Paul and Barnabas and John would see the governor of the region believe the Gospel. As we live sent lives, eventually we will see people respond to the Gospel and as they do, we will know that the challenges of living a sent life have been worth it.

This story continues with Paul and Barnabas setting sail for a different area – as an aside – John leaves them to go home – they arrive at this city called Psidian Antioch – not the same Antioch that sent them out – this is a different Antioch would be in modern day Turkey.

- They roll into the synagogue on the Sabbath
- And get this – they are actually invited to speak by the leaders of the synagogue “any word of encouragement”. I’m guessing the synagogue leaders had no idea what Paul would say.
- But Paul used this opportunity to share Jesus with them – starting way back in the Old Testament.
- Paul – in the Psidian Antioch synagogue – used the Old Testament to share the Gospel with them.

And one of the climactic moments that Luke records for us, happens in Acts 13:38-39:

³⁸ Therefore, let it be known to you, brothers and sisters, that through this man forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Everyone who believes is justified^[1] through him from everything that you could not be justified from through the law of Moses.

And don’t miss this – Living Sent – remember – Living Sent isn’t easy, but it’s worth it. An important point of Living Sent is SHARING JESUS! **We aren’t actually living sent until and unless we are SHARING JESUS.**

And here’s one of the really cool things about this story – They actually got invited BACK to share again with them in the synagogue! The Holy Spirit was moving and working, Paul and Barnabas got the invite to come back AND THEY TOOK IT!

Well, it says almost the whole town came to hear them speak the next week – and the Jewish leaders in the city got jealous. So blinded to the clear work of God, they were jealous. But Paul, kept preaching, and turned his attention to the Gentiles, or the non-Jewish people. And as he shared with them, “they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed.”

But this made the Jewish leaders ever more angry – and they threw them out.

But that’s not going to stop Paul and Barnabas. Because God had called them to Living a Sent Life – Knowing it wouldn’t be easy – but that it would be worth it – they traveled on.

Acts 14

Iconium

At the start of Acts 14 – they land in a city called Iconium – and they went into the synagogue and preached about Jesus → And see this – a large number of Jews and Greeks believed. Living

Sent for Paul and Barnabas wasn't easy – but as people believed, as they were confident in the calling of God to live their lives sent – it was worth it.

And as people responded to the Good News – those that didn't believe kicked up more trouble – but if we know anything about Paul – we know that opposition wasn't going to stop him. He kept preaching – 14:3 says that he stayed there for a long time and spoke boldly.

They would get so very angry at Paul, that they put together a plan to kill him by stoning – but Paul found out and was able to leave.

Lystra

They landed in a place called Lystra. And the Lord, through Paul, provided healing to a man that had never walked – and the people at Lystra thought Paul and Barnabas were gods. And here's a place where, we see another key thing – **The Goal of Living Sent is glorifying God, not Ourselves.**

Like – they're in a spot where they could say – “yeah, we're pretty awesome”. Or even, yeah sometimes we have the ability to bring healing to people (a gift that was limited to the apostles by the way). But see their response:

READ 14:14-15

¹⁴The apostles Barnabas and Paul tore their robes when they heard this and rushed into the crowd, shouting, ¹⁵“People! Why are you doing these things? We are people also, just like you, and we are proclaiming good news to you, that you turn from these worthless things to the living God, **who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them.**”

And Paul would go on to keep preaching Jesus to them. And, like most places he went, people would get mad at him. People from the two previous cities came and stoned Paul, thinking he was dead, they dragged him out of the city.

And can I tell you – if this were me – here's what I would have done. I would have been tempted to tap out. You know like tag team wrestling – Anyone watch wrestling as a kid? I did – and my parents are right over there if you want to judge them. Tag team wrestling – you get beat down enough, you tag your partner and let them take over. If this were me, and they stoned me and dragged me out of the city thinking I was dead – I'd have been wanting to tag out. Get the next boat back to Jerusalem – hang out in the church there – maybe get a corner office, lead a couple of Bible studies in the church, maybe even write a blog. Take it easy, because, well, I think the only thing worse than being killed by stoning is surviving a failed stoning attempt. Remember – we're not talking like – hey go to Manatee Memorial and get everything fixed and be laid up with 21st century medical care. 1st century middle east medical care is what Paul would have gotten.

But remember, **Living Sent isn't easy but it's always worth it.** Paul had been called to a work, and he wasn't giving up – even after they tried to kill him. I think Paul had a little bit of this – oh yeah – just wait and see what Jesus is gonna do know – like one of these I'll show you type of mindsets. But in a good and Godly way. I can relate to the mindset but mine's not always in a good and Godly way.

DERBE – THEN BACK THROUGH THE OTHER CITIES

Paul continues traveling – and he leaves the very next day to go to Derbe. Paul preaches at Derbe, sees many people become followers of Christ, then he goes back to Lystra, Psidian Antioch and Iconium – the same 3 cities he had just been chased out of.

God had saved people in every city in response to the preaching of the Gospel by Paul and Barnabas – and the churches that start as a result needed encouragement and well they had the right guys. They reminded the churches of the necessity of suffering – even the centrality of suffering in the life of the Christian (14:23).

Interestingly – but not surprisingly – as they reached people for the Gospel, as they made disciples, churches started. And Paul and Barnabas helped them with leadership – as we see here the leadership of the local church – says they appointed elders (MORE THAN 1) in every church.

THE TRIP BACK TO ANTIOCH

Read 14:26-27

²⁶ From there they sailed back to Antioch where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. ²⁷ After they arrived and gathered the church together, they reported everything God had done with them and that he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

The last thing I want us to see this morning – is that the results are entirely up to God. Notice their report – “everything God had done with them and that he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”

Never forget this – God is the author of salvation. You and I are the tools he uses – as we live our lives SENT to those who don't yet know him – but hear me you and I never save people. This takes a LOT of the pressure off – because even if we don't see a single person respond – it's still worth it. Let this truth free you to share and show Jesus to the people you've been sent to. That you don't save anyone – that's above your paygrade. You're the messenger – and the tool God uses – but God alone saves sinners.

CLOSING:

Last week, I asked you to consider where and to whom you've been sent. And I shared with you where and to whom I've been sent – I hope you went through that exercise to start writing down and considering where and to whom you've been sent.

This week – I want to take it one step further. Will you commit to living a sent life? Remember though, before you say yes – remember that Living Sent is hard, but it's always worth it. Will you commit to sharing and showing Jesus as you go through your life to the people that God has already sent you to?

PRAY