

“Contact points for the gospel” – Discussion Questions on Acts 14

Feel free to choose the questions that you feel are most interesting or relevant for your group – there is no need to go through them all! This week we conclude Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13-14) with his visits to Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Last week, we saw that Luke recorded an example of Paul preaching in a primarily Jewish context. This week we see Paul preaching to a group of pagan Gentiles in Lystra. Rather than starting with the Old Testament and the Law, as he did in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch, he starts with the futility of idolatry and creation. This passage also records Paul’s suffering for the gospel, and his return journey to Antioch, on which he sought to strengthen and encourage the churches that had been established.

Read Acts 14

1. What words would you use to describe the flavour of this chapter overall?
2. Given that there are many in our culture with no Christian background, what challenges do you think this presents for sharing the gospel with them?
3. Looking at Acts 14v3 we see that Paul and Barnabas were prepared to spend “considerable time” in Iconium. Why might this be surprising given what we are told in v2? At what point did they eventually leave?
4. Ought we to expect people who have less background in Christianity to take longer to become Christians? What implications does this have for our evangelism?
5. Looking at Paul’s words in v15-17, try to explain in your own words the contact points that Paul uses in his speech to the people of Lystra.
6. Can you think of any contact points that might be “on ramps” for the gospel in our own culture (you might like to think about this for individuals as well as for a culture as a whole)?
7. Why might Paul’s message at Lystra best be considered as pre-evangelism rather than evangelism – what more is needed?
8. Thinking about Paul’s example and his teaching about suffering in this chapter, what does this teach us about the role of suffering in the Christian life? What do you think enabled him to keep going? What implications does this have for our own evangelism?
9. Spend some time praying for those you know who have little or no Christian background. Pray that you might have open eyes to see good ‘on ramps’ for the gospel and that the Spirit might help you communicate Christian truth to them.