

March 21st & 22nd, 2026

The Resolve of Faithful Servants

Acts 14:8-23

Faithful servants of Christ are identified by their unwavering commitment to preach the Gospel, exalt the living God, assert His providence, persevere through opposition, and strengthen believers because faithfulness and endurance are the marks God requires of every steward.

Preach the Gospel

Acts 14:7-10 “They learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, ⁷and there they continued to preach the gospel. ⁸Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. ⁹He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, ¹⁰said in a loud voice, ‘Stand upright on your feet.’ And he sprang up and began walking.”

❖ The Gospel inspires people to believe in God for the supernatural. *Acts 14:9* “He listened to Paul speaking...”

- ◆ The importance of being receptive to the gospel.

Matthew 13:23 “As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

James 1:21b “Therefore ...receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

- ◆ The insight of a discerning teacher.

2 Timothy 2:15-16 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. ¹⁶But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness,”

- ◆ Faith is the result of God’s work in us; His call, and our response to the gospel confirm His purpose and providence for our lives.

Acts 14:10 “[Paul] said in a loud voice. ‘Stand upright on your feet.’ And he sprang up and began walking.”

Exalt the Living God

Acts 14:11-15 “And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, ‘The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!’ ¹²Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. ¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, ¹⁵‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.’”

❖ A miracle done by Paul and Barnabas led people to a misdirected idolatry, but Paul and Barnabas glorified God.

- ◆ The disciples gave God the glory when they were elevated.

John 3:29-30 “The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Acts 3:12 “And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: ‘Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?’”

- ◆ The disciples directed people from idolatry to the truth.

Isaiah 42:8 “I am the Lord; that is My name; My glory I give to no other, nor My praise to carved idols.”

- ◆ The disciples identified the living God by His creative work.

Assert the Providence of God

Acts 14:16-18 “In past generations He allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷Yet He did not leave Himself without witness, for He did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness. ¹⁸Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.”

❖ The Gentiles, who had no awareness of the Old Testament, needed a message through which they could recognize God in His creation.

- ◆ Knowing and speaking to people and their worldview requires boldness.

Romans 1:19-20 “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

- ◆ Confronting sin and directing people to God requires strength and commitment.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”

- ◆ God produces conviction in the hearts of the believers.

John 16:8 “And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:”

Persevere in Opposition

Acts 14:19-20 “Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. ²⁰But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.”

❖ Organized opposition against the disciples and their message led to a miraculous determination in the believers and the proclaimers of the Gospel.

- ◆ God provides in opposition.

2 Timothy 3:11 “my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.”

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;”

- ◆ The supernatural hand of God is on His messengers to overcome.

Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

- ◆ The call of God to do His will requires resolved resilience.

Hebrews 12:1-2 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set of before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Encourage the Believers

Acts 14:21-22 “When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²²strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

- ❖ The fruitful mission of God through His faithful servants brought many to Christ and revealed their call to strengthen and encourage the disciples as they went back to visit the churches.

- ◆ We are called to strengthen and encourage one another.

1 Thessalonians 3:2-3 “and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, ³that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.”

- ◆ The call of the Gospel is to perseverance, not to comfort.

Hebrews 3:13 “But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Philippians 1:29 “For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake,”

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

Endnotes:

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