

## On the Mission Field, Part VII- Back at Home

Text: Acts 14:24-28

### Introduction:

Having gone as far east as Derbe, we saw last time that Paul and Barnabas had begun to backtrack home, seeking to strengthen, exhort and build up, the disciples they had made, in all of the cities they had recently visited in Asia Minor, Galatia and Lycaonia.

And, we left off looking at verse 22, which, along with verse 23, describes their primary motivation for backtracking, rather than continuing east to Tarsus, and then ultimately to Antioch.

Before moving on then, to examine verses 24-28, let us finish questions 5 and 6, from last week's question sheet:

Question #5: How does the last portion of verse 22, apply to us, in our present context?

Question #6: Why was it important for them to do what they had done in verse 23?

Discuss the "praying, fasting and commendation," that takes place here. Why is this important?

### **I. Back at Home** (verses 24-28)

"And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. Now when they had preached the Word in Perga, they went down to Attalia" (vs. 24-25).

Again, they continue to head back, along the same (or at least similar) route, which they had traveled, when they had first come to the mainland. And after preaching in Perga, they go down to the port city of Attalia, where they will catch a boat, back to Antioch (in Assyria), where their sending church was located.

"From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (vs. 26-27).

Question #1: Why was it important for Paul and Barnabas to return to Antioch?

[Accountability to their sending church; to those, who had "commended them to the grace of God, for the work, which they had just completed]

Question #2: To whom did they report? [The whole church]. Why is this important?

Question #3: What was the tone of their report? We know that they had faced a lot of opposition and contention, wherever they had gone. How did they view this? What does the general description of their report, tell us about the way, in which, they viewed the whole mission?

Question #4: How do you suppose their report affected the people at Antioch, if it affected them at all?

"So they stayed there a long time with the disciples" (vs. 28).

Question #5: They didn't immediately jump back into the mission field. What does this tell you about mission's work, as a whole? Whose work is it? Who ultimately sustains our labors?

Question #6: Having finished observing and working through Paul's first missionary journey, what general observations can we make about "mission's work?"

- 1) Missionaries are commissioned and sent by the Holy Spirit and the church (13:1-4)
- 2) A critical part of missions work, involves prayer (and fasting at times) (13:2)
- 3) It is important for missionaries to study the culture and background of the people, to whom they are ministering. While the Gospel itself ought not to be altered, the method of presentation may vary, depending upon the religious background of the culture (13-14)
- 4) Whenever we seek to do the work of God, we ought, both, to expect opposition, and to trust that God will yet save His people! (13-14)
- 5) Generally, missionaries ought to strive to plant churches in various locations, with the intention of eventually helping to set up elders, from within each local congregation. As a general principle, the missionary ought not to become an elder in a planted church, or to even join it, for that matter. (13-14)
- 6) Missionaries ought to revisit their various church plants, so as to help encourage them in the faith, exhorting them to continue on, in the grace of God. (14:21-25)
- 7) Missionaries are accountable to their own local churches (who sent and commended them to the Lord), and they ought to periodically provide a report of their progress, to them (14:26-27)

8) Missionaries should take periodic furloughs, to renew their strength and get counsel and encouragement from their local churches (14:28)

Amen!