

# Acts of the Apostles

## 32 – Something Called Courage

### Acts 14

#### Courage to give God credit (v.8-18)

- When you live your life in a way that releases God's power into the world, there WILL be a temptation to take credit for it
  - John the Baptist – Peter and Cornelius – Peter / John and Lame Man – Philip and Simon
- What does this look like?
- Unequivocal declaration that God is God and we are not (v.15)
- Unequivocal affirmation of the true story (v.16-17)
  - Harvey volunteer: "You've got a beautiful church"
  - Prof: "You've got some smart people down there"
  - Don't baptize it, just tell the truth
  - What's the big deal if pagans offered sacrifice? God would know and somebody who later came to faith would think you thought it was okay (particularly tempting for ministers) – IT'S NOT THE TRUE STORY – Legend of Ovid (Zeus and Hermes and the Phrygian hill country)

#### Courage to live as though dead (v.19)

- Holy abandonment vs. spiritual recklessness
  - "My life is not my own" vs. "I know what God wants for me"
  - "I will do what pleases God" vs. "I'll make sure what I do is important"
  - "I am *not* what's most important here" vs. "I need to be part of the story"
- 2 Cor 5.14-15; Gal. 2.20
  - If you're already dead, the rocks hurt but aren't scary – dare to have your own funeral before someone else has one for you

#### Courage to keep doing ministry (v.20-28)

- He went back into the city! (Twice!) (v.20)
- He kept preaching the Gospel (v.21-22)
  - Inherent in the message was hardships are part of the Christian life (2 Tim 3.12)
  - Those who miss the hardships of the cross also miss the prizes of the Kingdom – that's important for new converts and mature followers
  - Tozer Quote
- He bet on the church (v.23)
  - Setting them up for success via spiritual leadership and spiritual emphasis
- He finished what he was sent to do (v.24-28)

Christ calls men to carry a cross; we tell them to have fun in His name. He calls them to forsake the world; we assure them that if they but accept Jesus the world is their oyster. He calls them to suffer; we call them to enjoy all the bourgeois comforts modern civilization affords. He calls them to self-abnegation and death; we call them to spread themselves like green bay trees or perchance even to become stars in a pitiful fifth-rate zodiac. He calls them holiness; we call them to a cheap and tawdry happiness that would have been rejected with scorn by the least of the Stoic philosophers...We can afford to suffer now; we'll have a long eternity to enjoy ourselves. And our enjoyment will be valid and pure, for it will come in the right way in the right time. ~ Tozer, *Born After Midnight*

#### Questions for Discussion

1. What's the coolest thing that you have personally ever seen God do (a.k.a. "releasing God's power into the world")? What was the result?
2. What's a situation you can think of (that you have experienced personally or not) in which someone claimed credit for something they did not do or only had minimal influence? What is your feeling about that? What do you want as a result of seeing this?
3. What is a situation in your life right now that needs an unequivocal statement of "He is God and I am not" and unequivocal declaration of "*this* is the true story – not this fable or fairy tale or fake news?" What's your best guess on the outcome if you take that step?
4. Reread 2 Cor. 5.14-15 and Gal. 2.20. What was Paul's attitude about his life and ours? What would change for you tomorrow if you adopted that same attitude?
5. What propelled Paul back into the city after being stoned and drug from it? Why would this kind of courage be necessary in ministry? Is there a situation you find yourself in right now that you need to "go back into town" and face? What would your prayer be as you faced it? What would your first step be?
6. In the sermon, Trent said that enduring hardships is part of the Good News of Jesus. Read Acts 14.23, 2 Tim. 3.12, and then the Tozer quote above. Why is it important for younger believers and more mature believers to hear this truth over and over again?