



**Sermon Text:** Acts 14:1-28

*Sermon Date:* May 6, 2018

In Acts 14, we witness Paul and Barnabas repeatedly encountering intense hostility while pressing on in their commitment to proclaim the gospel. In the face of utter brutality, they refuse to quit or compromise. Why?

### **AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING OUTLOOK: ETERNAL SATISFACTION THROUGH EARTHLY SUFFERING**

In verse 22, we see the lens through which we are supposed to examine this chapter and all of the Christian life. Circling back through the cities they've just visited, the missionaries strengthen and encourage these new churches and say *"through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."* In this short statement, we unpacked three important truths.

1. **The certainty of eternal satisfaction** – Here the kingdom of God refers to the restoration of all things when Christ returns—Paradise restored and amplified. It refers to infinite, awesome, all-surpassing pleasure in God's presence for all eternity.
2. **The necessity of earthly suffering** – We must go through many tribulations. John Murray said, "There is no sharing in Christ's glory unless there is sharing in his suffering. Suffering and then glory was the order appointed for Christ himself."
3. **The superiority of eternal satisfaction over earthly suffering** – In the context the announcement of verse 22 is an encouragement because this final truth is powerfully implied. It is worth it! The kingdom of God is worth the suffering. An eternity of Heaven is worth a lifetime of hurt (2 Cor. 4:17; Romans 8:18).

The reason Paul and Barnabas didn't quit is because we will arrive at **eternal satisfaction through earthly suffering**.

### **THE PERSPECTIVE IN ACTION**

Next, we walked through the entire chapter seeing the perspective of verse 22 in action. Paul and Barnabas are opposed, threatened, chased, beaten, and more; yet they continue sharing the gospel. What is more, they go back to all the places where they have been mistreated and suffered hardships because they are utterly convinced that the happiness of Heaven far outweighs the hurt of this world.

### **FOUR QUALITIES TO PRAYERFULLY PURSUE**

While we may never experience the intensity of persecution Paul felt, the Bible promises that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12). Therefore, we must prayerfully pursue the qualities that we see displayed in Paul and Barnabas.

1. **Tenacity.** They tenaciously continued, and so must we. We need grace-enabled grit. When was the last time you spoke faithfully for Christ in a certain situation, even though you knew you would be opposed?
2. **Certainty.** They didn't quit because they were certain of the glory to come. Suffering doesn't make sense when you lose sight of glory. But when you are utterly convinced of the all-surpassing glory to come, you will gladly suffer for it. How often do you fix your heart on the glory to come?
3. **Flexibility.** Paul and Barnabas adapted to their context. Paul was unbending on the gospel message, yet flexible in his approach. We too must meet people where they are.
4. **Humility.** When they report back to Syrian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas declare all that God had done. He takes center stage, not their sufferings or their triumphs. Who gets the spotlight in your success and your sorrow?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Why must the perspective of verse 22 shape our lives? What are some hindrances to adopting this perspective?
3. How can you fill your mind and strengthen your heart with the certainty of the glory to come?