

Acts 14:21-28

Homeward Bound



Acts 14:21-28

Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,



They could have returned along the south-west route to Perga
but they didn't

strengthening the disciples
and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.



Their main concern was
for the new disciples.

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.



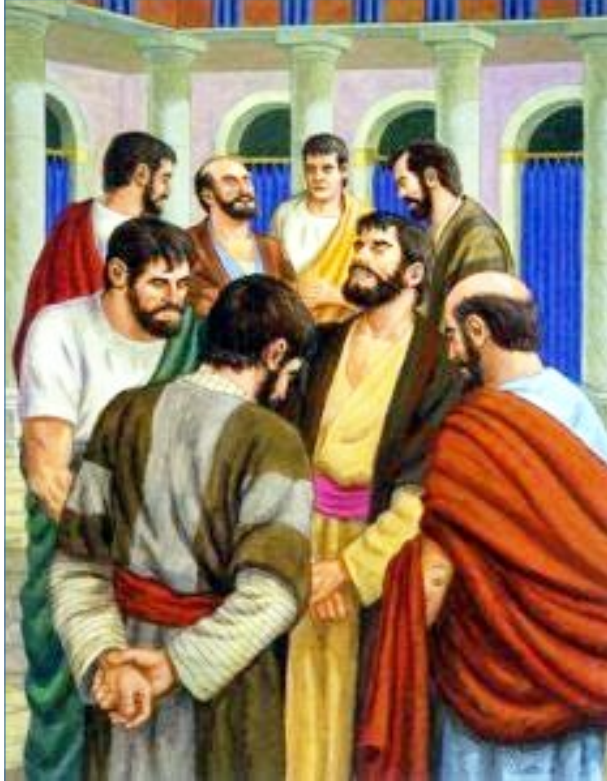
Paul could already speak from experience!



This was straight talking
It wasn't going to be
easy for the disciples.

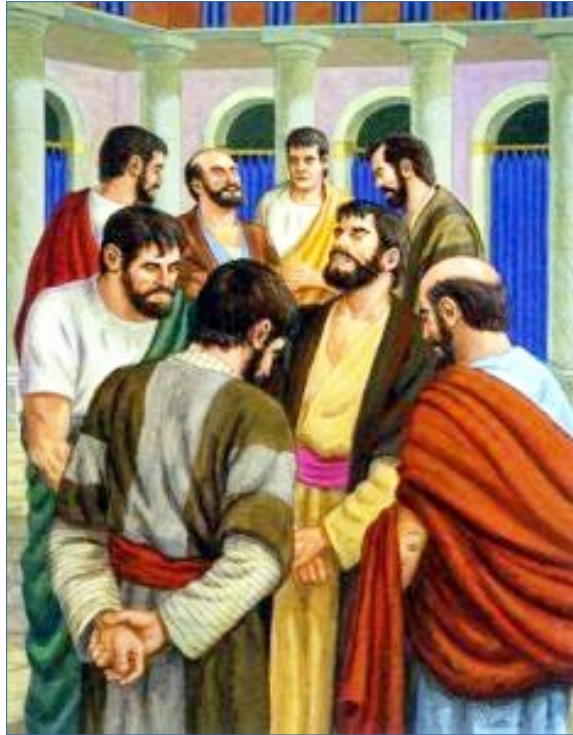
BUT to enter the
kingdom would be
worth all the trouble.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church



They recognised and set apart the emerging leaders in each church.

and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord,
in whom they had put their trust.



They showed that prayer and fasting was an important part of the decision process and in seeking God's blessing.

The churches would only continue because it was God at work in them.

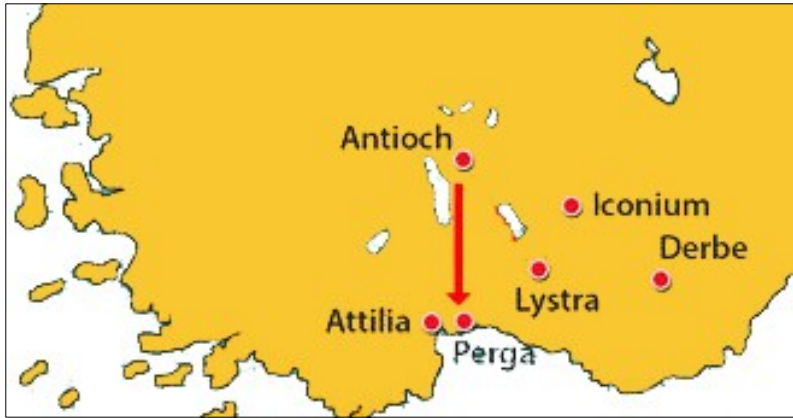
After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia,



The journey south through difficult terrain was not an easy one.

2 Corinthians 11:26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers;

and when they had preached the word in Perga,



This was an opportunity to share the gospel that couldn't be missed. It was an important city in that area.



they went down to Attalia.



They travelled on to the major sea port Attalia

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch,



Homeward bound – why didn't they call in on the churches in Cyprus?

Back to base.

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.



They felt this mission had been successfully completed.

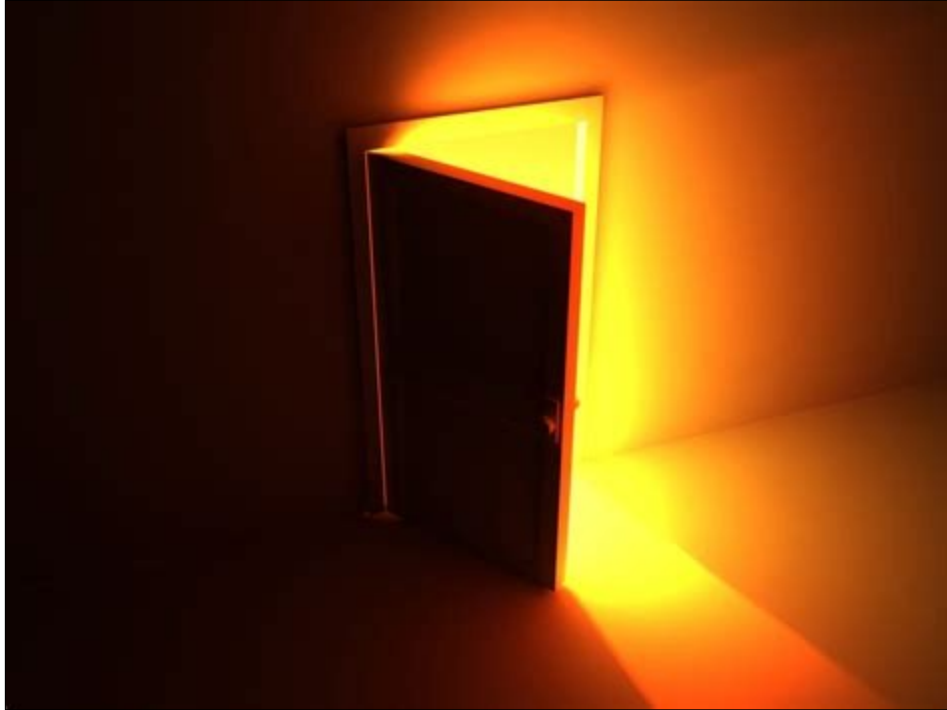
Of course the work goes on.

On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them



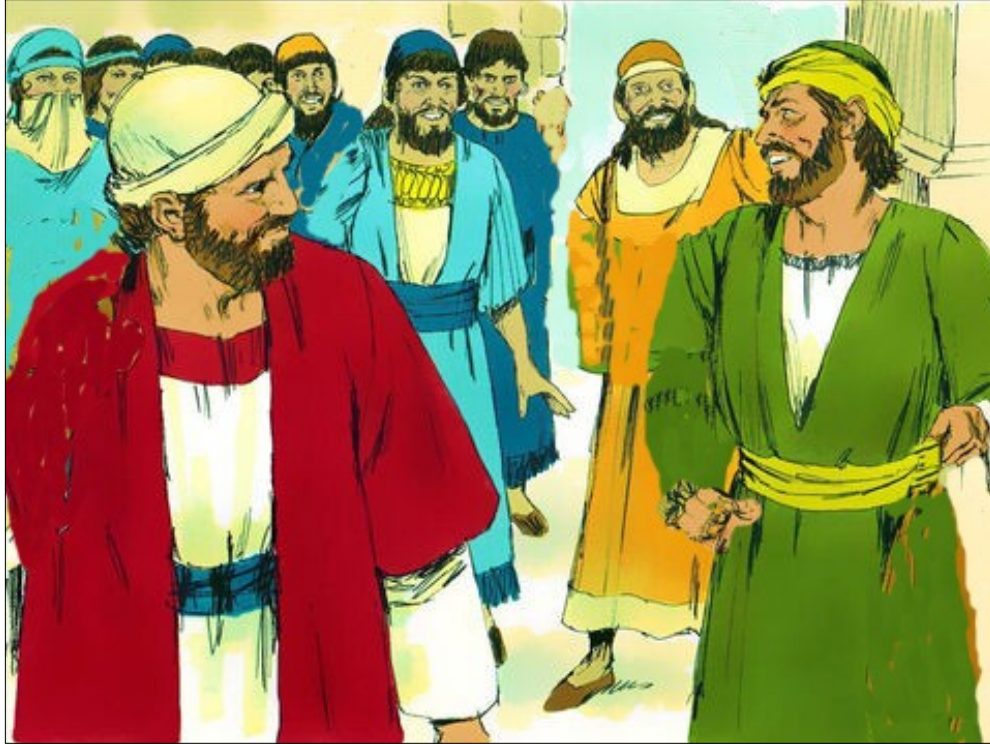
Sharing their news while giving God the glory.

and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.



It had become really clear that for the Gentiles things had really entered a totally different phase in God's work in the world.

And they stayed there a long time with the disciples



After about 3 years on the mission, do you think it was time to rest and relax or were they going on with the work of ministry?

What is 'church' about ?

This short account of the latter part of the mission has really important information about the nature of the early church and what it means to be a church.



Let's begin with the name :

ἐκκλησία

*Acts 14:27 And when they arrived and gathered the **church** together,*

The word in the original Greek is 'ekklesia'.

This is made up of 2 words which mean 'called out'.

The church is made up of **individuals** who have been called to be different. The old life has gone and a new one has begun. At the heart of this calling is faith in **the Gospel** of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Acts 14:22 strengthening the **disciples***

The members are called 'disciples' -**LEARNERS**-
because it is a life of growth

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.



*Acts 14:22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to **the faith**. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.*

The faith – was the teaching they had been given and what they had believed.

It was a realistic faith that recognised they were in a hostile world as God's children and difficulties lay ahead.

It had to be a **saving and persevering faith**.



*Acts 14:27 And when they arrived and gathered the church **together**,*

The church is made up of individuals who have been called to be different and meet together.



*Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in **each** church*

The church is made up of individual local communities of disciples (in different towns and cities) which are independent , but also connected through the apostles and fellowship.

The whole church is made up of **local churches**.



*Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed **elders** for them in each church*

The local church has a leadership structure patterned after the synagogue – having a **plurality of leaders**.

The elders were part of the community of disciples whom God had raised up and were recognised and set apart for the responsible role.



Acts 14:21 They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples.

The disciples, having heard and believed the gospel, would have needed **teaching** the basics of how to live as Christians. This role was begun by the apostles, and later was carried on through their written teaching that we have in the Old Testament and the New Testament.



*Acts 14:27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and **reported** all that God had done through them*

There was **accountability** over the things they did. It wasn't an individualistic thing.
And each one is ultimately accountable to God



*Acts 14:27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had **opened a door** of faith to the Gentiles.*

The churches had a commitment to mission and to support it by prayer and giving.

Act 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."



What is 'church' about ?

Ingredients for each church:-

Local fellowships – independent but linked

The gospel

Saving and persevering faith

Teaching

Leadership

Accountability

Mission

Worship

*While they were worshipping
the Lord ... Acts 13:2*

