

Focus: Persecution will never silence God’s servants. “Through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God.” (v.21) Suffering serves God’s plans and has its eternal rewards.

Introduction and Background

- 1st missionary journey (46-48) – in one sermon!
- What we believe about eternity will have a serious impact on how you live, and what you expect in life let alone in life after death.

I. Great Response??

- A. Great Message!
- B. Great response comes. Many believed from Iconium to Perga
- C. We should share expectantly!

II. Great Resistance?? (Read: Suffering!)

- A. From –
 - 1. Antioch, Iconium & Lystra –
 - a. Adulation & Temptation
 - b. The stoning of Paul
 - 2. It continues through Acts
- B. Man’s perspective
 - 1. A great paradox: Good news is rejected.
 - 2. Kingdom of God overturns our kingdoms. Luke 1:52-53: Luke 2:34
 - 3. Jealousy – Acts 5; 13; 17
- C. God’s perspective – “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” 14:22
 - 1. The necessity of suffering.
 - 2. It is ordained by God
 - “it is necessary” - Gk *dei*
 - the expression in Luke/Acts always points back to events announced by God in the OT.

3. The Messiah must suffer

- Luke 24:26-27; Luke 24:44-45; Acts 2:23; Acts 17:3

4. His People Must Suffer

- Luke 6:22-23; Matthew 5:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:11-12; John 15:18

D. Our sufferings - What do they look like?

1. The Apostles and Servants of Acts

a. Physical threats

b. Continuous lies, ridicule, slander, false accusations against the Lord's servants 2 Chron.36:16

2. Believers in this culture

- religious tolerance?

- Loss of freedom to speak

III. A Great Resolve

A. Doesn't run from the threat

- They return to Lystra and eventually back through all the cities they visited

- In order to: Strengthen – Encourage - Protect/Preserve (appointing elders!)

B. Sustained by Joy –Honor of Christ's name –Power of the Spirit - Christ's command (Matthew 28:19,20)

IV. A Very Great Reward

A. Great is your reward in heaven.

B. Suffering and reward?

1. Suffering never wasted. Psalm 56:8 **We may lose all *for* him in this life – but we gain all *by* him for life, both here and to come.**

2. Christ's suffering and reward? Phil. 2:6-11

3. Our sufferings? Phil.3:10

Let suffering serve it's purposes -

The glory & power of God

The honor of Christ and His redeeming work

The assurance of the resurrection and the life to come