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Faith to Persevere

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 /1913 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus - **December 17, 2017**

Acts 14:8-11, 18-23

Introduction: We have, in this chapter, a further account of the progress of the **gospel**, by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas among the **Gentiles**. It goes on conquering and to conquer, yet meeting with **opposition**, as before, among the **UNBELIEVING Jews**.
(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/mhm/acts-14.html>)

Acts 14:1-7, And it came to pass in **Iconium**, that they went both together into the **synagogue** of the **Jews**, and so spake, that a GREAT multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks **BELIEVED**. But the **unbelieving Jews** stirred up the **Gentiles**, and made their MINDS evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his **grace**, and granted **SIGNS** and **WONDERS** to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when there was an **assault made BOTH** of the **Gentiles**, and also of the **Jews** with their **rulers**, to use them despitefully, and to **stone them**, They were ware of it, and FLED unto **LYSTRA** and **DERBE**, cities of **Lycaonia**, and unto the region that lieth round about: **And there they preached the gospel**.

NOTE: This particular synagogue in Iconium had an unusually large number of **Gentiles** in attendance, many of whom were also proselytes (converts); and it provided a major opportunity for Paul. Walker commented on the fact that it was "**easier to interpret prophetic utterances** concerning **Christ** to the **Gentiles**," [5] because the Gentiles, unlike the Jews, were NOT blinded by the malignant (bent on evil) carnal nationalism which dominated Jewish thought and was the prime reason for their **rejection** of Christ. ...**Lystra** was the first stop, being only about eighteen or twenty miles eastward from Iconium; but the distance was NOT measured merely in miles, for it **lay in a different political division of Galatia**; and the people spoke a different language.
(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bcc/acts-14.html>)

Acts 14:8, And there sat a certain **man at Lystra**, **impotent (UNABLE, i.e. weak)** in his feet, being a **cripple** (one who has never enjoyed the use of his limbs) from his mother's womb, who **NEVER** had walked:

NOTE: The deplorable case of the poor cripple: He was impotent in his feet, **disabled** (so the word is) to such a degree that it was impossible he should set his foot to the ground, to lay any stress upon it. It was well known that he had been so from his mother's womb, and that he never had walked, nor could stand up. We should take occasion hence to thank God for the use of our limbs and those who are deprived of it may observe that their case is NOT singular. (Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/mhm/acts-14.html>)

Acts 14:9-10, The **same HEARD** Paul **speak**: who stedfastly **beholding** him, and **perceiving** that **he had FAITH to be healed**, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he **LEAPED** and **WALKED**.

NOTE: How did this faith come to this poor heathen? Why, by **hearing** the word of God preached: for it is said, the same **HEARD Paul speak**.
(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/acc/acts-14.html>)

Thought 1. I'm being reminded of a time, back in the early 1990's, when I was privileged to work with two Christian men who were DEAF and MUTE. They taught me "sign language" and we would communicate a length about whatever, and laughing about the funny things being shared and communicated as we fellowshiped.

During this time, I was of the "understanding" that the gospel HAD to be HEARD, then BELIEVED, in order for a person to be saved. And then one day, when I'm just working, and NOT thinking on anything in particular, the Holy Spirit asked this question:

"IF YOU HAVE TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD IN ORDER TO HAVE FAITH, HOW DID THEY GET SAVED?" Obviously, referring to the two men who both were deaf and mute. To my surprise, I could NOT answer the question! So, when I got home, I got into the scriptures, looking for the answer!

Psalms 119:130, The **entrance (opening** [interpreting: EXPLAINING]) of thy WORDS giveth **light (illumination** [enlightening of the understanding by knowledge, or the mind by spiritual light]); it giveth **UNDERSTANDING** unto to the **simple (foolish)**.

Romans 10:17, So then **FAITH** cometh by **HEARING**, and **HEARING** by the word OF (from, or ABOUT) God.

Hearing defined 189, akoe pronounced ak-o-ay' from 191; hearing (the act, the sense (understanding) OR the thing heard).

Thought 2. So, Rom. 10:17 says: So then faith cometh by UNDERSTANDING, and UNDERSTANDING by the word FROM or ABOUT God. The man who heard Paul speak, heard him EXPLAIN the scriptures and give testimony of the miracles done by God (Yahweh) confirming his word, and helping those who have FAITH because of the understanding received from the WORD from or about God.

Thought 3. Two more scriptures to confirm the truth about HOW faith comes to a person is found in Joshua 2 and Luke 7.

Joshua 2:8-11, And before they were laid down, she (*Rahab*) came up unto them upon the **roof** ...said unto the men, **I KNOW** that the Lord hath given you the land ...that your **terror** is fallen upon us, and that **all** the **inhabitants** of the land **faint** because of you. For **we have HEARD** how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of **Egypt**; (*40 years ago*) and what ye did unto the **two kings** of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, (Numbers 21:21-35) whom ye utterly destroyed. (*about 1 year ago*) And as soon as we had **HEARD** these things, our **hearts** did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for **the Lord (the self-Existent or Eternal)** your God ...is **God** in heaven **above** ...in earth... Source: *Reese Chronological Bible*

Thought 4. Did you notice they just HEARD the word ABOUT God.

Luke 7:1-3, 6-9 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain **centurion's servant**, who was **dear** unto him, was **sick**, and ready to DIE. And when he **HEARD of** Jesus, he sent unto him...

...Then **Jesus went** with them. And when he was **now NOT FAR** from the **house**, the centurion SENT FRIENDS to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter UNDER my roof... Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but **SAY in a word**, and **my servant shall be healed**. For **I ALSO** am a man **SET under authority**, having **UNDER me** soldiers, and I SAY unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

When **Jesus HEARD these things**, **he marveled** (wonder [affected with surprise or admiration; be amazed]) at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, **I have NOT found so GREAT FAITH, NO, NOT in ISRAEL.**

Thought 5. Here is another important spiritual principle that needs to be explained. The Centurion had GREAT faith because he had “proper REVERENCE” for God (Yahweh), and he had a “good understanding” of that reverence FROM him!

Proverbs 14:26, In the **FEAR (reverence)** of the Lord is **strong confidence (assurance [utmost certainty, FAITH].)**...

Acts 14:11, *And when the people SAW what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.*

NOTE: They lifted up their voices with an **air of triumph**, saying in their own language (for it was the common people that said it), in the speech of Lycaonia, which was a dialect of the Greek, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. They imagined that Paul and Barnabas had dropped down to them out of the clouds, and that they were some **divine powers**, no less than gods, though in the likeness of men. This notion of the thing agreed well enough with the **pagan theology**, and the fabulous account they had of the visits which their gods made to this lower world and proud enough they were to think that they should have a visit made to them.

(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/mhm/acts-14.html>)

Acts 14:12-18, *And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn FROM these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left NOT himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.*

NOTE: He does us good in giving us rain from heaven--rain for us to drink, for if there were no rain there would be no springs of water and we should soon die for thirst--rain for our land to drink, for our meat as well as drink we have from the rain in giving us this, he gives us fruitful seasons. (Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/mhm/acts-14.html>)

Acts 14:19, *And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been DEAD.*

NOTE: They fell upon Paul rather than Barnabas, because Paul, being the **chief speaker**, galled and vexed them more than Barnabas did. Now observe here, **1**. How the people were incensed against Paul NOT by any injury they pretended he had done them (if they took it

for an affront that he would NOT let them misplace divine honours upon him, when they considered themselves they would easily forgive him that wrong), but there came **certain Jews** from Antioch, hearing, it is likely, and **vexed to hear, what respect was shown** to Paul and Barnabas at Lystra and they incensed the people against them, as **FACTIOUS** (given to faction [**CLIQUE** of partisans of any kind, acting for their OWN interests]), seditious (tending to excite sedition [DIVISION, riot]), dangerous persons, NOT fit to be harboured (permit to lodge, rest or reside).

James 3:14-16, But if **YE** have bitter **envying** and **STRIFE** in your hearts, glory NOT, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth NOT from ABOVE, but is **earthly, sensual, devilish**. For where **envying** and **strife (FACTION)** is, there is **CONFUSION** and every **EVIL** work.

See how restless the **RAGE** of the **Jews** was **against** the **gospel** of **Christ** they could NOT bear that it should have footing any where. **2.** To what degree they were incensed by these barbarous Jews: they were irritated to such a degree that the **mob rose** and **stoned Paul**, NOT by a judicial sentence, but in a popular **TUMULT** (agitation of a multitude, usually accompanied with great noise, uproar, and confusion of voices) they **threw stones** at him, with which they knocked him down, and then drew him out of the city, as one NOT fit to live in it, or **drew him out** upon a sledge or in a cart, to **bury him**, supposing he had been dead. So strong is the **BIAS** of the corrupt and carnal heart to that which is evil, even in contrary extremes, that, as it is with great difficulty that men are restrained from evil on one side, so it is with great ease that they are persuaded to evil on the other side. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhm/acts-14.html>)

Acts 14:20, *Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he **ROSE up (stand up)**, and came into the city: and the NEXT DAY he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

NOTE: It seems there were some here at Lystra that became disciples, that found the mean between deifying the apostles and rejecting them and even these **new converts had courage** to own Paul when he was thus run down, though they had reason enough to fear that the same that stoned him would stone them for owning him. They stood round about him, as a guard to him against the further outrage of the people -- stood about him to see whether he were alive or dead and **all of a sudden he rose up**. Though he was **NOT dead**, yet he was ill crushed and **BRUISED**, no doubt, and fainted away he was in a deliquium (swooning [fainting]), so that it was NOT **without a miracle** that he came so soon to himself, and was so well as to be able to go into the city. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhm/acts-14.html>)

Acts 14:21-23, *And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned AGAIN to **Lystra**, and to **Iconium**, and **Antioch**, **Confirming (support further, strenthen)** the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to **CONTINUE IN the FAITH**, and that we must through much tribulation ENTER into the kingdom of God. And when they had **ordained** them **elders in every church**, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

NOTE: Behold the **courage** of these Christian men! They counted not their lives dear to them, and returned to do their Masters work in the **very places** in which they had been so grievously **persecuted**, and where one of them had been apparently stoned to death! (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/acts-14.html>)

Thought 1. Since all of these disciples are **NEW** converts, as directed by the Holy Spirit, Paul appointed **OLDER** men, with enough godly wisdom, as overseers of the congregations. This, in **NO WAY**, means that only **MEN** could be overseers. The Church is in the "baby stage." This explains Paul's words to Timothy concerning "bishops and deacons."