

FAITH PERSEVERES THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS

YEAR: KNEEL / FOCUS: LIVING ON MISSION / SERIES: ACTS

BIG TRUTH: FAITH PERSEVERES THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS

James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6; Revelation 14:12; Romans 5:2-5; Deuteronomy 4:30-31

BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 14:21-22

"When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

BIG IDEAS

- In faith we continue to preach the Gospel in every circumstance.
- In faith we purpose that the advance of the gospel is worth our lives.
- In faith we trust God to work.

BIBLE PASSAGE: ACTS 14

KNEEL: LIVING ON MISSION

The Kneel Year is an exploration of what it means to worship God with our all (Luke 10:26-28) and to use our influence to lead others to do the same. We know that as we pursue a life of worship, we will pursue a life of both wisdom and mission. Throughout this year we will study and pursue the wisdom of God through the book of Proverbs and the mission of God through the book of Acts, and we will learn how both of these things must inform and shape our influence as Jesus followers!

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know...

- The gospel has the power to turn the world upside down.
- They are empowered and chosen to be a gospel witness in the world.
- Our salvation has come by grace alone.



Every student should feel...

- Comfort that the Lord is with them wherever they go.
- Hope in the God of salvation.
- Responsible to use their influence to live for Jesus alone.



Every student should strive to...

- Read, study, and meditate on the entire book of Acts.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Pray consistently for boldness to make Jesus known.



Every student should want...

- To pursue faithfulness in living on mission.
- To share the gospel with people in their lives who do not know Jesus.
- To sacrifice their personal freedoms for the sake of the gospel

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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Disciples faithfully proclaim the gospel.

“When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples...”

- The disciples in the early church were faithful to proclaim the gospel no matter their circumstances. They shared the truth as they were led and did so faithfully.
- Even when they faced trials and were persecuted, they continued to share the gospel. They did not let difficulties or obstacles keep them from telling others about Jesus and what He had done for the world. Instead, they remained faithful to the proclamation of the gospel in the world.

Disciples persevere through trials.

“...they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

- The disciples in the early church were persecuted for their faith. They were imprisoned, beaten, and faced many trials. They did not stop proclaiming the truth through these trials. They found strength in the truth and continued to serve God through their trials.
- Disciples today will persevere through difficult times. When they face trials and persecution because of the gospel, they will continue to tell others about Jesus. They will not let trials and struggle keep them from sharing the truth of Jesus with others.

Disciples encourage one another.

“...strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith...”

- Knowing that you will face trials helps you overcome the trial. The disciples in the early church knew they would face trials because Jesus had told them so. They rejoiced that they were being persecuted as He was persecuted. They encouraged one another to persevere in the trials by remaining faithful and continuing to serve the Lord.
- Today, we can encourage one another to live faithfully by our personal faithfulness. When we live faithfully, we encourage other believers to live faithfully. We also encourage one another to live for Christ by spurring one another on to live for Him.

FAITH PERSEVERES THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS

BIG IDEA #1: IN FAITH WE CONTINUE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE.¹

[THIS]

Remaining faithful to the Lord requires that we persevere through every circumstance we face in this world. We will face many challenges, especially as we share the truth of God's Word with those who do not yet know Him as their Savior. Paul and Barnabas faced these challenges as they proclaimed the gospel in the world. We see examples of their perseverance in Acts 14. In Iconium, the unbelieving Jews stirred up Gentiles against them and caused trouble for them. Later in the chapter, we see they are mistaken for false gods and later in Lystra, Paul is stoned. After Paul is stoned, he is assumed dead, yet he rises and returns to the city, continuing to preach the gospel. Paul's circumstances did not dictate if he would preach the gospel or not. Though he was stoned near to death, he still chose to tell others about Jesus. He chose to live his life for Christ no matter what obstacle he faced. Paul lived his life in faith believing in the truth of the gospel for everyone.

[THEREFORE]

How does our faith that the gospel is true for everyone help us share the gospel in every circumstance?

In Acts 20:24, Paul says that he doesn't consider his life worth anything except to tell others about Jesus. Paul's faith exemplifies that he believed the gospel was true for everyone, not just himself. Romans 1:17 also shows us that he believed this to be true. When we have this kind of faith, we will tell others about Jesus no matter our situation.

[THIS]

Throughout our Christian journey we will face many obstacles to preaching the gospel. Jesus warned that we would be persecuted in His name. It is our faith in Him and the gospel that saved us that leads us to share the gospel when we encounter these challenges. When we really believe that the gospel is sufficient and is what every person needs to hear, we will share it with everyone no matter what we think their response or reaction. Paul and Barnabas believed this and lived this truth out. We see this in Acts 14 by the way they continued to preach the gospel even when they were told not to and were challenged. Our lives are different than theirs and we most likely won't face the same degree of obstacles that they faced, but when we are faced with them, we can still share the truth knowing that the gospel is true for everyone and it is the good news that sets captives free. Just as Paul believed it was worth dying for, we can give up our earthly lives for the sake of sharing its good news with others that they might have eternal life.

[THEREFORE]

What are some obstacles that have kept you from sharing the gospel?

1 Corinthians 1:18 reminds us that the message of the cross seems foolish to people who are perishing. This means that they will not naturally believe it, just like we did not naturally believe it. This obstacle can keep us from sharing the truth because we will fear their reaction. 2 Timothy 3:12 reminds us that when we desire to live a Godly life, we will face persecution. We should expect it and in faith, share the gospel no matter what.

How does Paul's faith encourage you to share the gospel?

In Acts 14, Paul's faith is exemplary because he continued to share the gospel no matter what he faced. When we see what he endured, we can draw courage to share in any circumstance also.

1. Acts 14:5-7: Though the disciples were persecuted, they did not stop preaching the gospel.

FAITH PERSEVERES THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS

BIG IDEA #2: IN FAITH WE PURPOSE THAT THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL IS WORTH OUR LIVES.²

[THIS]

When we become a follower of Christ, we must die to our sin nature and turn from a life of living for ourselves. We do this, repenting of the sinful way we have lived and purposing to live for God with the power and help of His Spirit. Because God redeems us and gives us His Spirit to live inside of us, we can live for Him as new creations. We still must battle our human natures that are sinful, and this requires that we die to ourselves daily. In doing this, we must make a choice that the kingdom of God is more important than the life we desire here on earth. We must choose the purpose of God and His glory over our own purposes and glory. When we do this, we will choose the advance of the gospel over our own lives. We will decide that our life on this earth doesn't really matter as much if the gospel isn't being proclaimed and people aren't hearing the good news of Jesus. What matters is that much is made of Jesus and that through our lives, He is glorified always and forever.

[THEREFORE]

What do you count as worthy of your life? What are the things in this life you would give up your life for?

Luke 9:23 reminds us of Jesus' words to His disciples when He taught them that they must give up their lives to really follow Him. If we are to advance the gospel in any circumstance, we must die to ourselves. In Mark 8:36, Jesus taught that we could gain the whole world, yet lose our soul.

[THIS]

When we come to the place that the advance of the gospel is worth our lives, we will preach the gospel through any persecution and trial. We will face many trials and still preach the gospel. We will even be able to face what Paul faced and rise up ready to proclaim Christ crucified just as he did. We will not let the world tell us we must be silent. Instead, we will continue to show the love of Christ to others and to tell others the truth of the gospel. When we are persecuted, we will come back stronger and with greater faith, knowing that the gospel is true and worth dying for. This is challenging because in our lives we will feel afraid and timid when our faith is challenged. We will want to give up. No doubt there were times the disciples in the early church wanted to quit, but they did not. They remembered the words of Jesus and the truth of the gospel, and they persevered. When we are challenged and when we are in a trial, we must remember what the gospel has done for us and what it can do for others. When we do this, we will continue to tell. We will tell others.

[THEREFORE]

How can a fear of man keep you from advancing the gospel?

When we fear man, we are handicapped from fulfilling God's purpose for our lives. Instead of living boldly for Him, we live in fear of what people think or of what people can do to us. Matthew 10:28 and Hebrews 13:6 remind us of the right attitude we should have toward the opinion and actions of others.

How does your daily life reveal that you have purposed the advance of the gospel is worth your life?

Proverbs 28:1 reminds us that the bold are like lions. Acts 4:29 and Philippians 1:20 offer us a picture of what it means to live boldly for the purpose of advancing the gospel. We live daily with the goal of telling others about Jesus.

2. Acts 14:19: When Paul preached the gospel, he was stoned nearly to death, yet he continued to preach the gospel.

FAITH PERSEVERES THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS

BIG IDEA #3: IN FAITH WE TRUST GOD TO WORK.³

[THIS]

Faith requires us to trust that God is working even when we cannot see Him working. Often, God allows us to see Him working. He allows us to know that He is moving in the lives of people around us, but there are times that He is working, and He does not allow us to know. In these times, our faith cannot wane or grow weak. We cannot doubt. We must continue to believe that God is at work doing what He is doing as He has determined to do it. This is the challenge to the Christian journey. Often, we trust in the things we see. More often, we are inclined to believe in the tangible expression of faith instead of just taking God at His Word. We will persevere in faith and advance the gospel in every circumstance when we begin to daily take God at His Word. When we study His Word and just believe Him, there really is no one else on earth who is as trustworthy and faithful as God. We really can trust that He is doing what He says He is going to do. He has said that He is going to save people who believe His gospel, so we can trust that He is indeed going to do that.

[THEREFORE]

Describe a time when you didn't believe God was working, but He later revealed that He was. How did this increase your faith?

In Acts 14, the apostles trusted that God was working even though they faced many trials. It didn't seem like God was doing anything through their efforts, but God was at work. Often, we may think that God is not working, but God is always at work.

[THIS]

In Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas trusted God in every situation. They pressed on in every situation, persevering with the gospel of Jesus. Even when they were opposed and Paul was stoned, they continued to believe and trust that God was at work. Often, we may believe that an obstacle means we should stop. Sometimes we interpret a trial as a sign that God is not working or we should do something else, but we should follow the example of Paul and Barnabas. When we face trials and opposition, we should press in even more. As we share the gospel, we trust that God is going to use our efforts for His glory. Even when we cannot see the result of what we are doing, we can still trust that God is at work. Often, we will share the gospel and never know if the person believes it or not. This should not stop us from sharing the truth and seeking to advance the gospel in any circumstance.

[THEREFORE]

Why is it easier to share the gospel when we think we know the outcome rather than when we do not?

2 Corinthians 4:18 reminds us that our faith is in things that we cannot see because we are living for our eternal home, not our home here. Because we are used to seeing and touching things, we often expect tangible results. This is why it is easier to believe in things that we can see rather than things that cannot be seen.

Why is it important to persevere in any circumstance when sharing the gospel?

Revelation 3:11 reminds us that Jesus is returning soon. We must persevere in sharing the gospel because this is true. James 1:12 teaches us that those who truly believe will persevere and their faith will grow.

3. Acts 14:27: Paul and Barnabas believed that God was working and would work. They acted in faith believing He would do all that He promised and said He would do.