

Crossway Life Group, Week of June 30

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

Community

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

Scripture: Acts 14:8-18 "The Danger of Misdirected Worship"

Reading & Discussing Scripture

- Consider this expression: "Don't shoot the messenger." Sometimes, when we receive news that we don't like, we are upset with the messenger who brought us that news, even though the messenger has perhaps actually helped us by bringing us the news we need to hear. We confuse the messenger with the message, and we might be upset with the messenger for no good reason.
 - Has this happened to you? What problems has it brought when people "shot the messenger"?
- **Read Acts 14:3.** What does this verse say about the role that Paul and Barnabas had? What does it say about the role that God had?
- **Read Acts 14:8-18.**
 - **Verses 8-10:** What does Luke emphasize about this situation?
 - **Verses 11-13:** What confusion came? What might have contributed to that confusion?
 - **Verses 14-17:** How did Barnabas and Paul respond to this confusion? What message did they bring to the people?

The Big Idea

**God's work through people
can lead to the great danger of worshipping (and "fearing") people
rather than worshipping (and "fearing") God**

Application & Reflection Questions

1. Consider this statement: "When we are thirsty, what matters is not the quality of the container (the water bottle), but the quality of what it contains (the water)." Of course there are also ways that the quality of the container is important. For example, if the inside of a water container is dirty, it will affect the quality of the water it contains.
How would you state this idea in your own words? In what ways is this true when it comes to learning about God from other people?
2. Consider these four parts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of how we can be restored in our relationship with God through Jesus. How might the Gospel help you see the world more clearly, including how we think of messengers of God, and thus to live more wisely and hopefully?

Aspect	Description	Life experience
God's holiness	Only God is holy and truly good God is holy and truly good	
Human sin	Every person and every organization is sinful and broken	
God's grace in Christ	Our fundamental hope is in the forgiveness and reconciliation that Jesus brought through His own death and resurrection	
Human faith/ Spirit's work	We also hope for and experience the work of the Holy Spirit through people in faith	

3. Whom has God used in your life in significant ways to help you know and grow in the Gospel? In what ways might there be a danger of thinking too highly of this person or group?
4. Read Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10. How does he describe his lowliness? How does he describe his confidence in God's work in him? Do you tend to think too highly of yourself, or too lowly of yourself, in Christ? Which words of Paul do you especially need to hear and take to heart?
5. Might there be someone in your life who might think too highly of you? What could you do to guard against this, for their good as well as your own?

Growing in Cross-cultural Understandings

This passage highlights how differences in language and culture can contribute to significant misunderstanding. And the issue is even more challenging when one or both groups do not realize that there is misunderstanding.

Have you experienced misunderstanding because of differences in language and culture? What was it like? Did the situation get resolved in a good way? If so, what helped resolve it?

Serving beyond ourselves

What are ways that your group can be for the benefit of people beyond yourselves? In particular, in what ways can you be Spirit-filled messengers of the Good News about Jesus Christ?

Acts 14:3 New International Version (NIV)

³So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.

Acts 14:8-18 New International Version (NIV)

⁸In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. ⁹He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed ¹⁰and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

¹¹When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" ¹²Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. ¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: ¹⁵"Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. ¹⁶In the past, he let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." ¹⁸Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10 New International Version (NIV)

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.