

Pain and Growth

How does a good coach help us in pain?

- Help us know what kind of pain this is
 - Is this the kind of pain when we should stop?
 - Is this the kind of pain when we need to keep going?
- Push us to keep going in good pain
 - To build strength and perseverance

Where does this apply in our lives?

Where does this apply in our lives following Christ?

**A faulty view
of the Christian life...**

Broken and
decaying earth

*Trusting & obeying God
Each day a bit more like heaven*

*Not trusting & obeying
Each day a bit more like hell*

Perfection of
Heaven

So when trouble comes,
who is at fault?

More brokenness
& decay

I think: prayer, God's love, good behavior, being around good people, should make life easier!

How are you experiencing brokenness and decay?
Where do you see brokenness and decay around you?

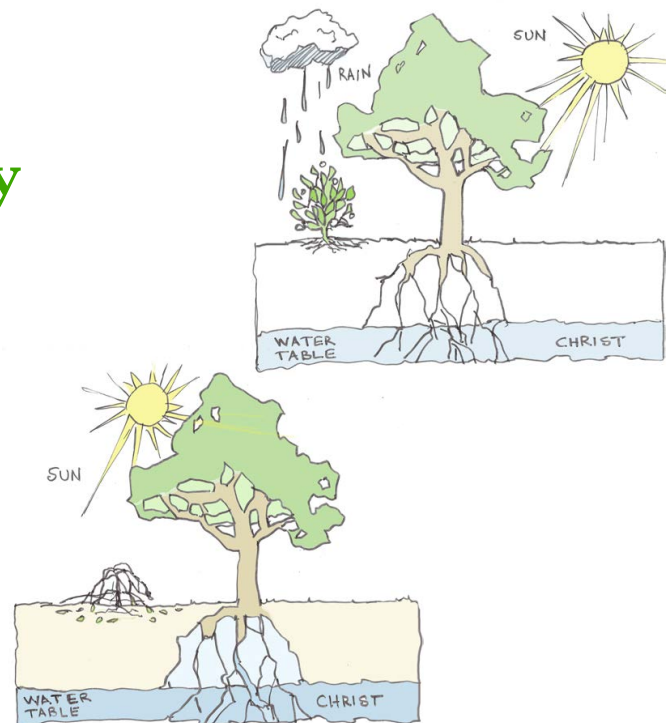
Pray:

- God, help us see our lives as you see them
- Help us learn to trust you more deeply,
and follow you more closely,
especially in the midst of trouble

The Good of a Hard Journey

Acts 14:19-28

Chinese: page 1791
Spanish: page 1407
English-Green: page 755
English-Brown: page 1107
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Paul and Barnabas tell people about Jesus

Where	Initial Response	Later Response	Outcome
Antioch <i>Acts 13:13-52</i>	Enthusiasm: whole city came to hear	Opponents stirred up the crowd against them Expelled from the city	They shook the dust off their sandals and left
Iconium <i>Acts 14:1-7</i>	Great number of Jews & Greeks believed	Opponents plotted to mistreat and stone them	They fled
Lystra <i>Acts 14:8-20</i>	The people tried to worship them		
Derbe <i>Acts 14:20-21</i>			

Acts 14:19-28

19-20a: Paul was stoned, left for dead, yet returned to the city

20b-21a: • Jews from Antioch (perhaps **5 days** of travel) and

21b-25: Iconium (perhaps **1 day** of travel) came to attack

26-28: Paul & Barnabas

- People of Lystra were persuaded against Paul
 - Mob action
 - Perhaps before they felt obligated to sacrifice
 - Perhaps here they felt betrayed
- Returned to the city
 - Probably he had no choice
 - Probably he avoided crowds!

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Acts 14:19-28

19-20a: Paul was stoned, left for dead, yet returned to the city

20b-21a: Paul & Barnabas made many disciples in Derbe

21b-25: • Perhaps a 3 day, hard journey

26-28: • They kept proclaiming the Good News!

- Many people began the journey of faith in Christ

Acts 14:19-28

19-20a: Paul was stoned, left for dead, yet returned to the city

20b-21a: Paul & Barnabas made many disciples in Derbe

21b-25: Paul & Barnabas returned to strengthen new believers

26-28: • Went to the same cities where there was opposition

- This time: build up the new believers
 - **Strengthen** disciples
 - **Encourage** them to remain faithful to Christ
 - **Remind** them: hardships are an essential part of the journey of entering God's Kingdom
- Appointed leadership to protect and guide them
 - Serious prayer

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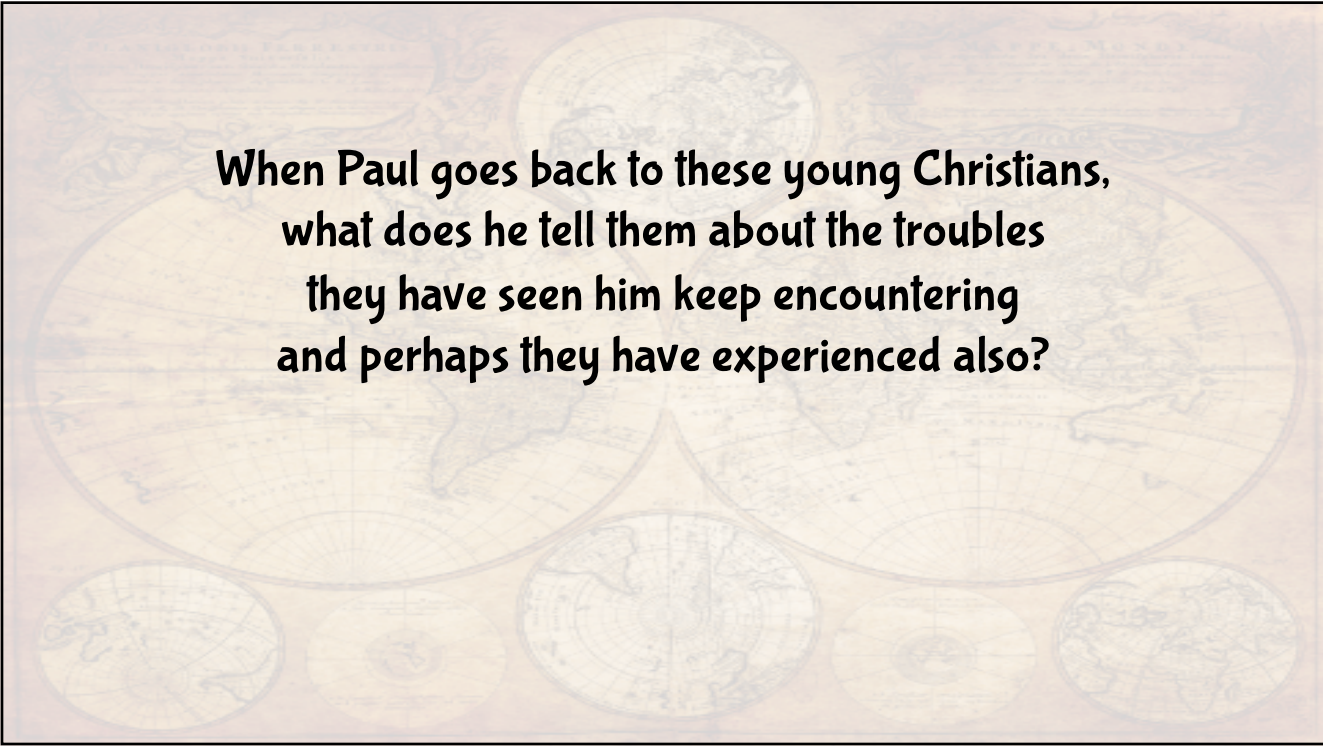
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26-28: Paul & Barnabas reported God's work to Antioch

- Final report to the whole church that sent them
- Message
 - God did powerful work through them
 - God opened a door for Gentiles to be Christians
 - NOT a focus on trouble or persecution

Paul and Barnabas: tell people about Jesus

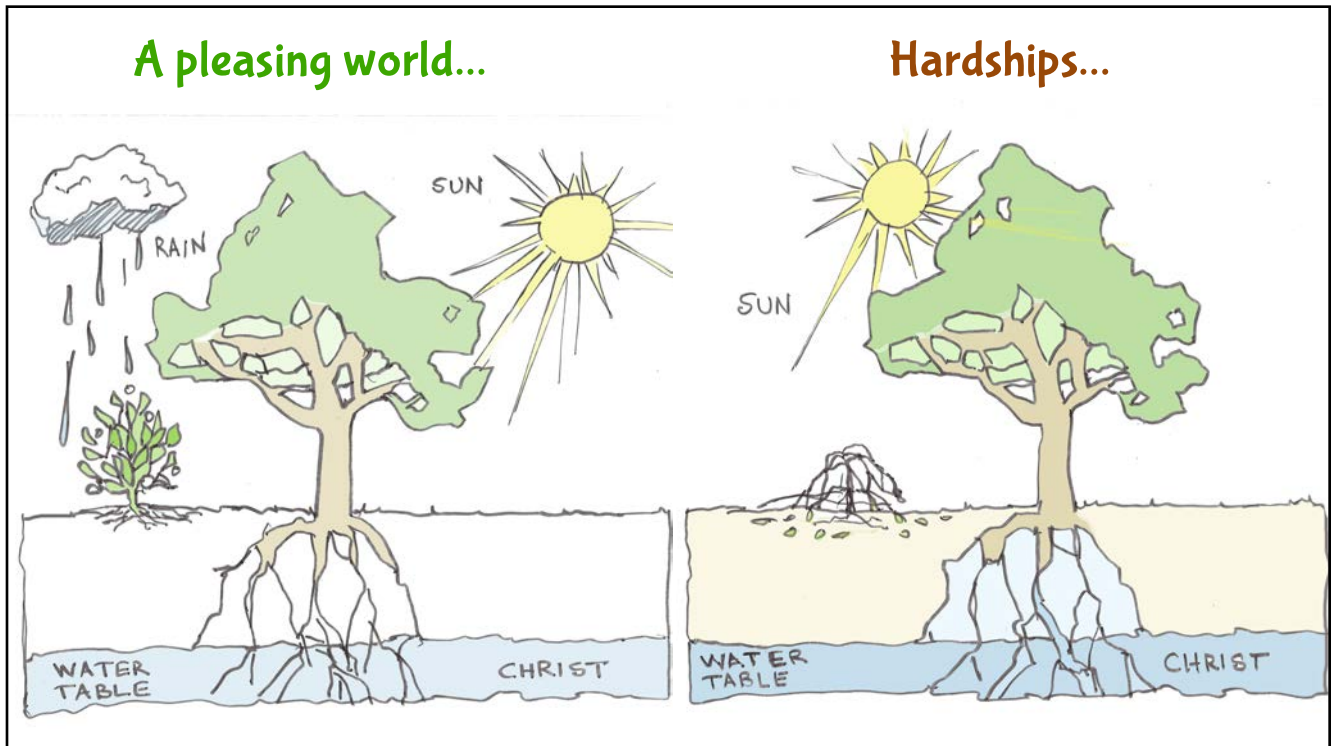
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Lystra <i>Acts 14:8-20</i>	The people tried to worship them	Opponents from A&I came and stoned them to the edge of death	Re-entered Lystra, then went on
Derbe <i>Acts 14:20-21</i>	Large number of people followed	Faith continued	



**When Paul goes back to these young Christians,
what does he tell them about the troubles
they have seen him keep encountering
and perhaps they have experienced also?**

The Big Idea

The journey of faith in Christ
until heaven
includes hardship
and the blessing
of the work and presence of God

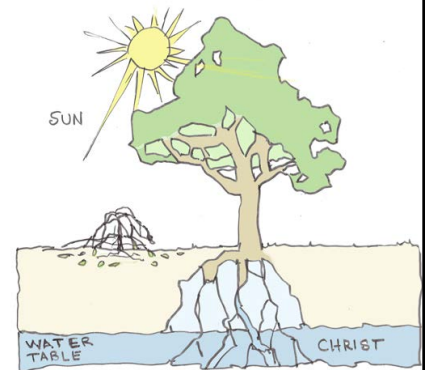


“Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, **but they have no root**. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.” *Luke 8:13*

“we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that **suffering produces perseverance**; perseverance, **character**; and character, **hope**.”

Romans 5:3-4

Our roots tend not to go deep until they need to!



God uses hardship to help us grow deeper in our knowledge of Him

The Big Idea

The journey of faith in Christ
 until heaven
 includes hardship
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The troubles Christians are going to encounter include...

Often hard to tell them apart

- Troubles from a **broken natural world**
 - Like rust and disease and disasters
- Troubles because of **human weakness**
 - Like misunderstanding and fatigue
- Troubles because of **human sin** (mine and others')
 - Like pride, selfishness, ...

**God can use all of these hardships
 to help us grow deeper
 in our knowledge of Him**

...on to Jesus Christ
 ...s even imprisonment

Application

- Persevere with hope
 - “Endure hardship as discipline [a means of growth]; God is treating you as his children [in love].” *Hebrews 12:7*
 - Trust in God as a perfect coach, trainer, mentor, parent
 - Hardship is one of God’s tools to cause us to grow deeper roots
 - “Object permanence”: kids have to learn that things aren’t gone simply because they aren’t visible
 - We learn to trust that God is working even in the dark

Application

- Persevere with hope
- Rejoice in the work of God
 - See the work He is doing in us and others in hardships
 - Some of God’s top goals:
 - People coming to know God
 - “This is what the Lord says: By this you [the Egyptians] **will know that I am the Lord**” *Exodus 7:17*
 - People growing in their knowledge of God
 - “Then you [the Jewish people] **will know that I am the Lord your God**” *Exodus 6:7*
 - “to be conformed to the image of his Son” *Romans 8:29*

- I am **not** saying...
 - Suffering is good in itself
 - We should be happy about sin and rebellion
- I am saying...
 - God’s goodness is so great that He can and does use trouble to accomplish wonderful good
 - We can and should trust His goodness and power, no matter how bad the trouble seems to be

Application

- Persevere with hope
- Rejoice in the work of God

“Be joyful in hope,
patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer.” *Romans 12:12*

Are you experiencing trouble?

Are you troubled by the trouble in the world around us?

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until heaven
includes hardship
and the blessing
of the work and presence of God

