

# “COMMITTED CHRISTIANS”

Acts 14:19-28

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

## INTRODUCTION

How committed are you to the Lord? Can the Lord “trust” you?

We have entrusted our souls to Him (II Tim. 1:12); He will faithfully **guard** and keep that. Cf. Jesus commending—entrusting—His soul to the Father on the cross (Lk. 23:46).

He has entrusted a treasure to us—a goodly deposit given to us at salvation and when called to service (II Tim. 1:14). We must “**guard**” that treasure and as **stewards**, must be found faithful—trustworthy (I Cor. 4:2). See I Tim. 6:20—“**Guard what has been entrusted to you.**”

He has entrusted His word to us (cf. I Tim. 1:18; II Tim. 2:2) and we must **entrust these truths to others**. Here Paul entrusts believers to the Lord’s care (v. 23). We are His and must use our lives for Him.

## Do you live a committed Christian Life?

This passage shows us that we must be committed in trouble, in travel, and in transfer of commitment to others. **[Due to the importance of this message—it will be a two-part sermon completed next week.]**

- I. COMMITMENT IN TROUBLE (19-20)
  - A. Determined Resistance of the Jews (19) [Compare the trouble had at Antioch and Iconium].
  - B. Fickle response of the Gentiles (19)
    1. They changed loyalty away from the apostles to the Jews  
The loyalty of the fickle crowd shifted away from the apostles (cf. “hosanna” to “crucify”) Cf. the later fickleness of the Galatians from the Gospel (Gal. 1:6-8)
    2. They “stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.”  
See II Cor. 11:25—this incident; II Tim. 3:11—persecuted at Lystra  
They chose him because he was the spokesman—the significant leader.  
Only 2 of the major persecutions in Acts were by Gentiles—Philippi and Ephesus.  
*This was an illegal act in a Roman colony, and even illegal by Jewish standards.*
  - C. Remarkable Resuscitation of Paul (20) (II Tim. 3:11—“out of them all the Lord delivered me.”  
See Gal. 6:17—“I bear in my body the brand marks of Jesus.” )
    1. They succeeded in getting to Paul this time—they must have been jubilant
    2. Was Paul really dead?
      - Text does not say; Luke does not sensationalize miracles!
      - Compare II Cor. 12—into the third Heaven (not sure whether in the body or out of it. But that does not mean “dead or alive”).

- But, that incident was about 40-41 AD; this occurred in about 47 or 48 (II Cor. written in about 55 AD—"14 years ago")
  - The Jews "supposed him to be dead."
3. Paul arose and entered the city—**just like that!**
- Can you imagine the amazement of the disciples?
  - Can you imagine the consternation of the Jews?
  - People were likely weeping and discussing burial arrangements.
  - There were many eyewitnesses to this event! They openly admitted their discipleship.
  - Regardless, his quick recovery and ability to immediately travel evidences that a miracle had taken place here.
  - By this act, **God vindicated him before his opponents.**

Paul was committed to the Lord—even in time of trouble. But he was also committed to Him in his travels.

## II. COMMITMENT IN TRAVEL (20, 21, 24-25, 26-28)

### A. On to Derbe (20b)—"the next day"—with Barnabas

Derbe was a frontier city of Galatia; a small town.

It was at least 30 miles from Lystra and would take several hours to get there.

Jesus had said, "When persecuted in one city, flee to the next" (Mt. 10:23).

### B. Back to Previous Cities—Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (21)

**Even though they had been persecuted there! They still remained committed.**

Most likely avoided public preaching; but it still took **great courage**.

#### 1. Passed through Pisidia (24—this is a technical term in Acts for **evangelizing (13:6)**.)

"Pisidia" was a region in the province of Galatia.

#### 2. This was not the quickest way back—that would have been through the Cilician gates or by the pass over Mt. Taurus—the actual route they took on their 2<sup>nd</sup> journey in 15:41-46. *Derbe was only 160 miles from Tarsus!*

#### 3. Came into Pamphylia—a Roman province in which Perga was located. (24)

- They "spoke the Word in Perga"—had not done so in 13:13-14.

#### 4. Went down to Attalia—seaport of Perga 16 miles away.

### C. Return to Antioch—their sending church (26-28)

#### 1. Finished their job (26)

- They had been "commended"—delivered over—to God's grace by this church.
- God's grace had proven sufficient and they were faithful—committed.
- They "fully accomplished the work" to which they had been committed.  
**"Finish the job, finish the job—get it done! When you have a job to do, never quit until it's through. Finish the job, finish the job, get it done!"**

#### 2. First Missionary Report (27)—a *full report ("all things") to the gathered church* (the congregation). The first missionary trip had lasted about a year to 18 months; now they spent another year at Antioch. **This was the first missionary meeting in history!**

#### 3. Rejoicing in the Grace of God (26-27)

- a. What God did with them—Supplied, Directed, Protected, Empowered
  - b. What God did to the Gentiles—He **opened a ‘door of faith’ to them!** (Cf. 11:18—repentance to life)
  - c. This church had a vested interest in the work of these apostles—they had shared prayer, financing, joys, and sorrows.
4. Fellowship with the Brethren—for an entire year (28)  
Antioch is now the new center of Christianity.

What commitment these men had—in their troubles, and in their travels. But they were also committed to Transfer their commitment to others.

**[Next week: Part two]**

### III. COMMITMENT TRANSFERRED TO OTHERS (21-23)

- A. Preaching (21a)—“They preached the gospel [“good news”] to that city.” (continuous)
- B. Making Disciples of Jesus—“And had made **many** disciples”

**Their teaching bore fruit. Some have said that the gospel was ineffective when confronted with “deep rooted heathenism”—but such is clearly not the case.**

- C. Edifying Disciples (22)—“Strengthening the souls of the disciples.” These Galatians were especially fickle; this word for “strengthening is used 4 times in NT—3 times in connection with the Galatians; see the book for how they had later turned away from the simple Gospel.

1. Abiding in the faith—“Encouraging them to continue in the faith.”

*They had broken family and social ties, were persecuted, were ill-informed.*

**“The Faith”—The Christian Belief system.**

2. Understanding Persecution—“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

- This is *why they needed Strengthening and encouraging.*
- Notice the **many** tribulations—“troubles, compressions.”
- Believers need to understand the normalcy of troubles: Jn. 16:33—“In the world ye have tribulation; but, take courage, I have overcome the world!”
- Notice “we”—the apostles AND the believers.
- See II Tim. 3:12: “All who will godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
- **Notice that in this passage, the kingdom is future—as in Gal. 5:21.**
- Those who suffer for Him, share His glory (Rom. 8:17): **No cross, no crown.**

- D. Organizing Churches (23)

1. Prayer and Fasting prepared the way. Remember Jesus’ all night prayer before His selection of the twelve.
2. **This is a solemn and sacred duty (So is being a deacon); not to be entered into lightly!**  
*If you cannot or will not live up to it—better to step down than to reproach the name of Christ or to be a bad example to the believers.*
3. There was a Plurality of Pastors (elders) in each assembly—notice, already “a church.”
4. **A church, to be a church, must have leadership—Scriptural leadership!**

5. The verb used here is unique—used only here in II Cor. 8:19. Literally it means: **“To stretch out the hand; to appoint by voting; to appoint, constitute.”**
6. Since in II Cor. 8:19 it must involve congregational vote and choice, **so it must here. CONGREGATIONAL FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT!** Cf. Acts 6:3
7. We have a confirmation of this in the writings of Clement of Rome—**leaders appointed with the consent of the whole church.**
8. True, hands of ordination were generally laid on after the selection was made.
9. Note that the men chosen were from the membership of the actual congregation! STILL A GOOD PATTERN TO FOLLOW.
10. They were likely Jewish in background—not “novices.”

E. Commending (entrusting) the People to the Lord (23b)

- **To entrust, deposit in a bank.** An old and very solemn word.
- It was all they could do now: Commit these disciples to the Lord Jesus Christ!
- See Paul and the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:32—**commended them to Lord.**
- See I Pet. 4:19—**commit** our souls to a faithful creator when we are suffering.
- “Them” here is not limited to the pastors; also includes **the people.**
- “The Lord” here is the Lord Jesus Christ; it is His kingdom they will enter; He is the object of their faith in which they are to continue. He is the foundation on which they are to stand firm.
- II Tim. 2:2—commit teachings to faithful men.

**NOTE: THEY HAD TRUSTED CHRIST; NOW PAUL ENTRUSTS THEM TO JESUS WITH FULL CONFIDENCE.**

CONCLUSION

It was out of Paul’s hands—now entrusted to the better hands of Jesus (Jn. 10:27-29).

**“Are you in good hands?”** And I guarantee you it is not ALLSTATE! [Liberty Mutual!!]

God’s work is committed to us—I Tim. 1:8; I Tim. 6:20.

- Do God’s Work—Teach, win, Train, Organize—**Be faithful!**
- But in the end, commit it all to God!!
- How about your own soul? Have you committed it to God? (I Pet. 4:19; Lk. 23:46)
- **O, how we need to be committed Christians!**  
**SALVATION SERVICE---Look what God entrusts to us!**
- O, how we need to commit our work to God!
- O, how we need to commit our lives to God!

In closing: See II Tim. 1:12, 14 and Jn. 10:27-29—God Guards (12); We guard (v. 14).