

*Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the Spread of God's Word*

## **Speaking to a Pagan Culture, Part 2**

**Acts 14:1-28**

*Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Oct. 20, 2019*

How can we reach people today who don't believe in God and know little or nothing about the Bible?

### **I. You Have to Be Absolutely Clear that Salvation is by Grace Alone and Not Works**

**Acts 14:3** "... the word of His grace..."

### **II. We Have to Be Ready to Suffer Well**

One of the greatest apologetics for the Gospel is how we as Christians can go through trials and suffering differently than unbelievers.

**Acts 14:22** "... we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

### **III. You'll Need to Call People Away from the Counterfeit 'Gods' of This World**

**Acts 14:15** "We... preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God..."

The very heart of our human problem is not just that we sin, but that we build our lives around something in this world other than God.

Nothing in this world was designed to bear the weight of all your human longings or desires.

The more people move away from God the more they'll need to inflate and worship something else.

Idolatry is at the root of the political polarization and hate that you see in our nation today. The root problem is a lack of worship and trust in God.

We can sleep well even if our political party is not in control – because our God IS in control and we are a part of His unshakeable kingdom.

**Titus 2:13-14** "...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."

#### **IV. You'll Need to Call People Back to the One True Living God**

**Acts 14:15-17** "... the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them... who did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

**Romans 1:18-25** "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things... who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

The seed of God has been planted in the heart of every human being because we're created in the image of God.

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** "... He has placed eternity in our hearts..."

There will never be justice on a human, horizontal level until we first have justification on a vertical level between us and God... that changes our heart and shatters our slavery to sin that keeps us living for the tiny kingdom of 'Self.'

#### **V. Take Heart that You Still Have What the Early Church Had that Rocked This World!**

##### **A. Don't Focus On What You Think You Don't Have Today**

Even when a miracle took place in the book of Acts, some believed and some did not!

**Acts 14:3-6** "... granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe..."

The apostles did not travel as 'Miracle Workers.' Their focus was always preaching and proclaiming the Gospel.

**Romans 1:16** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...”

## **B. Focus on Who God Is and What He’s Still Doing Through Us**

**Acts 14:27** “... they reported all that God had done with them...”

The apostles focused on the supernatural work of God’s Spirit in and through them.

**Colossians 3:1-5** “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”