

WORD

21When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22strengthening 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. 23And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. ACTS 14:21-23

The Apostle Paul embarked on a task no one had previously done: to plant churches in city after city. Armed with faith and the gospel, he went to many cities, preaching the gospel and establishing churches. As a result, the Word of God spread, and many became followers of Jesus. In this lesson, we will look at how Paul reached many cities with the gospel--as many of our missionaries do around the world today--and how we can do the same in our own communities.

1 Engage the lost.

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples . . . ACTS 14:21

Paul's primary purpose of going to different cities was to preach the gospel. In the same way, we are to engage the lost. What happened after they preached the gospel in that city? Why should engaging the lost result in evangelism?

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2 Establish strong foundations.

. . . strengthening the souls of the disciples . . . ACTS 14:22

Paul did not only preach the gospel; he and his team also encouraged the disciples to be established in the faith.

According to 1 Corinthians 3:11, who should be the only foundation of our faith? How can you help others grow stronger in their faith?

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3 Equip believers to continue in the faith.

. . . encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

ACTS 14:22

Paul equipped the local leaders to hold fast to their faith. He was also clear that, as believers, we will face trials and tribulations. How does a trial help you trust God more? According to Matthew 7:24,25, how can we live stormproof lives?

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4 Empower leaders to make disciples.

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. ACTS 14:23

As a missionary, Paul knew he would only be in those cities for a short while. That's why he appointed elders or leaders from the local church, to continue the work that was started. How were you empowered to lead and make disciples? How are you empowering others?

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