



Survive To Accomplish Your Mission

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“And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. 20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. 24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples” (Acts 14:19-28).

It is only survivors who can accomplish their God give purpose in life. “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence” (Psalm 115:17). Therefore, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Persecution dogged Paul everywhere he preached the gospel, but survival enabled him to make progress in accomplishing his mission. In this story, we learn the following:

- 1) The hatred of Jews from Antioch and Iconium brought them to persecute Paul at Lystra, ignoring the great miracle that had taken place.
- 2) The hatred was so severe to the point of stoning Paul. They only left off when they thought he was dead (vs 19).

3) “... as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city...” (vs 20). God answered their prayers by causing Paul to survive.

4) His restoration to life was not an opportunity to run away from the risks as he immediately “departed with Barnabas to Derbe” the next day, and taught many (vs 21).

5) The gift of life is for the purpose of fulfilling God’s purpose on earth, so, “... they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (vs 21,22). They went back to the same places where angry Jews came to stone him. No wonder he could confidently declare in Philippians 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”. The accomplishment of God’s purpose was to him of more importance than safety and living; yet he was always very careful not to expose himself to unnecessary dangers that could curtail his life and prematurely end his ministry.

6) Effectiveness in ministry was his priority - “ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (vs 23).

7) Their ministry continued to Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, Attalia prior to returning to Antioch “from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled” (vs 26).

8) You will fulfil your ministry and come back to declare God’s goodness (vs 27-28). Meanwhile, remain faithful to God.