

AN OPEN DOOR TO HEAVEN

Acts 14:26-28

Introduction: Paul and Barnabas were sent out on their first missionary journey together from the church in Antioch of Syria. These verses tell of their return to this church in Antioch to report what God had accomplished.

They had spread the gospel of salvation and established several churches. We know the importance of their work, for they established the church in Galatia.

Missionaries are opening doors for the gospel in other places today. Jesus said in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

I. GRACE OF GOD FOR THE WORK (v. 26)

A. FAITHFULNESS OF PAUL AND BARNABAS.

We know of Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road, when the Lord Jesus commissioned him to take the gospel to the Gentiles. We read of this in Acts 9:1-19. God later changed his name to Paul. The name Barnabas means "son of encouragement."

Barnabas faithfully encouraged Paul and others that he encountered in life. The two men remained faithful in spreading the gospel message as they traveled from place to place.

B. FULFILLMENT OF THE WORK BY PAUL AND BARNABAS.

Paul and Barnabas experienced many hardships in their ministry. They risked their lives for the gospel. We read in the chapter about the different cities they traveled to as they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. In places like Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, and Lystra, they made many disciples.

In verse 26, the Bible says they sailed to Antioch in Syria. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, they were sent to Antioch by the grace of God "for the work which they fulfilled."

II. GATHERING THE CHURCH TOGETHER

A. PURPOSE FOR THE GATHERING. (v. 27)

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, they gathered the church together and reported to them all that God had done. Their journey had been successful. The two men witnessed God's grace working in people's lives. In Paul and Barnabas's first missionary journey, they experienced God's favor.

B. PRAISE IN THE GATHERING.

Paul and Barnabas sang as God changed the lives of those who received the gospel in the city. The believers in the church joined Paul and Barnabas in praising God for His amazing grace.

We have all seen the joy when a team player makes a touchdown or hits a home run. The whole church was blessed and praised God for His work through Paul and Barnabas as they told of God's marvelous acts.

III. GOD OPENED THE DOOR TO THE GENTILES (v. 27)

A. DOOR OF FAITH.

The Jews believed they were saved by keeping the law. The problem in trying to keep the law perfectly is that it is impossible. In John 10:9 Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

The Lord was making it clear that He was the door. We know a door provides access into a room or building. Some say the "door of faith" means trusting in Jesus as Lord and only Savior.

In Galatians 2:16, the Bible says, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

In John 14:6, Jesus made it very clear He is the only entrance to heaven. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

B. DOOR TO THE FUTURE.

The Bible speaks of the door to heaven as being opened. In Revelation 4:1 John wrote, "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."

Many believe the opened door in Revelation 4:1 is the rapture of the church.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 states: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Saved Jews and Gentiles will be caught up to be forever with the Lord. In verse 27, the Bible declares that the door of faith has been opened. Everyone who comes to Christ must enter the opened door to Christ by faith.

When we sing the old song "Wonderful Words of Life," we are celebrating the life we have in Christ.

Christ, the blessèd One, gives to all wonderful words of life;
Sinner, listen to the loving call, wonderful words of life;
All so freely given, wooing us to Heaven.

LESSONS FOR LIFE:

1. Wonderful Words of Life reminds us of our blessings in Christ.
2. Christ is the living Word who gives us wonderful words of life.
3. Sing the words Wonderful Words of Life over again to me.