



GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#10)
The fact foundation – where we must begin when someone knows nothing about the Bible

When we tell others the Good News about Jesus and salvation,
WE MUST:

START
with the
FACTS

More specifically,
we must **START**



At the point where their understanding **STOPS**

START WHERE THEIR UNDERSTANDING STOPS!

- ✓ For people who are familiar with the Bible.
TODAY: Typical unsaved "church-goers"; some outsiders.
 - They tend to know something about the true God, sin, Jesus, etc.; but their thinking is cloudy.
 - They need a clearer understanding of what salvation and "following Jesus" is all about.
- ✓ For people who are NOT familiar with the Bible.
TODAY: Typical non-"church-goers" (= outsiders).
 - They tend to know little or nothing about the true God, sin, Jesus, etc.
 - They need the "basics" about God and the Bible, before they can comprehend the rest.

STARTING WITH THE "BASICS"

>> **EXAMPLES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS** <<

- The two main passages are:

CHAPTER IN ACTS	WHO WAS THE AUDIENCE	FOCUS OF THE GOOD NEWS
14	Gentiles (no knowledge of the Bible)	GOD (some basic foundational issues)
17b	Gentiles (no knowledge of the Bible); possibly others	GOD (foundational issues); JESUS


TODAY

(Further insights may be found in other passages.)

Acts 14:7-20

SOME KEY CONCEPTS:

- Sometimes you will be unable to "preplan" what to say.
- Watch your attitude. (Exalt God, not self.)
- You won't always succeed in presenting the complete "Good News."
- You may seem to have minimal success.



BACKGROUND:

- Paul and Barnabas had been at Iconium, but learned about a plot to kill them. So they went to Lystra and the nearby areas.

There they continued preaching the gospel [= "Good News"].

Acts 14:7 (CSB)

- Some people at Lystra did become disciples (followers of Jesus) – according to the end of this passage (verse 20).
- The main part of this passage focuses on others (perhaps bystanders) who had not been listening to Paul.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

- The Bible constantly tells us to not be surprised if persecution occurs!
- Persecution may be a legitimate reason for adjusting how we live (and speak) for Jesus; but it shouldn't put us to silence!

They responded the same way the apostles had been told to respond. It may have been the best response for their circumstances (being visitors to the city); but it's not the only possible response.

When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Matthew 10:23 (NIV)

WHAT LEAD UP TO THE EVENT?

- A crippled man, who was among those listening to Paul, believed the truth and trusted God.
- We do not know what Paul said; but something led the man to have faith to be healed. Paul, as an apostle, had the authority to heal him... so he did.

In Lystra a man was sitting who was without strength in his feet, had never walked, and had been lame from birth.

He listened as Paul spoke. After looking directly at him and seeing that he had faith to be healed, Paul said in a loud voice, "Stand up on your feet!"

And he jumped up and began to walk around.

Acts 14:8-10 (CSB)

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

We might not be able to heal people, but God has given each of us gifts and abilities to share with others.

- They are not given for selfish purposes.
- They might not be the abilities we want (if we desire praise and attention), but they will be what people need from us.

What is your duty?

1. Use your abilities for the glory of God and the good of other people.
2. Remember where your abilities come from.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ... [examples of gifts] ...

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

1 Cor. 12:7, 11 (NIV)

A WRONG RESPONSE TO THE HEALING

- These crowds were bystanders, not the ones who had been paying attention to Paul.

When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the town, brought bulls and wreaths to the gates because he intended, with the crowds, to offer sacrifice.

Acts 14:11-13 (CSB)

- In a world filled with false gods, this would have been considered a legitimate response... but it was the wrong response.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

- Things are not always going to go the way we plan!
- There will be times when we have no opportunity to pre-plan what we're going to say.
- At that point, we'll have to respond in whatever way we can, and trust God to do the rest.

The apostles were told that there would be times they would have to trust God for a response.

When you are arrested, don't worry about what to say in your defense, because you will be given the right words at the right time.

Matthew 10:19 (NLT)

(Our time spent with God and the Bible before such events will influence the outcome. We shouldn't expect to be filled with "words of truth," if we've been too lazy to learn truth!)

THE APOSTLE'S RESPONSE (PART 1)

- The apostles did not have an opportunity to pre-plan a response.

The apostles Barnabas and Paul tore their robes when they heard this and rushed into the crowd, shouting:

"People! Why are you doing these things? We are people also, just like you, ...

Acts 14:14-15a (CSB)

HOWEVER ...

- Their spontaneous response was influenced by their previous day-to-day thought patterns and habits.
 - If God has little influence in your life... don't expect to have much godliness in your response!

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

- We might not be mistaken for a "god," but when people lavish us with praise, how do we respond?
- If people praise our abilities ... do we remember where those abilities come from?

What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?

1 Cor. 4:7 (NLT)

The apostles honored God. But there was a king who didn't ... and who learned the hard way what such people deserve!

Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Acts 12:23 (NIV)

THE APOSTLE'S RESPONSE (PART 2)

... and we are proclaiming good news to you, that you turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them.

In past generations he allowed all the nations to go their own way, ...

Acts 14:15b-16 (CSB)

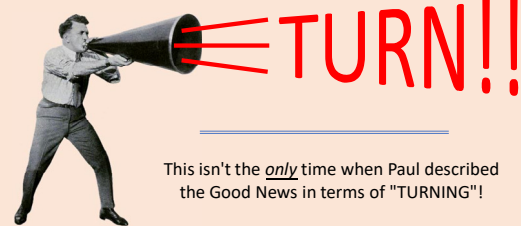
- The Good News is a proclamation that demands change. It's not a gentle suggestion!
- IN THE PAST:** People wanted to go after "worthless things," and God let them do as they pleased.

- NOW:** God is telling people (through the Good News) to:

- ✓ Turn away from those worthless things.
- ✓ Turn to the Living God who made all things.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

- Pay close attention to what Paul described as the "Good News." Do you include these things in your expression of the "Good News"?



This isn't the only time when Paul described the Good News in terms of "TURNING"!

I preached ... that all must turn from their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do.

Acts 26:20 (NLT)

THE APOSTLE'S RESPONSE (PART 3)

... although he did not leave himself without a witness, since he did what is good

by giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons and filling you with food and your hearts with joy."

Acts 14:17 (CSB)

- In the past, while people were pursuing worthless things, they were without excuse.
- The very goodness of God, which they experienced, was a reminder of his existence (even though they ignored it).

- People know instinctively:
 - ① something about God's existence, and
 - ② that they will be held accountable for suppressing that knowledge. (Examples: Romans 1:18-21+; 2:14-15.)

WHAT CAN WE LEARN? (1) ABOUT US

- Many people like to describe God as loving, kind and good. They choose to omit most of what Paul describes as the "Good News." (See the previous verses.)
- How about you? Do you claim to be telling others the "Good News," while omitting the Good News from what you say?

Paul never left people with half-truths. This why he could say:

Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Acts 20:26-27 (NIV)

WHAT CAN WE LEARN? (2) ABOUT THEM

- Unsaved people blame God for the bad that happens, even though it is the result of humanity's pursuit of worthless things. They may ask...

"Why does God let bad things happen to good people?"

- If they would ask the right question, maybe it would lead them to God!

"Why does God let good things happen to bad people?"

The good we may do doesn't cancel our evil nature.

Even though you're evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. So how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him?

Matthew 7:11 (GW)

DID THE APOSTLES FAIL?

- It seems that they had no further opportunity to speak to this group. False teachers led the people astray.
- Some might say that Paul failed, because he didn't mention "Jesus." Yet he faithfully said what he could... and that's what matters.

Even though they said these things, they barely stopped the crowds from sacrificing to them.

Some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and when they won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead.

After the disciples gathered around him, he got up and went into the town. The next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.

Acts 14:18-20 (CSB)

- Perhaps some of the people learned more about the truth at a later date.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

- We won't always be able to say everything we think we should say. But if we say what we can, that will be pleasing to God.
- We can leave the outcome in God's hands. We do not know how (or when) he may use our weak and imperfect efforts.

God often uses several people as he works in a person's heart. Paul illustrated this with him and Apollos:

My job was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God, not we, who made it grow.

1 Cor. 3:6 (NLT)

YOUR OPPORTUNITY

Consider what you can learn from this passage (Acts 14:7-20).

Paul's attempt to share the Good News with the crowd may seem like a failure... just like our attempts may often seem.

What can we learn from this example, so that our efforts may be pleasing to God... even though they may seem weak and feeble?

Credits

SCRIPTURE

- Scriptures marked "NLT" - Scripture quoted from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved. (www.newlivingtranslation.com)
- Scriptures marked "NIV" - Scripture quoted from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. (www.zondervanbibles.com)
- Scriptures marked "GW" - Scripture is taken from GOD'S WORD®. Copyright 1995 God's Word to the Nations. Used by permission of Baker Publishing Group. All rights reserved.
- Scriptures marked "CSB" - Scripture quotations marked CSB have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

PICTURES (original sources; modifications may have been made)

- Megaphone - roshellin / CC0; <https://openclipart.org/detail/167891/megafono>
- Key - various / Public domain; [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Die_Gartenlaube_\(1887\)_b.705_2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Die_Gartenlaube_(1887)_b.705_2.jpg)
- Man with megaphone - Witzel (L.A.) / Public domain; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_H_Ince_-_Megaphone_1922.jpg
- Presentation - Dennis Hinks © 2019.