

Monday, 21 August 2017 Acts 14:21-23

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening 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. 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.

What a comforting sentence. Paul and Barnabas recognized that each local congregation needed elders to oversee the spiritual health of the church; and that these men were committed to the Lord in whom they had faith/belief/trust/commitment/obedience.

Is the lack of committed oversight one of the causes of the spiritual malaise that infects so many congregations today? A church that is subject to one-man rule runs a terrible risk.

Tuesday, 22 August 2017 Acts 15:4-6

When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses." The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.

We see the beauty of the availability of seasoned leadership. It is obvious from Luke's use of the term "believers" that we have a situation of sincere individuals who are wrestling with an interpretation of Scripture. Collectively, they all did, but it took the wisdom and discernment of the apostles and elders to weigh the evidence and come to a decision (v 22).

Wednesday, 23 August 2017 Acts 15:7

And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

The Gentiles heard the word of the gospel and believed.

Peter, Paul, and Barnabas related the signs and wonders that had accompanied the hearing of the Word. Can you imagine the reaction of the assembled believers? What an awestruck gathering this must have been. Do we have the same sense of awe as we read a report in Voice of the Martyrs about the advance of the faith in some far off land? Or the work of church planters in our own country? We should be rejoicing.

Thursday, 24 August 2017 Acts 15:11

But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus/Deeper than the mighty rolling sea/Higher than the mountain sparkling like a fountain/All-sufficient grace for even me/Broader than the scope of my transgressions/Greater far than all my sin and shame/O magnify the precious name of Jesus
Praise His name.

Friday, 25 August 2017 Acts 16:1

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.

See 2 Timothy 1:5 It was Timothy's grandmother and mother who were responsible for discipling him; they were the one who carried the faith to subsequent generations. I've lost track of the number of men in the prisons who have told me of their grandmothers and mothers who were responsible for introducing them to the faith. Praise the Lord for those faithful women.

Saturday, 26 August 2017 Acts 16:29-33

And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

A simple statement, "Believe and you will be saved," Not a lot of deep and obtuse theology, just believe. But the Philippian jailor knew the import of what he was asked to do; the Spirit revealed to him that this was an act of commitment to the LORD, God, the Almighty. He was to discard his heathen gods and be obedient to and trusting in the One True God.

Lord's Day, 27 August 2017 Psalm 119:125

I am your servant; give me understanding, that I may know your testimonies!

Give me that understanding that can only come from You, the intimate knowing and joy that results from a total submission to You and Your Word. Continue my growth and maturing as a child of God.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



August 21-27, 2017

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Lord, our prayer is that we will respond to the gift of grace that comes to us in the form of eternal encouragement and good hope. We pray that this gift will be expressed in both deed and word. We pray that our faith will be evident in every step we take and every word we speak. Amen

Creational Theology hint for the week—A Workplace Prayer

The job I do today, Christ does it too./May my workplace be bright with His joy./May the Trinity be pleased with each task I do, Creator, Child, and Spirit/And may the bright angels hover 'round my desk—Dear presence—each hour of the day./Let every e-mail I send go forth in truth and blessing./May I speak only words of truth and blessing/On the phone and to my colleagues./May no dealing of this day/Give shame to the bright people of Heaven./The holy cloud that watches all./May I not forget them, nor the stout Earth that gives me strength./Nor You, fair Lord.

Voices Together is published daily on the website of the Fellowship of Ailbe, www.ailbe.org; along with material by other writers to encourage and assist in our walks as disciples of Jesus Christ. These messages can also be received as daily emails or in a monthly printed version by sending a request to: Pastor John Nunnikhoven, The Church at Prison, Inc. PO Box 8318, Essex Junction, VT 05452

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