

**“We Also Are Men”**

*Sermon Notes*

➤ **The end of Paul’s 1st missionary journey offers four critical lessons about our relationship with faithful Christian leaders**

*\*The best of men are men at best, so...*

1. Let’s not participate in the veneration of faithful Christian leaders (vv.8-18; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 4:1)
2. Let’s not participate in the cancellation of faithful Christian leaders (vv.19-20; 1 Timothy 5:19)
3. Let us be committed to cooperation with faithful Christian leaders (vv.21-23; Hebrews 13:7, 17)
4. Let us be committed to the commendation of faithful Christian leaders (vv.24-28; 3 John 12)

**Next Week: Acts 15:1-35 - “No Small Dissention and Debate”**

## **MEFC Community Group Study Guide**

For the week of April 7th-14th

### **Getting Started**

1. Look back over the course of your Christian life to this point. Who have been some of the most influential Christian leaders for you personally?

### **Digging Deeper**

2. Take a look at Hebrews 13:7. How does this verse shape a believer's reflections on faithful spiritual leaders? What three specific summons are Christians given in this text? Why do you think that the author follows Hebrews 13:7 with Hebrews 13:8? What point is being made when we consider these two verses side by side (notice a similar dynamic with Hebrews 11:1-40 and Hebrews 12:1-2).

## Open Your Bible to Acts 14:8...

3. Read through the account of Paul and Barnabas in Lystra in Acts 14:8-18. Where exactly does the crowd go wrong in verses 11-13? What's the temptation for these two men in this moment? How do Paul and Barnabas respond (vv.14-17)? How effective are they in achieving their aim according to Luke in Acts 14:18?

4. While the Lycaonian's instinct to worship Paul and Barnabas looks awfully primitive to us at first blush, in what ways are we more like these folks than we might care to admit? Consider Paul's strong word of correction to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 1:10-18. Do you see any parallels from the 1st century church for today's 21st century church? How ought we to view faithful Christian leaders according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:1? What two images does Paul offer for church leadership in this verse? What would it look like to make an increasingly conscious effort to think of and relate to Christian leaders in this way?

5. Now take a look at the next scene of Paul in Lystra (Acts 14:19-20). What happens to him here? What must have been racing through Paul's mind as the rocks are sailing toward him (Acts 7:58-8:3)? Before he leaves for Derbe the next day, how does Paul initially respond to this traumatic event (v.20)? Is that not *incredible*? Consider his later reflections on this moment in his life in 2 Corinthians 11:25; Galatians 6:17; and 2 Timothy 3:10-12).

6. Though perhaps we in the West don't participate in the stoning of faithful Christian leaders, we do tend to engage in what one Washington D.C. insider once referred to as "a high-tech lynching". While it's certainly good and right to mark and avoid false teachers (Romans 16:17-20), it's also true these days that many times faithful Christian leaders become the unwarranted focus of the attacks of other believers. How have you seen this happen over the last 5-10 years in person or online ('canceling' a faithful leader or making attempts at character assassination, etc)? How does Paul seek to mitigate false accusations against church leaders in 1 Timothy 5:19?

7. In verses 21 to 23, Luke goes on to describe Paul and Barnabas's next steps after the debacle in Lystra. How many wonderful evidences of God's grace in the leadership of these two men can you spot? Apply these verses locally. Do the Christian leaders in your life make a conscious effort to focus on ministry that reflects these priorities? If so, how? In what ways do you seek to encourage, assist, or meet them halfway in their efforts? Explain.

8. Now read through Acts 14:21-28. Notice the pathway of Paul and Barnabas. They are literally retracing their original steps of the 1st missionary journey (scan back through 13:1-14:7). How come? What stands out to you here? In verse 26, Luke tells us that the original church in Antioch "commended [them] to the grace of God". What does that mean? Instead of the *veneration* or *cancellation* of faithful Christian leaders, the Scriptures instead urge us to give ourselves to *cooperation* with and *commendation* of faithful Christian leaders. Take a look at 3 John 12. How does John offer three sources of commendation for Demetrius? How might we in the church look to do the same with those who lead us?