

Through Much Tribulation

Acts 14:8-23

Review:

1. Worldly people express devotion to their gods only in order to get what they want in this world.
2. Jesus was rejected by His people because He refused to give them the worldly blessings they craved.
3. Christians will always lose favor with worldly people when we challenge them to reject their materialistic priorities and embrace the exclusive claims of Christ.

Reflect:

1. Has your faithfulness to Christ ever caused you to suffer? In what ways?
2. How and to whom do you think the Lord is calling you to bear witness to Him? How might faithfulness to His call cause problems for you?

Go Further: Read Galatians 5

1. According to verse 1, for what reason has Christ set us free? Given this truth, what warning does Paul give to his readers?
2. The Galatian Christians were being taught that they had to be circumcised and follow the ritual laws found in the Old Testament in order to be members of the Church. In verse 2, what does Paul say will happen to those who receive circumcision for that reason?
3. In verse 3, what will those who insist on the need for circumcision be required to do?
4. According to verse 4, what two things happen to those who seek to be justified by keeping the Old Testament law?
5. In contrast, for what does verse 5 say we should wait? How should we wait?
6. According to verse 6, what does not matter? What is really important instead?
7. In verses 7 and 8, Paul asks his readers to think about those who are teaching them to observe Old Testament rituals. In verse 7, how does Paul describe the way his readers began their Christian life?
8. In verse 8, what does Paul say about the source of this new teaching?
9. In verse 9, what does Paul say is true about leaven (yeast)? What do you think this proverb has to do with the people teaching the Galatians to observe the rituals of the Old Testament?
10. About what is Paul confident according to verse 10? What does he claim will happen to the false teachers who are disturbing his readers?
11. In verse 11, Paul's question makes it clear that he is suffering persecution because he is not, in fact, preaching the necessity of circumcision. What does he say that such false teaching would abolish?
12. In verse 12, what does Paul want to happen to the false teachers?
13. According to verse 13, to what have Christians been called? What should we not do with our newfound freedom? To what use should we put our new freedom?
14. According to verse 14, how is the Old Testament Law fulfilled?
15. What warning does verse 15 give to those who do not observe this law?
16. How does verse 16 say that Christians will be able to fulfill the Law? What will the Spirit keep us from doing?
17. According to verse 17, what two things are opposed within every Christian? Because of this conflict, what must we not do?

18. According to verse 18, what is true of those who are led by the Spirit?
19. List the fifteen characteristics of walking by the flesh that you find in verses 19-21. What does Paul say will happen to those who practice these kinds of things?
20. List the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit found in verses 22-23. What does the Law say about these things?
21. According to verse 24, what is true of those who belong to Jesus Christ?
22. According to verse 25, what must those who live by the Spirit continue to do?

Summary and Application:

1. Paul suffered at Lystra at the hands of unbelieving polytheists. According to Galatians 5:11, he was suffering at the hands of legalists within the Church who insisted on following the Old Testament rituals. What kinds of persecution do modern Christians find outside the Church? What kinds of false teachings within the Church cause problems for faithful Christians?
2. According to 5:11, the cross is a stumbling block. Why would that have been true for the legalists in ancient Galatia? In what ways do people continue to stumble over the cross today?
3. Instead of being concerned with observing certain rituals, Paul encourages his readers to reject fleshly living and walk by the Spirit. How do you feel the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit in your own life? Against which desires do you have to struggle?
4. Which of the characteristics of fleshly living are most tempting or problematic for you? What aspects of the fruit of the Spirit would you like to demonstrate more consistently in your life?