

An Open Door...Now What?

Acts 13 & 14

LESSONS FROM THE PROS!

If we are truly following God, then:

We are all called to **be a light**.

Acts 13:1-3, 47, Matthew 5:14-16, Colossians 4:2-6, Philippians 2:14-15

Create **opportunities**, not **conflict**.

Acts 13:5, 14-15, 42, 14:1, 9, 1 Peter 3:15-16

We should expect **opposition**.

Acts 13:8, 45, 50, 14:5, 19, Romans 8:17

Rejection may be a sign of **success**, not **failure**.

Acts 14:22-26, Matthew 10:17-42, 1 Corinthians 16:8-9

Don't **barge down** a door that God hasn't **opened**.

Acts 13:51, 14:5-6, 20, Matthew 10:5-16, Matthew 7:6

HOW IT APPLIES TO US:

1. Pray for **open doors**.
Acts 13:1-3, Colossians 4:2-6
2. Realize that people need **answers** not **arguments**.
Acts 14:15-17, 1 Peter 3:15-16, 2 Timothy 2:14-15
3. Start with where **they are**, not with what **you know**.
Acts 14:15-17, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Mark 4:33

Growth Group Homework

For the week of October 12, 2008

QUICK REVIEW

Was there one point from "*An Open Door...Now What?*" that particularly caught your attention, challenged you or confused you more than the other points?

MY STORY

1. When you think of the words "witnessing," "evangelism" or "evangelist," what positive and negative words, images or stories come to mind?
2. Can you think of any ways you (or someone you know) have suffered rejection or opposition for being a Christian or talking about your faith?
3. What was your response to what Chris shared about "shaking the dust off our feet" when it comes to dealing with people who are closed to the Gospel?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. One of Paul's strong motivations for what he was willing to endure was his understanding that people are spiritually lost without Christ. In Luke 15:1-10, Jesus tells two stories which give us some perspective on how God views people who are spiritually lost.

Luke 15:1-10

Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." 3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons

who do not need to repent. 8 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." [NIV]

What similarities do you see in these stories?

What lessons do these stories teach us about spiritually lost people and God's attitude towards them?

What do Luke 19:10 and 2 Peter 3:9 add to your understanding of how God wants us to view spiritually lost people?

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." [NIV]

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. [NIV]

2. Colossians 4:2-6 does a good job of summing up our role in the calling to be light that Christ talked about. Read the passage and list any specific guidelines or tips that could help us be more effective in sharing the Gospel with people.

Colossians 4:2-6

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. [NIV]

Paul asked the Colossians to pray for an open door for the Gospel. How aware do you tend to be in recognizing a potential open door?

Often we think that the only way to capitalize on an open door is to share the Gospel with someone. Can you think of any other ways you might take advantage of an open door besides sharing the Gospel?

3. One effective means of sharing the Gospel with others is the "Roman Road." Whether you are a new Christian, a long-time Christian, or still trying to understand Christianity, this tool can help us understand our need for salvation and how a relationship with Christ begins. Even though you may be familiar with these verses, it is critical that we constantly remind ourselves about our need for a Savior. As you read each verse, jot down what essential truth each passage communicates about your relationship with Christ.

Romans 1:19-20

since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 10:9-11

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Looking back at the verses above, which one of them stands out to you most? Explain why.

Take a few minutes and talk to God. Thank Him for what He has done for you. Ask Him to help you understand how you might communicate the "Good News" to others.

TAKING IT HOME

1. In your current circle of relationships, who would you most like to see take a step closer to Jesus (perhaps the person whose initials you put on the rock at the tent meetings)? Is there anything you could do or say that might help that happen?

Spend some time praying for these specific people and God's work in their lives.

2. We as a church are committed to being a light to our community. The upcoming Weekend of Service is a great way for us to show our neighbors God's love in very practical ways. Have you gotten a chance to sign up for a project yet? To sign up, see the information below (feel free to sign up for more than one time slot if you want).