

Acts 14:2-3

But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

I love today's verses and reading of what the believers did when they were attacked by the enemy. So, what was the attack that was coming against them?

† ***But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.***

And what was their response? Before we answer that, let's ask ourselves what our response would be; And the way we do that is to look at maybe some things that have happened, or maybe are even going on in your church right now.

Maybe there is backbiting, and gossip, and even people who have left the church or even have turned their back on the church as a whole because of these things. For me, I have been a part of several churches over the years, based upon moving and my job, which caused me to travel. I can actually think of a couple different scenarios where things happened so bad that the church actually split or ran the pastor out when he didn't need to be, or even a church closing it's doors. Over the years I have seen some pretty bad things that Christians have done or said about one another, not based upon biblical values, but based upon the person's likes or dislikes, because any time strife happens in the church, most of the time it's because someone has made it all about "**Me, me, me**" and when they can't have it their way, they are quick to poison the minds of others in the church causing these things to happen.

Notice I use the word "**poisoned**" and I did that intentionally, because that's what they are doing, and it's the same thing that these certain Jews were doing in the early church as well.

† ***the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren***

When this happens, we really have one of two choices, Sad to say that many will do the first choice, which is to run from, or just leave the church instead of standing and fighting for the church. We know that Jesus prayed for us to be as one in the church, as well as love one another as God loves Jesus.

† **John 17:20-21** *I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

Well, if you run and don't defend your church or those being hurt by these people in the church, where is the love in that.

So, going back to my question, which was "And what was their response?" What did the people in the early church do?

† *Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*

Yep, they did the second choice, and "*they stayed there*" and not only stayed there, but stayed there, "*speaking boldly in the Lord*"

Now if you read the rest of the story, there was a division, but not in the church, but rather in the city.

† **Acts 14:4-7** *But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. And they were preaching the gospel there.*

The believers stuck around, and because they did, their lives were threatened to the point that the entire church was about to be stoned, yet God used that as an opportunity for the gospel to be spread as we read that they "*fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region.*" And not only fled but wherever they went they still "*were preaching the gospel there.*"

Today we don't have to worry about being stoned here in the USA (but other countries do) but there is still division in the cities where some would rather have the church "*gone, out of here, stop spoiling my sinful fun lifestyle*" mentality. One example, is look at the recent election, not everyone voted the same way, because some want good, godly biblical values back, whereas others want the opposite. But if all the believers leave the city, who would be there to tell them about Jesus? That's why we stick around and defend our brothers and sisters in the church as well as the cities we live in from the schemes of the wicked one.

† **Romans 10:15** *And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

† **Psalm 37:7-9 (NLT2)** *Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. Stop being angry! Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper— it only leads to harm. For the wicked will be destroyed, but those who trust in the LORD will possess the land.*