
Sermon Text Discussion 10/1/17

“The Privilege of Planting and Strengthening Churches” (Acts 14:21-28) by Drew Hunter

Overview

The local church is a crucial part of God’s redemptive plan. Because that’s the case, the Christian life requires robust involvement in a local church, and the advance of the gospel requires the planting of churches. This passage from Acts 14 reinforces these truths in its portrayal of Paul and Barnabas’s efforts to plant and strengthen churches. There are three questions this text answers about planting and strengthening churches:

- 1) Why is it important? Because God’s plan has always been to create a people, not merely to save isolated individuals (Acts 14:21).
- 2) How do we do it? (Acts 14:22-23)
 - a. Strengthen disciples (v. 22a)
 - b. Encourage endurance (v. 22b)
 - c. Appoint elders (v. 23a)
 - d. Entrust to God (v. 23b)
- 3) What makes it possible? God and his heart of love for his people (Acts 14:24-27)

Consider three implications in light of this passage: 1) Let’s treasure the local church. 2) Let’s enjoy the privilege of strengthening one another. 3) Let’s pray for what only God can do in our future.

Quotations

“God’s mission throughout the whole story of redemption is not just to save isolated individuals; but to create a people for himself.” – Drew Hunter

“While evangelism and church planting are essential components of a missions program, deep discipleship, pastoral preparation, and leadership training must be priorities as well.” – David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*

Understanding & Application

- 1) Can you identify ways that your Christian faith has been shaped and fed by a local church?
- 2) What is one way you could strengthen other members of Zionsville Fellowship? How could your small group become a more effective means of strengthening?
- 3) Are there people at this church who know you well enough to be able to know the areas where you need encouragement and strengthening?
- 4) Drew mentioned four ways to prepare for suffering as a Christian: Expect it, develop a theology of suffering, make Jesus your greatest treasure, and look to those who model how to suffer well.
- 5) What makes it hard for you to treasure this local church? What helps you do this?
- 6) Since planting and strengthening churches is ultimately God’s work, how might we make prayer for ZF and other churches a more prominent part of our small groups and individual lives?