**God Gives Endurance (Acts 14:19-28)**

 The one who does God’s work will endure every situation.

 Greetings to you dearly beloved in this beautiful moment as we think out loud about the protective and defending qualities of the Lord. We often go through difficulties that seem insurmountable or unbearable. Today’s topic follows Paul and Barnabas’ ministry, which is an example for us of God’s bestowed strength and ability. They were doing God’s work, and for that reason they had God’s stamp of approval on them. We’re going to establish today, as we declared at first, that the one who does God’s work will endure every situation. Therefore, let us take a look at just how this took place then, and how we can apply its truth in our lives.

 God gives the necessary strength for a task – we just need to stay faithful to Him and to His plan. Last time, we saw how Paul and Barnabas had trouble holding back the Lystrians from worshipping them as gods. The two had had preached the gospel to the people and Paul had healed someone in Jesus’ name. They had barely been able to contain the rambunctious crowd when unbelieving Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium, both cities near to Lystra in Asia Minor. There were many Antiochs at the time, and this one was located in the region of Cappadocia, which was just west of Western Armenia. These people resorted to violence immediately and having convinced the crowd to attack the apostles, they succeeded in stoning Paul. But God’s work was not done thru Paul on this earth, and when the other Christian disciples gathered around him probably to pray, he was able to get back up, and being aware of God’s mission for him, he returned back into the city. It was only a day afterwards that he left with Barnabas and headed to Derbe. The two continued their evangelism there, and not fearing the dangers present, returned once again back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, to continue their God-given assignment. God had led them to ordain elders in each church and to commission them in the Lord because of their faith. Then, the two continued their journey farther south and west towards Perge and Attalia, close to the Mediterranean, and after having preached there, finally headed back to Syrian Antioch. Of course, the Lord being with them, they had been able to withstand opposition, execution attempts by stoning, and even ignorant people throughout their journeys.

 The work of the Gospel is so important that once, a missionary had placed in the church above the clock a sign with the following words: “83 a minute.” A group of members came up to him and said, “Can you please take down that sign? It haunts us.” They knew very well that what the missionary was referring to was that every minute, 83 people were being transported to eternity – toward eternal darkness – people that had never heard about Jesus Christ. And then, the one reporting about this incident wrote, “Are you happy about that?”

 Only God knows how important your spiritual assignment is on this earth. Only God knows how many people are being lost eternally every minute or second. We, however, have been given a sphere of influence, a people group, and an assignment from our Creator.

 So, let me ask: from where are you getting your spiritual strength? How much do you persevere in the Lord when you are metaphorically condemned to death, when you are left to die, when you are abandoned by seemingly everybody. Paul and Barnabas certainly persevered. But you also, my dear brother and sister, are called because of your faith in Christ to an assignment of equal importance as they had. God is going to give whatever it is that is needed to perform and accomplish His intended assignment for each of us.

 But I ask you again: are you surrendered to the Lord’s assignment? Because right now, the Lord’s work is to pray with the needy, to pray for our front-line fighters in Armenian and Artsakh who are struggling for justice the well-being of their families – it is to pray also for our church life here. The Lord’s work now is to be a practical help to the poor, the isolated ones, be they here, or wherever they may be – especially in Armenia, Artsakh and the Middle East.

 God has blessed us with abundance and material prosperity. How much do we remember our needy, be it spiritually or materially? As those who preach Jesus’ love, we are called to make that theoretical love into a practical love. Therefore, let’s endure like the apostles all manner of obstacle and difficulty, and let us continue to be faithful to His plan and His specific mission for each of us.

 God will give us the needed strength – we only need to be faithful to Him and His plan. The one who does God’s work will endure every situation.

 May the Lord encourage you with His presence – may He give you the desire to seek Him, and to use the strength that comes from those seeking experiences to love all people – be it with our lives, our words, or our specific deeds.

 God is with you. Let’s serve, and let us not cease doing so… May the Lord bless you all. Amen.