



### Acts 14:21-14:28 – Prelude to a problem

What makes the coming problem a problem. All to do with disciples. A disciple is a follower. And we're all disciples of someone or of something.

What about you? Are you a disciple of anything or anyone? Why, of course, you are. The most important discipleship of all is following Jesus in life no matter what else we do.

What's the sign of a disciple of Jesus? You go to church. You got a church that believes in Jesus as the Christ. You may go to church every time the door is open. Of course, some people just go to church occasionally, thinking that may qualify them to be a disciple.

Someone said: "I go to church, so I am a Christian." But that's like saying if you go to McDonald's that makes you a Quarter Pounder.

If someone were to ask, "Are you a Christian?" and you responded "Yes, I am!" they might say, "Funny, you don't look like a Christian."

#### WE MUST STRENGTHEN THE DISCIPLES (V21-22)

Are you stronger than you were 20-30 years ago? It all depends on what kind of strength we're talking about. Physically, we do decline after many years but spiritually, we should be stronger.

What makes a person stronger in the faith of Christ? Years of living the Christian life. Enduring difficulty and trials. Staying faithful. Staying faithful to the Lord will strengthen your faith. Reading the book. Listening to sermons. Watching other Christians live the life.

And we need to pass on that strength to others, that is, what we've heard and learned and endured. How do we do this? We talk, we share, we love, we serve, we encourage, etc. We do things that build people in their faith.

Our faithful and committed example is probably the best thing we can do to strengthen others in the faith. Beyond that we continue to point people to Christ, encourage, and help one another. (v.27)

***[Musical interlude: "Looking At a Rainbow Through a Dirty Window" provided by Calum Stewart. More info and to listen again, visit: <http://myspace.com/calumfrancisstewart>]***

#### WE MUST CHARGE THE DISCIPLES (v22)

Sometimes people need to be warned or charged in a certain ways. We as parents may have threatened our children with the words, "If I have to stop what I'm doing and come in there, you're going to get it!"

II Tim. 4:1-2 "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be

prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction."

Paul charged young Timothy to charge the people in his preaching of the Word. Be strong. Be straight. Be sincere.

We need to be charged and charged up occasionally. But sometimes people merely need being charged in the sense of being encouraged.

22 "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Paul charged the brothers that hardships would come. They do come and they have, have they not? Have you not experienced some hardships in life?

Most of the problems that you and I face in life are with us! We are our own worst enemies. We cause us more problems than anybody; consequently, we ALL need to be disciplined in some form or another.

We need to make disciples for Jesus and we need to continue to disciple one another anyway we can. We need to encourage people in Christ! It's my job and it's your job because we are HIS disciples!