

# GOSPEL STRATEGY

ACTS 13-28





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## *Acts 13-28 - How the early church spread the gospel to new believers, and how we can too!*

As we saw in our previous series GOSPEL CHURCH, Jesus has told us: "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It's safe to say that if Jerusalem is your starting point, then Brisbane really is the ends of the earth! The question for us then is this: how should we go about being witnesses for Jesus in Brisbane?

It's an important question, because the strategy you employ is essential to fulfilling your purpose. If your purpose is to be a successful cricket team, your strategy better not involve ball tampering. You might think it'll help your success, but in the end it will destroy it. Same with sharing the gospel. There's lots of things we might think would help, but won't. Like changing the core content of the gospel to suit Australian society. Or failing to change the way we *present* the gospel to help people understand it. Or focusing on making Australia a comfortable place for Christians more than trying to make new Christians. That's where Acts 13-28 can really help us.

As the message that "the one who died for sin is King" spreads through the gentile world, the Apostle Paul becomes a key figure. In this series we're picking up the story of the progress of the unstoppable gospel from a slightly different angle, looking at Paul's strategy for reaching the world with the life-changing Word.

We'll track his travels around the map, watch him build teams and commission local leaders, see his concern for the churches he leaves behind, and then briefly dip into some of the letters he wrote to later. Along the way we'll get some fascinating insights into Paul the man, as well as his methods and his message. Maybe there'll be things for us to learn as we keep working to spread the gospel today!

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**APRIL, 2018**

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# PAUL'S TRAVELS



*"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses from Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

*Acts 1:8*





STUDY 1 || ACTS 13-14

# GOSPEL GRIND

They say anything worth having won't come easy. This week in Acts we'll see that's certainly true for the church as it tries to fulfil its mission: to be Jesus' witnesses to the ends of the earth (1:8).

Share an annoyingly difficult thing you've recently had to do for work or around the house. Get some empathy from your group! What made it hard? What made it worth doing anyway?



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## NEW STRATEGY

Read Acts 13:1-3

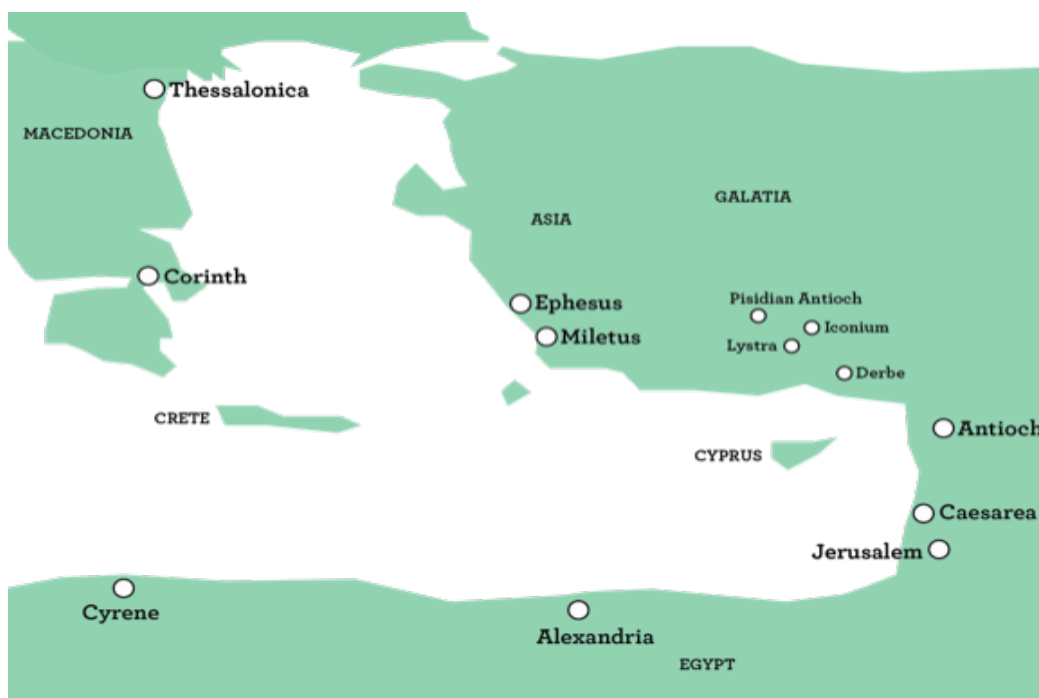
1. In what way was the church in Syrian Antioch well-resourced and what does the Spirit tell them to do with those resources?

Sending your best people away on mission is tough. Why do you think the Spirit told them to do it anyway?

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## EXECUTING THE STRATEGY

To see how it went for Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, read Acts 13:4-14:7.



2. In each city, Paul and Barnabas start by preaching at the Synagogue (v13:5,14, 14:1). Why would it make sense to start there?

3. In the various places Paul and Barnabas visit, who rejects the gospel and who accepts it?

Who rejects it?

Who accepts it?

**Cyprus**  
(13:8,12)

**Psidian Antioch**  
(13:45-48)

**Iconium**  
(14:1-2)

Why would this have been particularly hard for Paul & Barnabas?

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## TACTICAL ADJUSTMENT

As Paul turns increasingly from the Jews to the Gentiles, he reaches Lystra where there doesn't seem to be a synagogue...

### Read Acts 14:8-19

Even without a synagogue to start in, Paul can still win a hearing for the gospel. Paul heals a lame man, which is reminiscent of Peter healing a lame man back in chapter 3, which in turn was reminiscent of Jesus healing a lame man in Luke 5. The same Jesus who worked through Peter now works through Paul! And once again, the effect of the healing is that people come to hear the gospel...

4. How does this presentation of the gospel differ from Paul's synagogue presentation we heard earlier?

For Jews

For Gentiles

### Main Thrust

### Supporting Evidence

5. The easiest thing for Paul would have been to just keep presenting the gospel the same way all the time. Why do you think he did the harder thing of adapting his presentation to different audiences?

As our own culture changes, how easy will it be to find new ways of doing church and presenting the gospel?



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## STRATEGY DEBRIEF

To see how the whole trip ended, read **Acts 14:21-26**.

6. How do Paul and Barnabas balance reaching new believers, on the one hand, with strengthening existing believers, on the other? (v21b-22,27-28)

Is one task more important than the other? Or do they work together?

7. Paul tells the believers, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (v22). Think through the hardships we’ve seen Paul and Barnabas endure below. For each one, what does it look like when Brisbane churches go through that hardship today?

- Separating from fellow believers to reach new believers.
- Being rejected, even persecuted, by people they’d hoped would accept the gospel.
- Continually finding new ways to present the gospel so that it connects with people where they’re currently at.

8. How willing are you to go through each of these hardships for the sake of the gospel?

9. Reflect again on the gospel itself in **13:32-33a,38** and **14:15b**. Does the nature of the message make it worth the hardship? How so?

If we’re a church on gospel mission, we’ll be willing to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel. Sending out close friends to church-plant elsewhere. Being rejected by people who are dear to us. Changing the way we do church and present the gospel, to suit others, not ourselves. But the good news is that the one who died for sin is King! And that’s a message that’s worth any hardship. Let’s pray that’ll we gladly make these sacrifices together for the sake of the gospel.