

“The Power Of God!”
Acts 14:8-15

Introduction:

1. Please Head Back With Me To The Book Of Acts:
 - Acts Chapter 14:
 - Where - For The Last Several Weeks:
 - We Have Been Traveling Along With Paul & Barnabas On Their First Missionary Journey!
 - And As They Traveled:
 - Along Those Ancient Roman Highways:
 - Through What Is Today The Country Of Turkey:
 - They Came Into The Roman Province Of Galatia!
 - And Within This Province:
 - They Were Able To Share The Gospel:
 - In No Less Than Four Major Cities!
 - They Began In Antioch Of Pisidia!
 - Where We Find In Acts 13, A Complete Example Of The Message Of The Gospel Preached By Paul!
 - But After Being Driven Out From Antioch:
 - They Went To The City Of Iconium:
 - To Preach The Gospel!
 - And Although Many Believed In Jesus & Were Saved, There Were Many Others:
 - Who Rejected The Gospel, And Chased Paul & Barnabas Out Of Iconium As Well!
 - So - Where Did Paul & Barnabas Go?
 - And What Did Paul & Barnabas Do?
 - Look Back At Acts 14:5-7 - And When “They were ware of it” – What? A Mob Coming After Them To Stone & Kill Them – They “fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: And there they preached the gospel!”
 - They Really Could Do Nothing Else!
 - They Were The Lord’s Messengers & Missionaries!
 - And So They Entered The Next City Of Lystra:
 - And Continued To “Preach The Gospel!”
 - It Was The Same Message They Preached:
 - In Antioch!
 - And In Iconium!
 - And In Lystra - Where We Will Be Today!
2. And While They Are In Lystra:
 - We Read Of A Remarkable Miracle:
 - In 14:8-15 - “And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked: / 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, / 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. / 11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. / 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. / 13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. / 14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, / 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein!”
 - Just As We Have Witnessed In The Other Cities:
 - We See Another Big Contrast:
 - In How People Receive & Respond To The Gospel!
 - One Man’s Life There In Lystra Was Changed Forever!
 - But Many Of The People Remained Idol-Worshippers:
 - Even Though They Had Both Heard & Seen The Power Of The Gospel For Themselves!
3. This Morning - We Are Going Back To The City Of Lystra:

- To See For Ourselves:
 - The Power Of God Through The Gospel!
 - And How *We* Should Respond Whenever We See The Power Of God On Full Display!

* The First Thing We Come To Is:

1. A Great Illustration Of The Power Of The Gospel!

- In 14:8-10 - Where We Meet A Man With A Great Need!
 - Now, When Paul & Barnabas Were Back In The City Of Iconium:
 - We Were Told In 14:3 - “Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands!”
 - God Gave Paul & Barnabas Power To Perform “Signs And Wonders” In Order To Show & To Prove The Truth That Their Message Was From God!
 - These Were Gifts God Gave For A Certain Purpose & For A Certain Time!
 - Well - What We Just Read About In The City Of Lystra:
 - Was Another One Of Those:
 - “Signs And Wonders!”
 - The Lord Used Paul & Barnabas To Heal A Man Who Had Never Walked Before In His Life!
 - And Even Though This Was A Great Physical Miracle:
 - God Was Doing Something More:
 - In The Words Of 14:3 - He “Gave Testimony Unto The Word Of His Grace!”
 - The Lord - Through These Miracles - Through These “Signs And Wonders” - Was Confirming The Power Of The Gospel!
 - The Purpose Of The Gospel:
 - And The Primary Purpose Of Paul & Barnabas In Lystra:
 - And In All Of The Other Cities:
 - Was Not To Heal!
 - But Was To Save!
 - And So There Was Something More Going On:
 - When This Man Was Healed:
 - He Became A Living Illustration Of The Power Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ To Save!
 - And To Save Even:
 - The Hardest Of Hearts!
 - In 14:8 - The Condition Of This Man Is Emphasized:
 - “And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked!”
 - His Condition Was Permanent!
 - He Had Never Walked! Not As A Toddler / Not As A Child / This Was Not Caused By An Accident / He Was This Same Way Since He Was Born!
 - And Noone Could Help Him!
 - Not His Parents!
 - Not The Doctors!
 - Not Even The Gods They Worshiped In Lystra!
 - His Case Was Hard!
 - And His Case Is An Illustration Of What All Of Our Hearts Are Like Before God!
 - In Ephesians 2:1, We Are Even Described As Being “Dead In Trespasses And Sins!”
 - Our Case Was Hard!
 - And So - Spiritually - All Of Us Begin Our Lives In A Worse Condition:
 - Than This Man Did Physically!
 - So What Did God Do?
 - In 14:9 - We Find:
 - The Hearing Of The Word!
 - 14:9a - “The same heard Paul speak!”
 - Now - What Was Paul Saying?
 - Remember In 14:7 - “There They Preached The Gospel!”
 - The Primary Message Of Paul & Barnabas:

- Was The Gospel!
 - Which Was Given To Us In Detail Back In Acts 13!
- Now - I'm Sure Paul Would Have Shared More About Jesus:
 - And His Life & Ministry - And Even His Power:
 - To Heal Physical Diseases!
- But The Main Message:
 - Was About Salvation From Sin:
 - Not Physical Healing!
 - And This Is What This Disabled Man Heard Paul Speaking!
- And Even Though This Man Could Not Walk:
 - God Gave Him Ears To Hear:
 - So That He Could Listen To The Powerful Message Of The Gospel!
- And What Happened Next?
 - 14:9b - "The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, / Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked!"
- The Healing By Faith!
 - While Paul Was Speaking & Preaching:
 - His Eyes Were Scanning The Crowd!
 - For There Were Many People There!
 - But Somehow, His Eyes Fell Upon This Man – And He Saw Him – And Their Eyes Met!
 - There Was Something Different In This Man's Eyes That Paul Could See! This Man Was Intently Listening! So Paul Kept Looking At This Man & Probably Kept Preaching Directly To This Man - And Then Sensed Something About Him!
 - Not Just From The Interest He Was Showing, But Ultimately As An Impression From God Himself
 - God Was Working In The Heart Of This Disabled Man! And His Eyes Were The Windows Into His Soul!
 - But What Was It That Paul Sensed?
 - He "Perceived That He Had Faith To Be Healed!"
 - The Word Translated "Healed" Is An Interesting Word:
 - It Can Be Translated Literally - "Saved!"
 - Paul "Perceived That He Had Faith To Be Saved!"
 - And This Is What I Believe God Was Doing In The Heart Of This Man!
 - This Man Did Not Just Realize His Need:
 - To Be Healed - God Showed Him His Need:
 - To Be Saved!
 - And He Believed In Jesus & In The Gospel That He Was Hearing From Paul's Lips!
 - Because - As We Learn From Romans 10:17 - "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God!"
- And So - As An Aid To This Man's Faith To Be Saved:
 - And Even To Confirm God's Work In His Heart:
 - The Lord Adds Another Miracle Of Healing:
 - In 14:10 - Where Paul - Right In The Middle Of His Message - "Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked!"
 - Now - When Paul Said - "Stand Up!"
 - It Probably Shocked The Crowd!
 - His Words Were Sudden!
 - His Words Where Shocking!
 - And To Them - It Would Have Seemed Impossible For This Man To Stand Up Straight On His Feet!
 - And They Were Right - Mark 10:27 - "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible!"
 - But I Believe - Based On His Immediate Response To Paul:
 - That This Was No Surprise To This Man!
 - After All - He Already Knew The Power Of God To Save Him!
 - His Feet Would Be No Problem For God!
- So - "He Leaped And Walked!"

- And Just Like Another Very Similar Miracle Earlier:
 - In Acts 3:8 - He Too Was Probably - "Walking, And Leaping, And Praising God!"
- What A Great Illustration:
 - Of The Power Of The Gospel!
 - Not Just To Heal The Body!
 - But To Save The Soul!
- And The Rest Of The People:
 - There In Lystra – Took Notice!
 - They Heard The Same Words:
 - As This Disabled Man!
 - They Saw The Same Miracle!
 - But How Did They React / Respond? With:

2. *A Great Ignorance To The Power Of The Gospel!*

- 14:11-13 - "And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. / And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. / Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people!"
 - Their Response Was Altogether Different:
 - Than The Disabled Man!
 - We Read About The Difference In Hebrews 4:2 - "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it!"
 - They Did Not Receive The Message With Faith!
 - And This Ignorance Led To:
- Curiosity!
 - In This Passage - We Never Read That The People:
 - "Heard" Paul:
 - Just That They "Saw What Paul Had Done!"
 - They Were More Intrigued By The Work Of Healing:
 - Than By The Word Of God's Grace!
 - And Their Hearts Remained Hard To The Gospel!
 - Their Ignorance Also Led To:
- Confusion!
 - These People Were Not Entirely Ignorant!
 - They Knew That What They Had Witnessed:
 - Men Could Never Do!
 - They Knew That What They Had Witnessed:
 - Had To Be Supernatural!
 - Had To Be Divine!
 - They Believed That There Was Something:
 - Even Someone Greater Than Them!
 - But They Did Not Trust In The True God!
 - Instead - In The Words Of Romans Chapter 1:
 - They "Changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things!"
 - And They "Changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator!"
 - And This Is Why They:
 - 14:12 - "Called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker!"
 - And Were Even Going To Make Sacrifices Unto Them!
- The Hearts Of The People Were Still Fixed In Idolatry!
 - Even Though They Had:
 - Heard God's Powerful Word Of The Gospel!
 - And Had Seen God's Powerful Work Of Healing!
 - Not Only Does This Show Once Again:
 - How Hard Our Hearts Are As People!
 - But Also How Powerful The Gospel Is:

- To Change Our Hearts!
 - Because - Remember - That Disabled Man Had Lived His Whole Life There In Lystra!
- These People Were His People!
 - And Those Gods Were His Gods!
 - He Too Had Worshiped Those Same Idols!
- The Difference Between Them Was What We Find:
 - In Ephesians 2:8 - “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God!”
 - The Power Of The Gospel Was Strong Enough To Pierce Even Into That Disabled Man’s Heart!
 - And It Is Still That Powerful To Do The Same In Our Own Hearts & In The Hearts Of Others!
- Do We Still Believe In The Power:
 - Of God’s Message Of The Gospel?
- But God Even Had A Use For Their Ignorance:
 - Of The Truth! For It Led Paul To Present:

3. ***A Great Introduction To The Power Of The Gospel!***

- The Vast Majority Of The People In Lystra:
 - Did Not Know About The True God:
 - They Had Very Little If Any Background In The Jewish Scriptures!
 - It Does Not Seem Like There Were Enough Jews In Lystra To Even Have A Synagogue, Like They Had In The Other Cities!
 - So - Paul & Barnabas - Mortified By What Was Going On:
 - Share With These Idolaters:
 - That God’s Grace Has Been Shown Even To Them!
 - In 14:14-15 - We Learn About:
- The Witness Of The Gospel!
 - 14:14-15a - “ Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, / And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you!”
 - Paul & Barnabas Could Take No Credit:
 - For Their Works Of Healing:
 - Nor For Their Words Of Salvation!
 - They Too Were:
 - Sinful Men & Suffering Men!
 - “Men Of Like Passions!”
 - This Is How We Must Always Be:
 - When Sharing The Gospel!
 - As I’ve Heard It Said - We Are Just Like One Beggar Telling Another Beggar Where To Find Food!
 - We Are No Better Than Anyone Else!
 - We Who Share The Grace Of God With Others:
 - Only Do So Because We Have Received The Grace Of God Ourselves!
 - We Must Always Approach Our Mission With Humility!
 - But Always Point Others To:
- The Wonder Of The Gospel!
 - 14:15 - “We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein!”
 - Paul Tells Those People In Lystra:
 - That Even They Have Seen The Power Of Living God In Their Own Lives!
 - They Just Have Not Recognized Him:
 - Nor Have They Responded To Him Or Believed In Him!
- And So - He Continues On To Share The Gospel!
 - The “Power Of God Unto Salvation To Every One That Believeth!”

Conclusion:

1. Next Sunday, We Are Going To Look A Bit More Closely:

- At The Message Paul Gave:
 - There In Lystra - About The Living God!
- But For This Morning:
 - Let Us Remember That:
 - The Gospel Is The Greatest Demonstration:
 - Of The Power Of God!
- 2. People Are Always Looking For:
 - Some Sign & Some Wonder:
 - To Show That God Is Working!
 - And That Was No Different 2,000 Years Ago In The City Of Lystra!
 - But The Gospel Remains:
 - As The Greatest Sign & The Greatest Wonder:
 - And The Greatest Work Of God!
 - Let Us Continue To Believe It:
 - And To Share It - Because:
 - It Remains The Power Of God!

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