



ACTS THE GREAT ADVENTURE ~SUPERNATURAL~

Paul and Barnabas in Lystra and Derbe

*ACTS 14:8-20: ⁸ While they were at Lystra, Paul and Barnabas came upon a man with crippled feet. He had been that way from birth, so he had never walked. He was sitting ⁹ and listening as Paul preached. Looking straight at him, **Paul realized he had faith to be healed.** ¹⁰ So Paul called to him in a loud voice, "Stand up!" And the man jumped to his feet and started walking.*

There were a few things at play here with Paul and the crippled man. The crippled man had the gift of faith and Paul had the gift of discernment to recognize the crippled man's gift. Bear in mind also that Paul and Barnabas were not on a "faith-healing" journey. Their missionary journey was to preach the gospel. This crippled man came to hear the gospel with no preconditions or expectation of healing. It was enough to be there to hear the message. He did not ask Paul for healing but Paul looked into the man's eyes and said, "stand up!" Without hesitation, without being gingerly about it, the man had such faith that he JUMPED TO HIS FEET! That was an act of pure faith. Now this crippled man had never in his life walked. Surely his legs must have been severely atrophied so it would have been by miracle...pure miracle that this man would not only rise to his feet but have the strength to actually jump!

Do you have faith enough to be healed? Have you ever witnessed what you would categorize as purely a faith-healing?

¹¹ When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in their local dialect, "These men are gods in human form!" ¹² They decided that Barnabas was the Greek god Zeus and that Paul was Hermes, since he was the chief speaker. ¹³ Now the temple of Zeus was located just outside the town. So the priest of the temple and the crowd brought bulls and wreaths of flowers to the town gates, and they prepared to offer sacrifices to the apostles. ¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard what was happening, they tore their clothing¹ in dismay and ran out among the people, shouting, ¹⁵ "Friends, why are you doing this? We are merely human beings—just like you! We have come to bring you the Good News that you should turn from these worthless things and turn to the living God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. ¹⁶ In the past he permitted all the nations to go their own ways, ¹⁷ but he never left them without evidence of himself and his goodness. For instance, he sends you rain and good crops and gives you food and joyful hearts." ¹⁸ But even with these words, Paul and Barnabas could scarcely restrain the people from sacrificing to them.

¹ Paul and Barnabas tore their clothing for two reasons 1; to prove they were human just like the Lycaonians and 2; this was a typical Jewish response to blasphemy such as being considered gods.

Why was it so hard to convince the people that they were not gods? Because the people of the community had a cult thing going on. They believed in and worshipped the gods Zeus and Hermes so when they saw Paul perform miracles, they put 2 and 2 together which of course did not add up and is why Paul and Barnabas strongly rebuked them. Consider also that the Lycaonians were culturally a little behind those along the coastal areas of the region that had made the move to speaking Greek versus their native tongues. The Lycaonians were inland lower class folk that perhaps were more bent toward clinging to false gods. Because of this, Paul and Barnabas spoke to them in ways they could relate such as in verse 17 when Paul says, "he sends you rain and good crops and gives you food and joyful hearts" rather than quote prophesy or reference the old law in other ways. Paul communicated at their level but to no avail, the following takes place according to verses 19 and 20:

¹⁹ Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowds to their side. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of town, thinking he was dead. ²⁰ But as the believers gathered around him, he got up and went back into the town. The next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.

Remember the stoning of Stephan and the scattering of believers that followed? Here we see yet another "ding-and-dash" by Paul and Barnabas. They came, they preached, they reached and not without being wounded. It may seem as though they wanted to waste no time getting out of Lystra and head to Derbe because the town was turning against them-right? Perhaps they fulfilled God's purpose for Lystra and were simply eager to bring the gospel to Derbe next? What we do know is that Paul and Barnabas took up their cross. They were charged with not only bringing the gospel to people under different laws and different rules. They were bringing with them a new law and not because there was a new sheriff in town; no-this was the same God that brought them food, crops and joy in the past but brings them a new way to live in Christ Jesus.

Question: "What did Jesus mean when He said, "Take up your cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23)?"

Answer: Let's begin with what Jesus didn't mean. Many people interpret "cross" as some burden they must carry in their lives: a strained relationship, a thankless job, a physical illness. With self-pitying pride, they say, "That's my cross I have to carry." Such an interpretation is not what Jesus meant when He said, "Take up your cross and follow Me."

When Jesus carried His cross up Golgotha to be crucified, no one was thinking of the cross as symbolic of a burden to carry. To a person in the first-century, the cross meant one thing and one thing only: death by the most painful and humiliating means human beings could develop.

Two thousand years later, Christians view the cross as a cherished symbol of atonement, forgiveness, grace, and love. But in Jesus' day, the cross represented nothing but torturous death. Because the Romans forced convicted criminals to carry their own crosses to the place of crucifixion, bearing a cross meant carrying their own execution device while facing ridicule along the way to death.

Therefore, "**Take up your cross and follow Me**" means being willing to die in order to follow Jesus. This is called "dying to self." It's a call to absolute surrender. After each time Jesus commanded cross bearing, He said, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?" ([Luke 9:24-25](#)). Although the call is tough, the reward is matchless.

BRINGING IT HOME

Paul and Barnabas could have had the world, or at least the city of Lystra at their beck and call. But that isn't what they wanted, their motive was their mission which was to lead people into an understanding and relationship with the real and living God. This was revealed not just by their words but by their deeds. Why was it so important to them? Because they knew that Jesus was the only way to heaven, belief in and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They knew that message was true and so they devoted their lives to taking that to other people. Perhaps we don't see the signs and wonders much today because our motives aren't right. People today tend to gravitate toward the messenger more than the message itself. It was no different in the 1st century yet Paul and Barnabas would have no part of that. Clearly they understood what it meant to "die to one's self" and now 2000 years later we are challenged to do the same, to die daily, to submit, surrender and sync with the One true living, loving God.

