



A just weight  
and balance

are the  
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- In **1858** Stephen A. Douglas defeated Abraham Lincoln for a seat in the U.S. Senate.
- When a sympathetic friend asked Lincoln how he felt, he said,
  - **"Like the boy who stubbed his toe:**
  - **I am too big to cry**
  - **and too badly hurt to laugh."**

- Our question for today:
- When was the last time you were disappointed?
  - A better question would be.
  - How do you handle your disappointments?

- **Acts 14:8-20** RSV

**In Lystra there sat a man  
who was lame.**

**He had been that way from birth  
and had never walked.**

- **9 He listened to Paul  
as he was speaking.**

**Paul looked  
directly at him,  
saw that he had  
faith to be healed**

- **Acts 14:8-20** RSV

**10** and called out,

**“Stand up on your feet!”**

**At that, the man jumped up  
and began to walk.**

- **11** When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language,  
**“The gods have come down to us  
in human form!”**

- 12 Barnabas  
they called  
Zeus,
- and Paul  
they called  
Hermes  
because  
he was the  
chief speaker.

- **13** The **priest of Zeus**, whose temple was just outside the city, brought **bulls** and **wreaths** to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted **to offer sacrifices** **to them.**

- **14** But when the apostles **Barnabas and Paul** heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting:
- **15** “Friends, why are you doing this? **We too are only human, like you.**
- **We are bringing you good news,** telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them.

- **16** In the past,  
**he let all nations go their own way.**

- **17** Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you **rain** from heaven and **crops** in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food **and fills your hearts with joy.”**

- **18** Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd **from sacrificing to them.**

- **19** Then some **Jews** came from **Antioch** and **Iconium** and won the crowd over.
  - **They stoned Paul** and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.
- **20** But after the disciples had gathered around him, **he got up and went back into the city.**
- The next day he and Barnabas **left for Derbe.**

- **When** was the last time you were disappointed?
  - **You can admit it.**
- **Everyone** experiences disappointment.
- **History** is filled with disappointed people.
- Let me give you a few famous **examples.**

- Hugo Grotius,  
the father of modern  
international law,  
said at the last,
- "I have accomplished  
nothing worthwhile  
in my life."

- **John Quincy Adams**, sixth President of the U.S., wrote in his diary:

- "**My life has been spent in vain and idle aspirations,....** "

- **Robert Louis Stevenson** wrote words that continue to delight and enrich our lives,
- and yet what did he write for his epitaph?
- **"Here lies one who meant well, who tried a little, and failed much."**

- **Cecil Rhodes**  
opened up Africa  
and established an empire,  
but what were his dying  
words?

- **"So little done,  
so much to do."**

- When was the last time  
**you felt knocked down?**

- Paul and Barnabas are on the island of Cyprus, in the town of Lystra.
- Their expectation must have been high.
  - This is their first missionary journey.

- It has to be noted that Paul and Barnabas were more and more taking their lives in their hands.
- In the more civilized cities their lives at least were safe because Rome kept order;
  - But out in the wilds Paul and Barnabas were ever under the threat of mob violence.
- As we note in this lesson.

- Their evangelistic efforts in that town began with the community's saddest citizen.
- This gentleman had never walked.  
(**Acts 14:8**)

- It is safe to say he was a professional beggar;
- He existed on the compassion of others.
- His friends or family placed him in his spot in the morning and took him home at night.
- The whole community saw him as a victim,
- But Paul saw more.

- Luke records the event for us:
  - # 1 “A certain man,  
impotent in his feet,
- # 2 “A cripple from his mother’s womb,
- # 3 “Who never had walked”
  - The phrases are like three beats of a hammer;
  - No fine literary style,
- But it compels your attention.

- The tense of the verb suggest,,
- That he had for some days been among St. Paul's hearers,
  - He had heard the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus,

- And had found that such a Savior met his every need.
- Paul then asked the man to do something he had never done, “get up and walk!”
- “And he leaped up and walked” .  
(**Acts 14:10**)

## Acts 14:11

When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they started shouting in their own Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us!"

- This miracle was accepted by the heathen citizens

as proof that

Paul and Barnabas were their gods

come to earth;

- They named Barnabas

“Jupiter”

(chief of the gods),

- And Paul they named

“Mercury”

(messenger of the gods).

- Paul  
seizing the opportunity  
**began to preach the Word of God.**

- **He did not use  
the O.T. Scriptures**  
as he did  
in the synagogue service,
- But rather reasoned  
with these Gentiles  
**on the basis of  
God's works in creation.**

- The works of God in nature leave the heathen **“without excuse.”**
- **Romans 1:20** (KJV)
  - **For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:**

- To Paul and Barnabas, the healing was performed to demonstrate the power of God.
- This is where the story falls apart.
- To the people of Lystra, the miracle proved that Paul and Barnabas were gods.

- Have you ever done something for the right reason
- But everything went completely wrong?
- They tried to explain their actions, but their words fell on deaf ears.
- Then, things got even worse.

- People from “Antioch and Iconium” showed up and incited the crowd against them.  
(Acts 14:19)
- Paul is stoned and left for dead outside of the city.  
(Acts 14:19)

- How fickle a mob is!
- Enthusiastic loyalty;
  - And next,  
disappointment  
and rejection.
- Today, “Hosanna.”
- Tomorrow, “Crucify.”

- One minute Paul is viewed as a god.
- The next he is stoned by an angry mob,
- We wonder if Paul remembered the day he stood by in stoning Stephen.

- **What tremendous evidence of courage!**
  - They had been **expelled** from **Antioch of Pisidia**,
  - **Threatened** in **Iconium**,
  - Actually **stoned** in **Lystra**,
  - But yet, when God raises Paul up, **they go right back into those same cities** to strengthen the disciples.
  - **That kind of courage** comes only from trust in the Living God.

➤ **Let us notice  
Paul's statement:**

➤ **Acts 14:16**

**In the past he allowed  
all people to  
go their own way.**

➤ The point Paul makes is  
that the Living God

**permits men free choice.**

➤ And as a result  
of that choice

**He allows evil.**

➤ **A constant argument**  
of humanists,  
and others is.

➤ **"Why is there  
evil in the world?"**

➤ **They say,**

**"If God is such a loving God,  
who loves man,  
why does he permit  
suffering?"**

➤ **Why does he allow evil,  
and injustice,  
and war?"**

➤ **"What you must know  
is that God,  
in generations past,  
allowed all the nations  
"to walk in  
their own way."**

➤ In other words,  
he gave them free will.

➤ In order to  
permit free will,  
**he must allow evil.**

➤ That is Paul's  
argument,  
**and it is**  
**unanswerable.**

- There are those today who say,  
**"Why doesn't God stop  
all the wars and injustices?"**
  - **Well, he could.**
    - But if he did,  
he would take away  
**your freedom of choice,**
    - And that is the one thing  
**you don't want to surrender.**

- The greatest dignity of humanity is the power to choose.
- God has given us that power, and he will not take it away.
- Paul says that is the reason why he allows evil.

- In our lesson last week Paul announced to the people of Antioch that they were making a choice.

- Acts 13:46

**Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you:**

- **but seeing you put it from you,**
  - and judge yourselves  
**unworthy of everlasting life,**
- **lo, we turn to the Gentiles.**

- How does this odd story  
(Acts 14)

help us to live out the faith?

- How does this story help us to be a little more like Jesus?

- The answer comes from distilling the story down to its basic element.

- It is not a story about being left for dead.
- The common element that speaks to us is disappointment.
  - Paul and Barnabas had such high expectations for Lystra.

- **Life has its disappointments.**

- **Acts 14:19**

**And there came certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.**

- **14:20** **Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city:**

- The outstanding feature of this story is **the sheer courage of Paul.**
- When he came to his senses, **his first act was to go right back into the city** where he had been stoned.
- A deed like that would have **more effect than a hundred sermons.**
- Men were bound to ask themselves **where a man got the courage to act in such a way.**

- Wherever the Gospel is you will find division and disturbance.

- Matthew 10:34

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

- 10:35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

- 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

- **We must not be led to think that**  
because many are the troubles of the righteous,
  - That every one that has many troubles **must therefore be righteous.**
  - Be forewarned that **sorrow** and **trials** **are fastened to sin.**  
(**Genesis 3:19**)

➤ **1Peter 4:12** CEV

**Dear friends, don't be**  
**surprised or shocked**

**that you are going through testing**  
**that is like walking through fire.**

➤ Keep always praying  
**that when it comes**  
you may have patience  
for its endurance.

➤ It will come soon enough;  
**sooner, perhaps,**

than you will be ready to meet it.

➤ **And in the meantime**

do not think you are  
not being tried.

➤ **Unbroken sunshine**

may be a trial  
**that we fail**  
**to recognize.**

➤ The expression  
**"through many tribulations"**  
is used in the sense of  
**traveling through this world.**  
(**Acts 14:22**)

➤ Both Paul and Peter state  
that we are  
**"pilgrims"**  
passing through this world below.  
(**Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11**)

➤ Our Lord warned that  
“**Narrow is the gate**”  
that leads unto eternal life;  
(**Matthew 7:14**)

➤ And when our Lord  
chose this expression  
**He intended no doubt**  
to represent not only  
the few who go in there at,

➤ But the fact that to each man it proves  
**narrow** and **uninviting**.

➤ “**Few there be who find it**”

- Every Christian must prepare himself for "**fightings without and for fears within**".  
(**2 Corinthians 7:5 ASV**)
  - **Be it distress of heart**
  - **Or wrenching asunder of earthly ties.**
  - In some shape or other lies every one's **path to the kingdom.**

- Romans 5:3

“we glory in tribulations also:  
knowing that tribulation  
works patience;

- 5:4 And patience, experience;  
and experience, hope:

- Note that we do not glory

- over trials,

- or about trials,

- We glory in the result.

- **(Acts 14:21-22 RSV)**
  - **When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,**

- They did what was **essential** to the life of the church.
- They gathered the disciples together **and ministered to them.**
  - The Christian life **is more than** merely being converted;
  - It is “**growing**” in Christ.  
(**2 Peter 3:18**)

- Notice **Four** important things the apostles did.
- **First**, they **taught** the disciples.
  - "**They strengthened the souls of the disciples.**"  
(**Acts 14:22 NET**)
    - You do that by **teaching the Word of God.**
    - The Word is what **sets men free,**
- But people **must know** the truth before they can be set free.

- Second,  
they exhorted  
"them to continue  
in the faith."  
(Acts 14:22)

- This is usually done  
by an appeal to example.

- Hebrews 11  
is a mighty example.

- Third,  
taught them how  
to view hardship.

- Acts 14:22

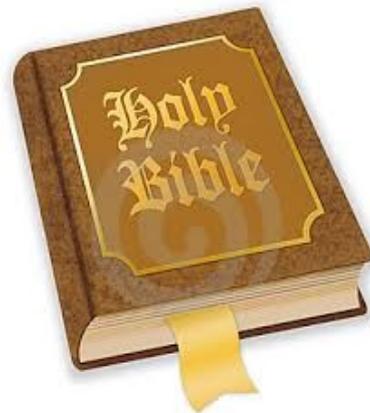
**Exhorting them to continue  
in the faith, and that  
we must through much  
tribulation enter into  
the kingdom of God.**

- Finally they did a **fourth thing:**
  - **They prayed and committed them to the Lord.**  
**(Acts 14:23)**
- Paul was utterly **honest.**
  - He offered them **no easy way.**
- He acted on the principle that Jesus had come **"not to make life easy but to make men great."**

**The doors of the church  
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride  
Say  
“Come”.**

**Revelation 22:17**



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