



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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