



### **The Man at Lystra Who Had Never Walked Before**

Text: Acts 14: 8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:<sup>9</sup> The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, <sup>10</sup> Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. <sup>11</sup> 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.

Title:

#### **The Man At Lystra Who Had Never Walked Before**

Paul and Barnabas were driven away from Iconium by persecution and now they are preaching in the town of Lystra. Lystra was a Roman colony in Central Asia Minor made up of wild and rude people. Why? Because they had never heard about Jesus Christ. You see, when you hear about Jesus, things begin to change, and when you come to know Him, things really change!!!

The people at Lystra were deeply sunken in superstition. So Paul and Barnabas were facing quite a challenge. As they entered the city, right at the gates, there was a huge temple dedicated to Jupiter. The people of Lystra were fanatical about their false god worship. Jupiter was their supreme deity.

So coming down the mountain, Paul and Barnabas enter Lystra. As they are entering through the gates of the city and into the marketplace, as the Lord leads, they begin telling people about Jesus! They told of His love and how he had come down from Heaven as Jesus Christ and suffered and died for them. A crowd gathers around them and in the crowd was a crippled man who had never walked before in his life...he is listening very closely to what Paul is saying about this Jesus.

While he is preaching, Paul takes special notice of this crippled man. Paul is feeling an intense focused compassion for this man. Paul looks into his face with bold grace. Paul picks up in the Holy Ghost that this man from Lystra has faith to be healed. Remember: this man has never walked before in his entire life...yet his faith is strong enough that He believes God can heal him!

Paul knew exactly what he was doing...he stopped right in the middle of his message...why? Because Paul knew that God would receive more glory if the entire crowd could see this miracle because it would publish God's fame to the max and it would build the faith of all the people.

So right in the middle of his message, Paul stops preaching and shouts directly to the man: "Stand upright on thy feet!" This man who had never walked suddenly leaps up and begins walking!!!!!! He's now ready to cruise because God never misses the mark!

The crowd is in shock and awe! They have never seen anything like this in their lives!

Up to this point it's been smooth sailing.....no Problem....However....there was this tradition among the people of Lystra, you see, that Jupiter and Mercury had once appeared in that very town! They believed it as truth. So as soon as they saw this undeniable miracle take place, they immediately assumed that this was Jupiter and Mercury coming down to them again! You see, they still did not know Jesus Christ and Him crucified! All they knew is their superstitious tradition. How many people today do you know who are steeped in tradition....how would they react if they saw God perform a miracle through your hands?

They thought Jupiter was the god of light, sky, and weather. They had a picture in their minds that Jupiter was this god with this stately and commanding presence....when they saw Barnabas....bingo...he fit the bill....so this must be Jupiter!!! Mercury was thought to be the god of eloquence so the people of Lystra assumed Paul was Mercury because he was the one who did most of the speaking.....he was the eloquent one, you see! So since only gods can perform miracles it was natural to assume Paul and Barnabas were Jupiter and Mercury.....so what do you do when you are in the presence of gods? You worship them, of course...and that is exactly what they tried to do.....! They rushed to the temple and tell their pagan priests that the gods have come down to Lystra.....so these priests act upon their desire to remain popular and they bring out the bullock to sacrifice before Jupiter and Mercury....but really it's just Paul and Barnabas....can you imagine how Paul and Barnabas must have been feeling right about now? What do you do when they bust out the fatted bullock and they are bowing down to you....humming and chanting?

The men of God did exactly what they were supposed to do...they tore their clothes as a sign of disapproval and they refused to be worshipped. Way to go men! Can I tell you that God is still looking for a few good men who aren't looking for any glory for themselves! If it is your utmost desire to bring glory to God and not to yourself...I have good news for you...God wants you on His team!

**Then there were those who totally opposed Paul and Barnabas.....**Satan always has his servants...wolves in sheep's clothing somewhere hiding in the shadows to stir up irritation. This mob causes such a stir that the wild passions of the people came to the surface and they stoned Paul and drug him through the streets. He is left to die by the very people who attempted to worship him yesterday!!!!!!

Nevertheless, Paul's preaching is not in vain, and the work Barnabas run deeper than the reaction of the angry mob. You may be able to temporarily wound it, but you can't tear it down forever when it's a work of the Creator!

He is still the Creator....it didn't matter if this man had never walked before.....God's creative ability didn't stop in Genesis! He is still the creator today that he was back then! Even if you are missing half your brain he can create brain cells right inside your skull !!!!!!!

**\*\* I love to read about miracles in the Bible....but I am not satisfied with just knowing that it happened ...I** want to know what elements caused the miracle to come to pass....what factors moved God to the point of action? I want to know and you deserve to know....

First I have to ask...what preceded the lame man's faith? Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God is a steadfast principal to follow....but what is heard? it's the hearing of the gospel...that is what they preached....the gospel. "But Paul, you had success in Iconium and Antioch preaching to your brethren...you should change your voice and your personality to have success in preaching to these rude superstitious barbarians at Lystra...! Why would you speak the same truth to them?" Paul does it...he speaks the same exact gospel.....no matter the adverse culture...he doesn't change the message a bit!!! I come from one of the most affluent areas in North America...Silicon Valley...home of Intel, Apple, IBM, HP, Ebay....and dozens of other high tech companies got their start in the Bay Area....yet the message is the same everywhere....."people are people" didn't start with the Depesh Mode...it started with God...people are people and we all need the gospel no matter rich or poor! Paul makes no difference in the education of his hearers....no matter where he goes it's the same! One may have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade education...the other may have a PHD....both need the same gospel.

Remember that Paul went to Ephesus....it was a city given over to sorcery....yet when Christ is preached the people will make a bon fire with their books. What about when he would preach to the polished governor..should he water down his message....no way! He preached the same Jesus and Him crucified...what about when he went to Athens....a people very highly educated...did Paul try and reach them with philosophy...nope....he stuck with the same Jesus. Paul took that same approach at Corinth.....a city given to materialism and deep immoral practices...yet the same Jesus was needed there too....and now here in Lystra...Paul knows what these people need...isn't it awesome to know that we all have a hope that is just reliable regardless of culture and regardless of location? God owns this universe....you see....but what about our wills....what about our lives right now...and what about our desire....does God have control of your desire....you see, what you *desire* is what you will place your faith and trust in!!!!

If you desire Jesus.....then He is the One you will trust. Paul and Barnabas are here in Lystra ministering to a

group of people who ignorantly worship an image that doesn't bless, heal, breath, or help them in any way shape or form....and here they come with the genuine!

If the peoples greatest sin is idolatry...why doesn't Paul preach about the deity? That may seem to make good logical sense, and it may be necessary down the road....but that is not the starting point and that is not the ending point....Paul understood full well that no matter the problem...the only lasting answer was the pure gospel of Jesus Christ....that is what preceded this crippled man's faith. Don't ever lose hope in the power of the gospel..without it there is no real faith because our faith was designed for the gospel, that we may be born of water and Spirit.

Where did this man's faith have its anchor? The scripture says: "He had faith to be healed."

Perhaps as Paul preached this man thought to himself...."Sounds like truth, looks like truth, and if it is true that Jesus Christ is such an awesome savior, then that must mean that He can heal me! These legs that have never carried me anywhere: they can be made straight. I think they can, I hope they can, I believe they can, I know I can be healed if Jesus says so! If Paul is right in what he is saying, then I know that Jesus wants me to be healed! Perhaps he even thought about asking Paul at first opportunity ....but that Paul beat him to it and broke the ice first....Paul noticed great faith coming from this man....Paul felt something because is caused him to stop preaching!

This man had faith beaming from his eyes, the window of the soul. He was bubbling over with faith! When you have faith, and when you have a desperate need in your life....and when you realize that there is hope at a certain juncture for your need to be met...you won't let anything come in between you and your miracle!

The man was on the edge of his seat, drinking in every word, totally absorbed in what Paul was saying, and at the very same time, Paul was fully absorbed in the faith radiating from this crippled man....it was an awesome combination.....a perfect mixture coming together to produce a miracle....to the point that Paul forgot the formality of the pulpit! Paul and this crippled man met on the common ground of a vital faith! You see, to experience a change in your life tonight...you must connect with Jesus Christ in such a way that everything else in your life takes second place....Jesus must have your full attention or you will walk away the same!

Many people have exercised a great faith to be saved through Acts 2:38, but are still crippled in various ways in their soul. Why? Some are stunned by the grief they have suffered because of the consequences of sin. Some have only believed that God can save, but they have not believed it for themselves because they see themselves as being unworthy. Satan wants to keep you in that state of constant guilt. It is time to come out of condemnation and stop hurting your faith.... If this crippled man could do it, then why can't you? I am not talking about holiness....if you are under condemnation it's not coming from God, so don't settle for the lie that says that to end condemnation you have to give up on the holiness of God that is taught in scripture! Stick with the Word and attack the real source of your condemnation.....Satan and his dark kingdom.....look it straight in the eye and rebuke it all out of your life, out of your home, out of your workplace, out of your car, out of your school.

I am speaking to some people of God here tonight, that even though you are saved, in some ways you are cripple emotionally.....you face constant fear....fear is very crippling.....you've got to take fear by the nap of the neck and tell it where to go.....fear is a spirit....I am tired of seeing God's people bound by these tormenting spirits! WE are the people who should be at the most liberty to laugh, to sing, to express joy.....I don't understand Christians who never smile, never laugh, never sing, never raise their hands, never come to the altar, never witness, never testify, never believe God for anything, never take risks in faith, never spread their wings, never climb any mountains....I don't understand dead, dull, dry Christians....the lukewarm spirit is for the birds....it's time to be made whole.....you don't have to be a spiritual or an emotional cripple anymore...stop hiding your gift.....spread your wings and soar! Get out of your nest and do something for God!

Some people are content to stay spiritually and emotionally crippled because they just don't know any better....they are ignorant of a better way!

This should not be in the body of Christ! Some entertain wrong expectations of what living for Jesus is all about....they wait for surprising emotions to hit them like lightening, they have not had any remarkable dreams, they have not had any extraordinary visions, they don't have the faith of a present salvation, but it is always based on some pie in the sky experience that God never promised and as a result they settle for a type of handicap that may not be seen with the human eye, but is just as crippling regardless.....if we could only realize the joy that comes in a constant and steady walk with Jesus on a daily basis....just keep it up every single day and you and I will one day realize that

we got much farther than some who thought the way to excellence was the path of the daredevils who only work in the realm of the spectacular....I am speaking to some here tonight who are crippled and wounded in their faith, not because of some external circumstance, but something way down deep on the inside, and right here tonight, this is the night for you to come out of your crippled state...it's something that has left your family scratching their head...they know you. They have seen you live for God hot...and even you yourself remember a day when you served Jesus with an on fire attitude, but something happened along your journey that crippled your faith....it's time for you to be healed.....God is going to heal you of complacency, God is going to heal you tonight of Apathy. You haven't been able to explain why you only show up to church once a month, or why you never grace an altar. You are gone out the back door before anybody gets a chance to shake your hand, but tonight things are different, and now you know why, it's because sometime back your spirit was crippled...it may have been sin, or it may have been simply a distraction, but now you realize that it is not worth losing your soul and you want to make Jesus #1 in your life again.....he is right here, right now, and He wants to heal your wounded soul....I am speaking to some wounded soldiers tonight who have been crippled in the battle.....it's time....

**The Holy Ghost has brought you to a crossroads tonight and the time has come to put faith to the test.**....Jesus said that if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you would be able to move mountains.....as we stand, I am simply opening up this altar right now.....whatever has been crippling your walk with Him and standing in your way....it's time to move that mountain so that you can have victory again, joy and laughter again, peace again...that is what God wants for your life and that is what he has to offer you here.....is there anybody who is tired of living the way you have been living? Is there anybody here who is ready to be free from all the guilt and pain? Jesus is here to set you free.....