Acts 14:15c We are preaching the good news to you so that you turn from these worthless things to the living God.

What a problem they had on their hands. Here were Paul and Barnabas just out doing the work of the Lord preaching the message of Jesus Christ the Savior of the world and bringing souls to faith. In this particular instance, Paul had performed a miracle. They had entered Lystra and there was a man crippled in his feet from birth, a man who had never walked. The man had listened to what had been said and had come to faith. Because of this faith, did you catch that? Because of this faith, Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit healed the man. Paul said, **"Stand up on your feet!"** No mumbo-jumbo. No pious ritual. No laying on of hands, just the command. The man jumped up and began to walk.

Now let me back up for a minute. The translation of our Bible can be misunderstood. The text says, **"Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out..."** A better translation here would be **"Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be saved and called out."** It's an important difference. The better translation shows who was doing what. The difficulty comes from the word used. It can mean both healing and salvation. We base the translation on the context. Since most assume this context is a physical healing we thus translate with the word healed but I would argue that the context is spiritual in nature and thus is to be understood as “saved.” Just one of those translation difficulties that arise.

The current translation makes you think that this man's faith caused the healing. Not so. God's power, God's Holy Spirit was the cause of this healing. We have no indication that this man was thinking of being healed. This man was focused on Jesus as the risen Messiah of the world. Paul performed the miracle as an added blessing to the saving faith this man had gained through the hearing of God's Word. Not only did this miracle bless the man, but those who saw the miracle were also blessed with a demonstration of God's power. It was a power that showed the message was genuine and true, a message that should be heard. It seems however, that the majority of the people could not get past their heathen beliefs.

It was the heathen beliefs of these people that caused a real problem. The people of Lystra determined that Paul and Barnabas were gods come among them. If you want to have an interesting discussion of why they believed that, then speak with me privately. So, they were getting ready to make sacrifices to worship Paul and Barnabas. You and I can only imagine how Paul and Barnabas felt. They were distressed. They wanted this stopped. They wanted these people to believe in Jesus and his salvation not in false gods and false hopes.

Here is where we can learn something of great importance. We will consider the words of our text under the theme: **WE HAVE GOOD NEWS.**

The problem that cropped up for Paul and Barnabas was the mistaken belief of these Lyconians that the gods Zeus and Hermes had come down among them. The problem was that Zeus and Hermes were not gods but idols, false gods dreamed up by false teachers. Fact is, there is only one true God, the God of Scripture, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is to this true God that Paul tries to turn the hearts of the Lyconians.

Just as an added side note, lately in discussion on social media, I have seen a number of commentators say that they think the only reason for religion is to control people and get power over them. I think this particular history shows the falsehood of that in Christianity. Instead of going with the flow, letting themselves be dubbed “gods” and then doing and commanding whatever they wanted, the Apostles fought against what was being done. All they wanted was for people to become believers in Jesus. So if faith is about power, Christians over most of the centuries have been really lousy at it, in many cases being persecuted for what they preached. Back to our text.

Notice what is said **"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them."** Paul's words direct these people to a truth that is still valid today. His words direct away from men and point to the True God.

Need I tell you how important this truth is? We should not let the men who serve us become our gods. We should not exalt and elevate the servants of God so that they become more important than God himself. Men are men and God is God. In this particular vein consider a few things of great importance.

The men who serve you are to be servants of God. Their concern is to be the truth of God and upholding the truth of God. We know that is being done only when those who serve us preach and teach God's Holy written Word. Not just what they like. Not teaching we can skip this or ignore that! But teaching the whole truth of God. If they are not teaching God's written Word in all its truth and purity, then you do not have a servant of God but a wolf in sheep's clothing, or one of the many false teachers God’s Word warns of.

Second, when a man proclaims that he knows God's will apart from the written Word of God beware. When you are being taught to rely more on your feelings and emotions for heavenly guidance, beware. That means we are relying on feelings and emotions. Please note that there is no measure better than God's written word. The reason God gave us His written Word is so we could be sure and certain of what God has revealed. A man who claims that God is speaking directly to him is not a sure thing. After all, how do you know he isn't preaching his own will? How do you know he isn't teaching falsely in the name of God and his will? Beware of making men, feelings and emotions more important than God, whether pastors or members.

Now, in our history Paul and Barnabas were appalled that they should be treated as gods. They were men zealous for the glory of God and they wanted all glory to be given only to God. Such is the direction they pointed these people to. Pointed them to the true God, the maker of heaven and earth.

You did catch that didn’t you? To help all the more in qualifying who this True God is Paul's words continued, **"In the past, he let all nations go their own way. 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."** With these words Paul is simply telling us that the very creation of God cries out the truth of God.

It's very sad in today's world that so many people don't see the majesty, wisdom, and power of God in creation. People have been duped into believing that the world has evolved and that everything in it is just an accident of nature. I don’t think we should be surprised that the world clings to such things. It really is an easy way to deny God and what He is. But such is not the testimony of God's Word nor of the creation itself.

Psalm 19 says, **"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."** Indeed how true that is. Just sit back and think about the vastness of the cosmos, but even more think of the wonder and structure of the universe. In our own solar system there is the sun and the planets, with moons and stars galore. All of them function in harmony with one another. All of them proclaim a structure with purpose and design. Surely these things cry out of the wisdom and power of God.

Psalm 104 declares, **"How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures."** Do we fail to see God's wisdom and creative playfulness in the multitude of creatures he has created for this world of ours? That there is a structure, harmony and similarity among the creatures of creation should be no surprise. God himself is a being of structure and harmony: three persons and yet one God, indivisible, eternal and divine. Don't we see in creation this wondrous reflection of God?

The book of Romans declares to us, **"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities -- his eternal power and divine nature -- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."** Men are without excuse. Yet they are blinded to God's truth. Blinded because the sinful nature wants to exalt man and beast above God. Man wants God's glory. Man wants to be his own god. Man wants things his way so that the burden and weight of sin can be eased and ignored. So it is that man ignores the truth of God. Ignores the very testimony of God found in the creation itself. Ignores that creation's testimony is in harmony with God's revealed testimony in the Word. And notice how as this take place more and more the world is getting less and less peaceful, less and less settled and stable. Such is what happens when God is ignored. As God says, **"Men are without excuse."**

Shall it be this way with us? In the city of Lystra Paul and Barnabas were frustrated in their bid to teach the truth of God. We are told Jews from Antioch came and won the crowd over. The end result was that Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city to die. It was God's grace that allowed Paul to live. God's grace that allowed Paul to carry on his message of good news.

We have that message of Good news. Did you note what verse 16 said? It said, **"In the past, he let all nations go their own way."** That verse implies that there has been a change. God no longer lets nations and men go their own way. God has given us his Holy Word. God has given us his clear testimony, the clarion call of Scripture to guide us in His salvation. It is this testimony of God, especially the revelation of Jesus Christ and His gospel message of salvation that forms the heart and core of God's good news.

Of course, the good news is the message of God's Son come into the world to be our Savior from sin. Jesus offered himself as the perfect and holy sacrifice for sins on our behalf. Jesus shed his blood to atone for you and me. And more! The greatest good news that I have to share with you is the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and because of his resurrection we know God's Word, God's redemption, and God's promise of eternal life is true.

Here is the witness of God. Here is how God has reached out to mankind to bring redemption to all who believe. Jesus, by his resurrection has become the Savior and Lord of all. Jesus has provided a complete and sure salvation. Jesus has given his Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, the truth of God's written, inspired and inerrant Word. It is in Jesus that guilt is taken away. In Jesus that strength for holy living is found. In Jesus heaven becomes our home now and for eternity. Jesus is the good news of God.

Again, we have that message of good news. We have the marvel and wonder of God's Holy Word. Let's not lose this precious truth. Let's not exalt men and their word, passions, wants or desires above God. Let's not let unbelievers come and prevent us from hearing this good news of Jesus. Let's not be like the Lyconians who had but a brief glimpse of God's wonder and in their foolishness they let their desire to exalt men keep the joy of the gospel out of their hearts.

So, Lord, we have your good news. Let us continue to hear of Jesus and his atoning sacrifice for sin. Let us rejoice in the fact that Jesus died and rose from the dead to proclaim life and salvation in his name. Let us believe in Jesus. Let us know His joy. Amen.