

## Superman Rescue Video

Today we're looking at Acts 14:8-18. This is an action packed passage that is exciting to read. I love to read this. It even has a comical nature to it. It is like Paul and Barnabus are no longer mere mortals but they become super heroes for Christ. They save the day! This begs the question: when someone saves the day how do we respond to them. What do we do? Well, the citizens of Lystra have an exciting response.

**In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said in a loud voice, 'Stand upright on your feet.' And the man sprang up and began to walk.**

**When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, 'The gods have come down to us in human form!' Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates; he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice. When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, 'Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good—giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy.' Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.**

Pretty Amazing, right? Can't you just see Superman swooping in and saving the day? Yet, normally superheroes are able to flee the scene. How about when the miraculous happens – how do people respond? We see it here! Paul and Barnabus went from every day Joe's to amazing heros which had to originate from their divine gods Zeus and Hermes. The greek gods are so interesting. In many ways our modern day Marvel worlds echo the greek gods. There have been so many exciting Gardians of the Galaxy movies out over the years. How many of you have seen one of these? Please forgive me if you are already aware of all of this. In preparation for this sermon, I thought of this. There is Thor and Thor - Poseidon which is similar to Aquaman and Thor who is similar to Thor...

Here Paul and Barnabus are immediately given superhero status when the show compassion to a man who had been crippled from birth. This healing was so amazing that the crowd knew it was of divine origin. Yet, their only worldview was that of those Greek gods. Paul and Barnabus were taken aback the people were crying out in their native language of Lycaonian and not speaking Greek. Initially, Paul and Barnabus had no idea what was taking place. They couldn't fly off to the land of the Gardians of the Galaxy and re-group. They were in for a surprise as people prepared to worship them. They brought Oxen and Garlands to the gates for a sacrifice. They the Lystra-onians were prepared to worship. In many ways this is how our culture treats the superheros. We line the box offices with sales – big sales. The latest movie, Guardians of the Galaxy Volume 2 grossed \$851,501,152 in the Worldwide Box Office (from the-numbers.com). Is the world dreaming of a superhero to save them? **The truth is that Paul and Barnabus were just regular people like you and me who serve and extraordinary God!** They healed a man who was crippled from birth.

The Bible says “looking at him intently and seeing that he had enough faith to be healed.” I love this. He must have worn his heart on his sleeve. Paul looked at him intently. He saw supernaturally in the spiritual

realm that there was enough faith for healing. There was enough faith for transformation. He knew that it is by the wounds and suffering of our Lord topped by the death and resurrection of Christ that healing comes. It takes faith. It takes belief and vision of the Lord to bring about transformation. It takes openness.

This begs. We can pray for people to be healed daily. We can pray for lives to change. Yet, how great is the change, healing, and transformation when it comes from within us. When the person believes in Christ Jesus and has faith. When it springs from the wells of faith. It comes with an inner core belief that Jesus Christ is real. This really is powerful.

**Could it be that Jesus' transformative love is alive and well today?  
Do you have faith to be healed or to speak healing to others?**

Paul said, "stand upright on your feet." Stand up! That is the moment of truth. The poor crippled man that was possibly invisible to society. That man was second class. Maybe even rejected as one whom God had forgotten. A sinner. Would he be laughed at? Would it be further mockery? No, he did it! This man stood up!

This was a spectacular sight. Oh, if we could just see it. The fireworks went off. The people went ballistic. The crowds went crazy. He stood upright on his feet! (Stand Up Arise)

The crowds went straight to carrying out their worship much like the culmination of a great sporting event when your team wins. They cried out that the gods had come down in human form. In many ways they were right but they didn't know the healing work of Jesus. They didn't have faith in the one True God.

**Paul and Barnabus were like – no way! We are ordinary people. Let me introduce you to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Let me teach you of Hosannah's grace and merciful trust. Clark Kent is not**

**turning into Superman! Here normal guys serve an Almighty God.**

Don't worship us they said. We're just guys. Guys that have good news. They went about sharing that they were just mortals with a really True Living God. We're just messengers with good news to share with you, they said.

**“Turn from these worthless things!”** The worthless things are the worship that adores false gods. Today what would these false gods be? Think about it! In our modern world these are marred by the sanctification of Human sexuality, Wealth, Individuality, and Power. These things point people in many cases to debt, excessive self expression, promiscuity, and the repression of others. Those turn into seeking the self or the worldly. People turn to their heroes and live their lives in their wake. I appreciated what Natalie Kull said on Youth Sunday. People try to be like their idols: Michael Jackson, Bill Gates, Gwen Stefani, and Ariana Grande. They lose themselves as they seek to be fully other as found in the media. This can even be found in the Christian world as we long to emulate other Christians rather than to emulate and worship Christ.

**Paul and Barnabus were pointing not to themselves but to the true Healer that was Otherworldly.**

Initially, Paul begins with an aspect about him that they would be able to understand and resonate with: God is the God of creation and the giver of the rains and the crops and the food they eat, and the joy they have in life. They could hardly get through their message. The people wanted to sacrifice. It says in the text, even with these words they scarcely refrained the crowds from sacrificing to them.

**We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news (Acts 14:15).**

I must confess that as I read this text I was drawn to an Otherworldly world. The Superheros. The Galactic Starveyors. The Guardians of the Galaxy. But really I am humbled because this story shows me the life of the Christian. One who is looking for faith. One who is leading others to healing. One who is looking to Christ for the answers. I am pleased to reflect that God is not calling me to be anything but my mortal self who serves a Superhuman God. A God that we can share with the world. A God that loves the whole world. A God of miracles. A God that is intimate with our circumstances as we trust and have faith in Him. May we all approach the throne of Christ!

Sitting at His feet. Taking the Word of God literally may we find faith around us and step out in faith. I am challenged by this passage. I pray that you are, too. As we step out in faith, life may look more like a circus. Life may go into chaos. Life may become unbelievable. People may even reject us. They may be uncomfortable as we are transformed like the crippled man was and as we stand on our own two feet.

We have an Incredible God. **Let's trust God and step out in faith and maybe He will even lead us to do great things or even small things with great love!**

Yet, life isn't all about "doing" it is "being," too. Abiding with Christ makes us strong. Christ is our constant intimacy and constant walk that gives us discernment and gives us direction. Walking with Christ as we receive him as our Lord and Savior helps us to look intently and discover faith in others calling forth a miracle.

Some of us are sitting down today. Sitting and waiting. Sitting and sulking in our circumstances. Is there faith in us? Is there a hunger for Christ in us? Are we open to God?

Prayer:

Slip up your hand. Like the crippled man Healing. Financial

Transformation. Salvation for our souls. Unhealthy Habit to Break.  
Walking away or standing up for truth in the midst of Abusive or Painful  
Relationships. Needing a Job. Addiction. Hatred towards others.

Pray for God's miracles – Go Gwen see the faith and pray in Jesus'  
name!