

Acts 14:8-18

May 5, 2013 – 6<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

S#1464

CW 474

Pastor Mark A. Cordes

## Stand Up on Your Feet!

✠ for the one true God (vv.8-13)

✠ for the Good News of blessing (vv.14-18)

In the name of our great Creator – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, dear loved ones of God:

Have you noticed? People are in denial. It's always been that way. People with power and influence denied who was behind climate change in Noah's day too. ***"People were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."*** (Matthew 24:38f NIV84) ***"It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all."*** (Luke 17:28f NIV84) By His Word God created the world. And by His Word He destroyed it with water. God tells us, ***"By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men."*** (2 Peter 3:7 NIV84) Denial will not mention the Name of the Lord in weather forecasts; "Mother Nature" is responsible. Or is it "Mother Goose"? Meanwhile, hearts are broken, homes shattered, and peace lost.

And what does Jesus say we should do when we see all this? ***"Stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*** (Luke 21:28 NIV84) God wants the spiritually lame to walk like the man in Lystra on Paul's First Missionary Journey. **Stand Up on Your Feet!**

✠ for the one true God (vv.8-13)

Paul and Barnabas had been using their feet to get from one town to the next in what is modern day Turkey. We heard in the Second Lesson for the last two Sundays how Paul preached for two weeks in Pisidian Antioch, until driven out by jealous Jews. ***"So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."*** (Acts 13:51f) At Iconium God granted the Gospel early success, but then ***"the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers."*** You might expect the apostles to give up, but instead ***"Paul and Barnabas spent a considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders."*** Division in the city led to a plot to kill them until they fled to some Gentile cities without a synagogue. ***"They continued to preach the good news"*** in Lystra and Derbe. (Acts 14:1-7)

Did you know they had free healthcare in those days? Really! In Lystra Paul saw a man whose legs were crippled from birth. He had never walked. But he listened intently to the Word of God Paul was preaching. Somehow the Holy Spirit let Paul know the man believed what he was hearing about God the Creator and Jesus God's Son our Savior. Then, without filling out a single form, without taking a pill, without surgery of any kind, and totally without insurance or a bill Paul called to the man in a loud voice so no one would miss this: ***"Stand up on your feet!"*** Without delay the man jumped up and walked.

You would expect newscasts and blogs, Twitters and Tweets to praise **the one true God** for doing such a wonderful miracle for this poor man. But people don't do that. For the last few years when the spring was warm, people worried about global warming. This year you wonder where's the warmth? But does anyone give God credit for cooler weather? No, we just hear more complaints about Mother Nature!

Their souls were just as lame in Lystra. Apparently, there was a local legend that an elderly couple, Philemon and Baucis, had entertained Zeus and his son Hermes without recognizing them, but the townspeople had rejected them. The Lystrites did not want to repeat that mistake. So you can see why the

priest and people were rushing to offer sacrifices to Barnabas and Paul. They thought Zeus was the protector of their city, and they'd better not fail to recognize him again.<sup>1</sup>

What's the difference with some of the folks who wrote comments on the Weather Channel website about the earthquake in China? They were worried about Mother Earth. Some confessed God as Creator, then blamed man for earthquakes. There is some truth in that if you trace it from God's holy Word. Adam's sin brought death and destruction, sickness and disease into God's perfect creation. But the solution cannot come from sinners who can only hide from the holy anger of God. Sacrificing bulls and placing wreaths cannot soothe the soul or satisfy a guilty conscience. Watch how quickly people's loyalty will blow away like the morning mist. The greatest love story on earth, maybe your own, will suffer from the speed of the human heart to leave love behind. Don't keep looking for help from man or comfort from woman. **Stand Up on Your Feet – for the one true God.** Let God be your soul mate...

### ✠ for the Good News of blessing (vv.14-18)

At first you might wonder whether Paul and Barnabas were overreacting. *“They tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: ‘Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you....’* Remember what happened to King Herod Agrippa when he let people worship him as god? *“An angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.”* (Acts 12:23 NIV84) Remember the reaction of the angel in Revelation when John tried to worship him. It happened twice. The second time the angel said again, *“Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”* (Revelation 22:9 NIV84) When we sing, *“All glory, laud, and honor to you, Redeemer, King...”* (CW 131), it's because God alone deserves the praise. We want to fear, love and trust in God above all things. And one of the things we fear the most is stealing glory from God to whom alone all glory belongs.

And yet there is more than fear behind the sermon Paul and Barnabas preached as they tore their clothes and rushed into the crowd in protest. They wanted the people at Lystra to love God for all the good He gives. They wanted them to trust God instead of worrying about what their idols might think. You see, denying the cause of sin behind suffering is just as deadly as trying to fix your life with the wrong tools. Glue and scissors and magic markers can't make the picture better for real. Government programs fizzle and fade in the fights that always flare up among those seeking power. But God uses His power to help and heal and bless. And He brings His power to bear through **the Good News of blessing.**

My dear friends, you can see it every time it rains. It's there in the warmth of every ray of sunshine that parts the clouds and colors the rainbow. God said He would never destroy the earth again with water as He did in the days of Noah. His rainbow is a constant reminder that God never forgets His promise. While nations and empires have come and gone, God's love remains steady and strong. *“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.”* (Acts 14:17 NIV84)

There is no question about God's love when you look at the normal flow of nature which He designed and preserves to this day. But to recognize that love requires that we first hear the Good News and that we also believe it. To know that Jesus died is history. To trust that Jesus died for you is faith. To trust that God still cares for you in spite of troubles and trials is conquering faith. When you are angry and frustrated about your relationships with friends and family, are you forgetting the grace and goodness of God? *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”* (1 Peter 5:7 NIV84) That way you don't have to deny your troubles. You can face them squarely as you lean on God for help and healing. *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV84) Let God's Word lift you up come rain or shine. **Stand Up on Your Feet – for the one true God, for the Good News of blessing.** Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> Balge, R. D. (1988). *Acts*. The People's Bible (158). Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Pub. House.

For the study behind this sermon or for copies email [m.cordes@comast.net](mailto:m.cordes@comast.net).  
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at [www.wels.us/newlife](http://www.wels.us/newlife).

New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church  
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126