

# ACTS

THE PERPETUAL POWER OF THE GOSPEL

**Beauty and Brokenness**  
**Acts 14**

## **Acts 14:8-23**

**Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. <sup>9</sup> He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, <sup>10</sup> said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And he sprang up and began walking. <sup>11</sup> And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” <sup>12</sup> Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.**



**<sup>13</sup> And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. <sup>14</sup> But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, <sup>15</sup> “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.**

**<sup>16</sup> In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. <sup>17</sup> Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” <sup>18</sup> Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.**

**<sup>19</sup> But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.**

**20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.**

# Pervasive Brokenness



# Pervasive Brokenness



# Pervasive Brokenness

## Physically

**<sup>8</sup> Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked.**

## Spiritually

**<sup>11</sup> And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”**

## Utterly

**<sup>19</sup> But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.**



# How We Misuse Brokenness

**Brokenness among Creation  
(*nature, relationships, physical bodies, spirituality*)  
can lead us to...**

## **Deify**

**“The gods have come  
down to us...”**

**How do we look for our  
hope within this world?**

## **Demonize**

**“They stoned Paul and  
dragged him out of the  
city”**

**How do blame others for  
the world's (and our  
own) problems?**

# How We Can Grow From Brokenness

**14:9-10**

**“Listened...Had Faith...Sprang Up”**

**The most common genre in all the Psalms is the “Lament” where the poet essentially and honestly charges God with a “dereliction of duty”.**

**But in the end of each of these laments (with one exception in Ps 88) the hurting artist concludes with hope, worship and trust.**

# Universal Beauty (“common grace”)

***17 “Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”***

**God weaves love and beauty through the brokenness of this world because he loves us, wants to bless us and, primarily, wants to draw us to himself, The Beauty.**

**He healed the lame man and kept Paul from dying.  
He grows us food and gives us gladness.**

**Where is God’s Universal Beauty in your world?**



# How We Misuse Beauty

***18 Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.***

**We often worship (and seek, even demand) the blessing rather than the Blessor.**

***“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”***

***- C.S. Lewis, Weight of Glory***

# How We Can Grow From Beauty

The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshipers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.”

- *C.S. Lewis, Weight of Glory*

**Brokenness can be a hidden blessing because it forces us to see our need.**

**But we easily can be blinded by brokenness, going inward rather than upward.**

**Beauty is a blessing because it gives us a glimpse into Real Beauty.**

**But we tend to be “too easily satisfied” with these hollow blessings rather than follow them to Jesus.**



# Ultimate Beauty

**15b we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.**

# Beauty from Brokenness

**<sup>21b</sup> through many tribulations  
 (“anguish, pressure, stress”)  
 we must enter the kingdom of God.**

## **Galatians 3:13-14**

**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law  
 by becoming a curse for us—for it is written,  
 “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”**

**<sup>13:30</sup> But God raised him from the dead...<sup>38</sup> Let it be known  
 to you therefore, brothers, that through this man  
 forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, <sup>39</sup> and by him  
 everyone who believes is freed from everything from  
 which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.**

# Living Beauty

**15b we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God...**

- Own and turn from my own brokenness and how I try to find my hope in “vain things”
- Enjoy the beautiful things God’s given, especially as they point to The Beautiful One
- God universally blesses His creation. How can we join him in blessing others regardless of who they are?