



From Rejection To Celebration

"Paul.... Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked" (Acts 14:9-10).

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"And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. 11 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. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. 13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. 14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them" (Acts 14:8-18).

It is sometimes said, "Go where you are celebrated, rather than where you are tolerated". Your gifts, talents and skills will work better and bless more where you are celebrated. Even Jesus left Nazareth, where he was not believed, to minister in other places where He was believed. "But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching" (Mark 6:4-6).

The apostles fled from Iconium as if they were criminals but were later celebrated at Lystra as if they were gods (vs 8-11). This teaches us that:

1) A rejection in one place does not imply a uni-

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versal rejection. Find out where you are accepted, then go and prosper there, rather than waste your life at a spot of rejection. This why Jesus admonished "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feed for a testimony against them..." (Mark 6:11).

- 2) Such was their passion in wanting to offer sacrifice to them that the apostles dramatically restrained them as "...they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you..." (vs 14,15).
- 3) By this they humbly acknowledged their humanity and used that opportunity to preach to them about "... the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein" (vs 15). God will not share his glory with human beings. Therefore, we must give Him all the glory for all the things He accomplishes through us by His power.
- 4) God may be silent during our times of ignorance, but that does not imply divine endorsement or approval of sins. "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (vs 16). God's past silence over their sacrifice to idols was not approval of idolatry.
- 5) Even during times of ignorance God "... left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (vs 17).

Be wise and courageous to move to places you are celebrated when faced with rejection.