

July 26

Scriptures: Read Acts 14 & 15

Key Verse: "...We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these vain things to the living God..." (Acts 14:15)

Overview

Perhaps you're noticed that people whom God has gifted with a genuine ministry of "signs and wonders" are generally pretty self-effacing about it. They keep saying things like, "I didn't do this, God did..." or, "this is God's doing, I'm just an instrument in His hand..." You might think it's wonderful to have such gifts. Think again.

It's a burden to be gifted in this way. Why? Because someone who genuinely knows the Lord and recognizes the source of his or her "power" is someone who finds the adulation and "groupie-ism" of miracle-seekers to be a great liability and offense. Offense? Yes, looking for God-seekers, and have no wish to be cast as deities themselves.

Paul and Barnabas had an encounter with adoring fans in Lystra. The crowd was so impressed with Paul's healing of the man born crippled that they cried, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" (14:11). They said Barnabas was Zeus and Paul, Hermes (maybe they gave Barnabas the greater stature because he was the quieter of the two). And they "brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because... the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them" (v.13). Paul and Barnabas were distraught, so much so that they tore their clothes in grief and protest. "Why are you doing this?" they cried. "We too are only men, human like you." Then they went on to explain their mission.

"We are bringing you good news," they said, "telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them" (v.15 NIV). "We're not gods, we're messengers. Servants. That's all we are!" Don't focus on the messenger but on the message: the "good news" that Jesus has come to give us life.

Prayer

O great miracle-working God, we need Your fresh intervention in our families, our circumstances, our own lives, and in this troubled world. Thank You, Father, for the greatest miracle of all, Your Son Jesus, coming in the flesh to redeem us from sin's power. We're Yours now, Lord. We love You for Yourself and we're thankful for Your miracles. Amen.