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August 3rd, 2025

Scripture: Acts 14: 1-28

Sermon Title: Healing and Humility

Prayer...

Introduction:

Last Sunday I reflected on Jesus healing a man who was paralyzed and I suggested that the miracles that Jesus did are still possible today and that followers of Jesus are called and invited to walk in the same power doing signs and wonders just as the early followers of Jesus did and other Christians have done through the centuries. The Healing ministry of Jesus is for today because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever and by the power of the Holy Spirit we can also be used by God to do miracles in Christ's name.

This morning, I want to continue with that idea but suggest that for us to walk in the healing ministry of Jesus we must walk in humility.

The story we read today is about the Apostle Paul and his partner

Barnabas. What I like about this story is how Paul and Barnabas act with humility. They live to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus even as they face persecution. God also uses Paul in this story to heal another man who could not walk due to being disabled from birth.

Let me walk us through this story and highlight how Paul's humility is the key to his healing ministry.

- Context is that Paul and Barnabas are sharing the Gospel of Jesus with both Jews and Gentiles. Some of the Jews and Gentiles who were Greek became believers but others tried to prevent the ministry of Paul and Barnabas.
- We read the Paul and Barnabas are able to do signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. One example is given of Paul preaching and seeing a man who was disabled from birth and unable to walk. Paul looks at him and sees that the man has

faith. Paul says, “Stand upright on your feet.” The man sprang up and began to walk.

- After the miracle the people assume that Paul and Barnabas are Gods in human form, but do you notice that rather than gloating in the praise, Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes and say we are mortals just like you. Turn away from your worthless Gods and follow the living God who made heaven and earth.
- They highlight that nature and the good gifts of creation help prove the good and true God.
- After this intense experience Paul experiences more persecution. Some Jews, who are challenging Paul, come from Antioch and Iconium and rile up the crowds to the point that Paul is stoned and dragged out of the city. But then some of Paul’s supporters- fellow disciples come around him and he is able to get up and continue with his ministry.

- Paul continues to support the forming of house churches in the city and praises God for all the disciples of Jesus that are made in that place.

I want to suggest this powerful story about Paul and Barnabus' ministry remind us to have humility in a few different ways.

1. First It is clear in our story that the Apostles are there in the city making disciples of Jesus. The focus is to be faithful in living out the Gospel. The Apostles don't care about personal fame, they only want people to experience new life in Christ.
2. Humility is also shown in the willingness of Paul in this case to do a healing miracle. Paul has compassion on the disabled man. Paul preaches but he also does a miracle through the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. Humility is seen again after the miracle, since Paul and Barnabas do not claim to be Gods but point people again to the one Living God and his son Jesus.
4. Paul and Barnabus show humility by church planting and helping form small communities of believers to support the growth of the new disciples.

Recently, I feel called has invited me to go deeper in my calling as a minister. I am feeling led to pursue a spirit of humility born out of my own surrender to God's will in my life.

One way the Holy Spirit speaks to me is through something called synchronicity. Synchronicity is when similar things occur that seem to have a deeper purpose or meaning. For me this recently occurred with the word surrender.

About one month ago, I had a period of three or four days when I kept hearing the word surrender. First, I heard it in a wonderful

movie/ concert about Bono from the band U2. In it he describes his journey from childhood until adulthood. The movie is based on Bono's Memoir and was called Stories of Surrender. You can find it on Apple TV, if you are interested in watching it.

A day after I watched the movie, I visited a meeting for Alcoholics Anonymous here at our church in order to celebrate my friend Susan who reached 20 years of sobriety. I noticed the word surrender come up often as people described their experience of hitting rock bottom and seeking the support of AA to help them stay sober and to help them stay connected to God.

Finally, my daughter Cate and I had a great conversation about the word surrender because Cate has appreciated the significance of that word in her own life.

As I talked to Holy Spirit about why the word surrender is coming up in my life, she shared with me that I am entering a new season in ministry where I am being invited to surrender more to the work of

the Holy Spirit. As I surrender, I am also being called to greater humility.

The reason why Paul and Barnabus were so easily led by the Holy Spirit even in very challenging circumstances is because they were surrendered to God. The reason why Paul was used to bring healing to the disabled man is because he was open to the power of the Holy Spirit moving in his life.

So what does this mean again for you and me? I wonder if the message is that healing flows more freely in our lives and in the lives of other when we surrender to God's presence and power. The Holy Spirit wishes to lead and guide us.

Have you ever laid back in a stream of water or been in a kayak or canoe and let the current of the water take you across the lake or down the river? When you go with the flow of the current, the water moves you naturally. You just need to relax and let the grace of the current take you with it. In the same way a sailboat moves when the

sail catches the wind. The wind or current of the Holy Spirit is active. We are invited to rest and let the grace of God carry us where God wants us to go. This requires us to be yielded to the Holy Spirit.

Friends, my prayer is that we will embrace the healing ministry of Jesus in every area of our lives. My prayer is that we will be led by the Holy Spirit. We have the option of choosing pride over humility. We can choose to resist the grace offered to us by God, but this does not really bring life to us. Resistance to God's presence of love only causes us pain.

Paul and Barnabas surrendered to God and God used them to do amazing things for the Gospel. May our church be open to living out the Gospel with similar boldness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's take a moment to pray. If you would like a deeper filling of the Holy Spirit in your life, I just invite you to place your hands over your heart like this... Let me pray for you...AMEN.

Acts 14

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

14 The same thing occurred in Iconium, where Paul[a] and Barnabas[b] went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So they remained for a long time speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace by granting signs and wonders to be done through them. 4 But the residents of the city were divided: some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. 5 And when an attempt was made by both

gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 the apostles[c] learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region, 7 and there they continued proclaiming the good news.

Paul and Barnabas in Lystra and Derbe

8 In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been lame from birth. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And the man[d] sprang up and began to walk.

11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” 12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city,[e] brought oxen and garlands to the

gates; he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice. 14 When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, 15 “People,[f] 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. 16 In past generations he allowed all peoples to follow their own ways, 17 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.” 18 Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

19 But Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples surrounded

him, he got up and went into the city. The next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

21 After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. 22 There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, “It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God.” 23 And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25

When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

26 From there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been

commended to the grace of God for the work[g] that they had completed. 27 When they arrived, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them and how he had opened a door of faith for the gentiles. 28 And they stayed there with the disciples for some time.