

“The Living God”
Acts 15:15-18

Introduction:

1. Have You Ever Met Someone:
 - Who Knows Absolutely Nothing:
 - About Jesus Christ?
 - Or Have You Ever Met Someone:
 - Who Knows Absolutely Nothing:
 - About The Bible?
 - For Most Of Us:
 - The Answer Is Probably:
 - No!
 - Now - Even Though We Know Many People:
 - Who Are Not Christians - Yet Even They Have Some Knowledge About Our Faith!
 - But The Truth Is:
 - The Way We Live Is Altogether Different:
 - Than The Way The Rest Of The World Lives!
 - Even For Our Brothers And Sisters In Christ All Around The World!
2. More Than Half Of The Entire Population Of This World:
 - Has Absolutely No Knowledge:
 - Of Jesus Christ Or Even Of The Bible:
 - Which We All Have So Readily Available!
 - That Is More Than 3.5 Billion People!
 - And Our Own Country:
 - Often Considered To Be A Christian Country:
 - Is Beginning To Reflect What The Rest Of The World Has Been Like For Thousands Of Years!
 - The Vast Majority Of People In This World:
 - Are Not Christians!
 - They Are Muslims And Hindus And Buddhists, As Well As Countless Other Folk & Traditional Religions!
 - Yet - When Jesus Gave Us His Great Commission - To “Go Ye Into All The World, And Preach The Gospel To Every Creature”:
 - He Included Even Those Who Know Absolutely Nothing:
 - About The True God, The Bible, And The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - So - How Are We To Reach Them:
 - With The Gospel?
3. For The Last Several Weeks:
 - We Have Been Traveling With Paul & Barnabas:
 - On Their First Missionary Journey!
 - And In Acts 14-15 - We Come With Them To The Roman Province Of Galatia!
 - And Especially The Cities Of:
 - Antioch, Iconium, Lystra & Derbe!
 - Within All Of These Cities, Many People Will Hear The Gospel For The First Time:
 - And Believe In Jesus, Become Saved, And Begin Churches!
 - And These Churches Will Later Be The Same Churches:
 - To Whom Paul Will Write His Letter Of Galatians!
 - But So Far In Our Journey With Paul:
 - In Antioch & In Iconium:
 - Most Of The People Already Knew Something About:
 - God & The Bible!
 - You See - Years Earlier - God Had Dispersed:
 - The Jews – His Chosen People:
 - All Around The World!
 - And Wherever They Went & Wherever They Settled:
 - They Established Synagogues:
 - Where They Could Worship & Share Their Faith In God With Others!

- And Paul & Barnabas - In Both Antioch & Iconium:
 - First Went In To The Synagogues:
 - In Those Cities To Preach The Gospel!
 - So They Had A Ready Audience:
 - That Knew Something Of Which They Spoke!
 - And Even Though Many Rejected Their Message, Many Others Still Believed!
 - The Background Of The Jews & Even The Gentiles:
 - In Those Synagogues:
 - Helped Them Understand The Gospel!
4. But This Was Not The Case:
- In The Third City To Which They Came:
 - The City Of Lystra!
 - In Lystra:
 - There Was No Synagogue:
 - And There Were Probably Not Many If Any Jews!
 - Little If Any Knowledge Of The Bible:
 - The Old Testament Scriptures!
 - Little If Any Knowledge Of:
 - The One True God!
 - In Lystra:
 - They Worshiped Idols:
 - And - As We Saw Last Week - They Even Thought That Paul & Barnabas:
 - Were Their Own Gods Come Down To Them In Human Form!
 - So - What Did Paul & Barnabas Do In Lystra?
 - How Could They Reach Them?
 - Well - First We See In Acts 14:7:
 - “And There They Preached The Gospel!”
 - It Did Not Matter:
 - How Little Or How Much These People Knew:
 - They Were Going To Preach “Jesus Christ & Him Crucified!”
 - And As They Were Preaching:
 - And Introducing The People To This God They Likely Had Never Heard Of Before:
 - In 14:8-10 - “There sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked: / The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, / Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked!”
 - This Crippled Man - Heard The Word Of God:
 - And Believed! He Had Faith To Be “Healed” & To Be “Saved!”
 - What We Can Learn From This Is That:
 - God Can Take His Word Of The Gospel & Use It To Save Anyone!
 - No Matter How Far They Seem To Be From The Kingdom Of God!
 - The First Way We Can Reach Those Who Have Never Heard:
 - Is The Same Way Paul & Barnabas Did!
 - We Continue To Tell Them About “Jesus Christ & Him Crucified!”
 - And In Doing So:
 - We *Are* Introducing Them To God & The Bible!
 - Perhaps For The Very First Time!
 - But The Very First Time:
 - Is Sometimes All That Is Needed:
 - For God To Save!
5. But How Did The Rest Of The People Respond?
- 14:11-15a - “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. / And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. / 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. / Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, / And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you!”
 - They Responded According To:

- Their Own Religion And Beliefs!
 - No Knowledge Of The Bible!
 - No Knowledge Of The True God!
 - They Did Not Hear & They Did Not Understand:
 - The Message Being Preached To Them!
- So Then What Did Paul & Barnabas Do?
 - How Could They Reach The Rest Of These People?
 - They Introduced Them To:
 - “The Living God!”
 - We See This In Their Own Words In:
 - 14:15-18 - “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: / Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. / 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. / And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them!”

6. There May Be Times In Our Lives:

- When We Will Need To Do What Paul & Barnabas Did:
 - There In Lystra – And Introduce People To:
 - The God They Do Not Know!
 - We Must Not Assume That People Have The Same Understanding Of God That We Do!
 - Instead - We Are To Introduce Them To:
 - The Living God!
 - And That The God Who Saves:
 - And The God They Need – Is:

1. ***The True God!***

- In 14:15 - Paul Tells The People The Purpose:
 - For Their Preaching!
 - We - “Preach Unto You That Ye Should Turn From These Vanities – Idols – Unto The Living God!”
 - Their Emphasis Was First On Introducing Them To:
 - “***The*** God!”
 - The ***True*** God!
 - The ***Only*** God!
 - The Majority Of The People In Lystra:
 - Were Idol Worshipers!
 - And They Did Not Just Believe In & Worship:
 - One Idol – But At Least Two:
 - And Probably Many More!
 - Yet - Paul Was Preaching That:
 - There Is Only One:
 - And There Can Be Only One:
 - True God!
 - Deuteronomy 6:4 - “The LORD our God is one LORD!”
 - You Can’t Have More Than One:
 - Truly Supreme Being!
 - **IE**: Even False Religions Would Agree With This! The Egyptians & The Greeks & The Romans & Even The Hindus - Although They Believed In Many Gods - Yet There Was Always One Supreme God, Above All The Rest!
 - And It Was To This True God:
 - They Were To Turn!
 - To Be Saved:
 - They Needed To Completely:
 - Turn From Their False Gods!
 - And Turn To The One True God!
 - Not Just Add Him To:

- Their Pantheon / Collection Of Gods!
 - But A Complete Break From Their Old Beliefs!
- This Is What We Are To Call People To:
 - Through The Gospel!
 - “**The** God!”
 - The True God!
 - The Only God!
 - **IE**: Heard It Said - There Are Many Ways That Lead To God - The Truth Is This - There Are Many Ways That Lead Away From God! As Jesus Taught In Matthew 7:13-14 - “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: / Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it!”
 - We Need To Tell People About The Strait Gate & About The Narrow Way:
 - About Jesus Christ - Who His “**The** Way, The Truth, And The Life!”
 - Because Only He Can Lead Us To The True God!

* But We Also Must Tell Them About:

2. **The Living God!**

- Also In 14:15 - Paul Describes The True God As:
 - “The Living God!”
 - Which Was Altogether Different Than They God’s They Worshiped And Served!
 - What Got These People So Excited:
 - After God Saved & Healed That Crippled Man?
 - They Thought - 14:11 - “The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men!”
 - They Believed That Their Gods:
 - Had Come To Life!
 - They Had Never Seen Nor Experienced This Kind Of Supernatural Power Before!
 - But - Paul & Barnabas Made No Such Claim!
 - Instead - In 14:15 - They Reminded Them That “We also are men of like passions with you!”
 - They Said:
 - We Are Mere Men!
 - But Then - They Pointed Them To:
 - The Living God!
 - The One True God Who Lives And Acts And Rules Over All The Affairs Of This World!
- This Description Of God:
 - Is Found All Throughout The Bible!
 - Some 30 Times - In Both The Old And The New Testaments - God Is Described As:
 - “The Living God!”
 - Could Any Of Their False Gods:
 - Do What The “Living God” Can Do?
- The Living God – Speaks!
 - In Fact - The Bible Is A Record:
 - Of Him Speaking & Of His Words!
- The Living God – Acts!
 - In Fact - The Bible Is A Record:
 - Of God Working Out His Perfect Will:
 - In This World!
- The Living God – Rules!
 - Jeremiah 10:10 - “But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king!”
- The Living God – Delivers!
 - Again - The Bible Is A Record:
 - Of God Delivering People:
 - From Their Sins & From Themselves!
- The True God:
 - Is A Living God!
 - And As Isaiah 45:21 Tells Us - “There is no God else beside [Him]; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside [Him]!”
 - But We Also Must Share That He Is:

3. ***The Powerful God!***

- Only A Living God Can Act!
 - And We See His Most Powerful Actions:
 - In Creation!
- 14:15 - “Which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein!”
 - The True & Living God:
 - Is The One Who Created Everything!
 - Nothing Came About Randomly Or By Chance!
 - And He Displayed His Power:
 - By Creating Everything:
 - From Nothing!
 - And Just By The Words Of His Voice!
 - What Did He Create?
- Everything Above Us!
 - He Made The Heavens!
 - Psalm 102:25 - “The heavens are the work of thy hands!”
 - And He Made & Designed The Heavens:
 - To Reflect & To Reveal His Own Glory!
 - Psalm 19:1 - “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork!”
- Everything Around Us!
 - He Made The Earth & The Sea!
 - Genesis 1:9-10 - “And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. / And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good!”
 - And He Made - “All Things That Are Therein!”
 - All Living Things & All Non-Living Things!
 - Animal / Vegetable / Mineral!
 - God Made Everything!
 - Paul Is Quoting From:
 - Psalm 146:5-6 - “Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: / Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is!”
 - We Need To Tell People That The True & Living God:
 - Is The Creator Of All Things:
 - Including Them!
 - And The Authority Upon Which Our Message Rests:
 - Is Not Science; It Is Not Philosophy!
 - Our Authority Is The Word Of God!
 - But We Must Also Introduce Them To:

4. ***The Longsuffering God!***

- 14:16 - “Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways!”
 - As Creator - God Can & Does Make Demands:
 - On His Creatures – And Especially On Man!
 - The False God’s That People Have, Are Often Ruthless & Impatient!
 - But Not The True God!
 - He Is Patient & Has Been Longsuffering!
- For A Time:
 - God Permitted Most Of Mankind:
 - To Live As They Pleased!
 - God Let Us “Go Our Own Way!”
 - And So We Did!
 - And Look At How That Turned Out!
 - What Did We Do?
 - And How Did We Use Our Freedom?
 - 1 Peter 4:3 - “We walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries!”
- Yet - As We Read In Psalm 103:10 - “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our

iniquities!”

- For He Is - “A God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth!”
(86:15)

- And This Patience & Longsuffering Of God:

- Is Now Revealed To Us - So That We Will See How Desperately We Need The Lord!

- And Repent From Our Sins Against Him!

- Because He Is Also:

5. *The Good God!*

- 14:17 - “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!”

- All Throughout History:

- God Has Actively Shown Himself To Be:

- Real & To Be Good!

- There Is Not A Person On Earth:

- Who Has Not Seen & Experienced:

- The Goodness Of God For Themselves!

- His Goodness Is His Witness:

- To The World!

- “He Did Good!”

- How?

- He Has Given Blessing!

- As The “Rain From Heaven!”

- There Are Some Blessings That He Gives To All People:

- No Matter Who They Are Or What They Do!

- Matthew 5:45 - “He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust!”

- Yet How Do People Respond?

- He Has Given Wealth!

- As “Fruitful Seasons!”

- And The Abundance And Wealth That Brings!

- How Many People Are Rich:

- And Yet Ignore The One Who Has Given Them Those Riches / That Wealth?

- He Has Given Health!

- “Filling Our Hearts With Food!”

- Not Just Satisfaction With Our Food:

- But A Healthy Life Because Of The Nourishment We Receive From Our Food!

- Isn't God In Control:

- Of Our Food & Our Health:

- Even Our Heart!

- He Has Given Happiness!

- “Filling Our Hearts With Gladness!”

- Even People Who Have Never Known The True & Living God:

- Can Experience The Joys Of Life!

- The Joys Of Love!

- The Joys Of Family!

- The Joys Of Humor & Laughter!

- And With All Of These Good Things:

- God Has Shown & Continues To Show Himself As:

- A Good God!

- James 1:17 - “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning!”

- Yet - How Often Do People Ignore God?

- How Often Have We?

- Many In Lystra Still Ignored Him! 14:18 - “And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them!”

- They Still Clung To Their Gods!

- But Not Because The Lord Had Not Reached Out To Them!

- He Has! He Does!

Conclusion:

1. This Is The God:
 - We Must Share With Those:
 - Who Have Never Heard Of Him!
 - And This Introduction:
 - Will Lead Us To Share The Rest Of The Gospel!
2. About How:
 - This True, Living, Powerful, Longsuffering And Good God:
 - Promised A Savior:
 - Because Of Our Great Need & Our Great Sins Against Him!
 - And About How This True, Living, Powerful, Longsuffering And Good God:
 - Provided A Savior – By Sending His Only Begotten Son, The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Who Lived A Life Of Righteousness:
 - For Us!
 - Who Died On The Cross:
 - To Pay The Penalty For Our Sin!
 - Who Rose From The Dead:
 - To Offer New Life To Us!
 - And How This True, Living, Powerful, Longsuffering And Good God:
 - Had A Purpose For This Savior:
 - To Provide Justification & Forgiveness:
 - To All Who Turn To & Believe In Him!
3. This Is The Full Gospel:
 - That Was Shared With Those People!
 - And This Was The Gospel:
 - Through Which Those Galatian Churches Were Formed!
 - It Is The Same Gospel:
 - That We Are All Called To Believe!
 - And It Remains The Gospel:
 - That We Are To Share With Everyone!
 - Our Message Remains:
 - “That Ye Should Turn From These Vanities Unto The Living God!”

Grace Baptist Church

Stephen Elmer, Pastor

4245 North 200 West

Greenfield, Indiana 46140

317-326-2362

www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace

www.growatgrace.org

pastor-elmer@hotmail.com