



SHAKE OFF THE DUST

"So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."
Acts 13: 51-52

Paul and Barnabas had been forced out of the region that they had served the Lord in, even after seeing God do incredible things through them both. The Bible says they shook the dust off their feet and carried on to Iconium, and God used them to bless the disciples, who were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

As we step into a New Year, what dust from the past do we need to shake off? Jesus said, "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet" (Matthew 10:14).

We can carry hurts and disappointments from last week, last month, last year, or even after many years. This stops us from doing what God has called us to do. This stops us as we stay in the moment of whatever has caused us to take offense, staying in that place of hurt, allowing unforgiveness to turn into bitterness and resentment. **Let's learn this vital lesson from Paul and Barnabas and allow the words of Jesus to sink into our present as we choose to shake off the past!**

Being hurt is part of life, and we can be let down, disappointed, and often mistreated. Feeling that pain in the moment is genuine and real, but it's not where God wants us to stay! Forgiveness is the key to unlocking that hurt. Jesus is always our primary example; when He was being nailed to the cross, what did He say? Luke 23:34 records that Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." **Forgiveness may not change the perspective of the person that hurt you, and that's not even your responsibility! More importantly forgiveness has the power to change our perspective, removing the opportunity for bitterness and anger to take their destructive root in our lives.**

Unforgiveness has been described like you're drinking poison and hoping the other person gets sick. Let forgiveness be the greatest gift you give yourself. Matthew 6:14-15 says, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins".

Let's step into 2024 with a renewed spirit and a determination to not allow the past hurts to rob us of the future that God has planned for us. Let's dedicate 2024 to the Lord and ask Him to use ourselves to be a vessel of His peace and blessing. Then, just like the disciples in Acts 13, we will see the joy of the Holy Spirit being poured out in a whole new measure!