

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 4.13.2025

PART 10 - THE DEEPEST NEED

I. INTRODUCTION

Acts 3:1-10

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. **2** And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. **3** Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. **4** And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." **5** And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. **6** But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" **7** And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. **8** And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. **9** And all the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

- The early church devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and praying. They had radical generosity towards one another, out of genuine care and affection towards their brothers and sisters in Christ.
- They had sincere and deep relationships with one another, doing life together, encouraging one another daily.
- And when the people of God are living as his spirit filled witnesses, on mission, devoted to the core tenants of the church, full of generosity, that church makes a statement. That church sticks out.
- As we move through chapter 3 of Acts, following the depiction of this vibrant community of Christ followers, we shouldn't be surprised that we now begin to see opposition and persecution arise.
- Acts 3:1-10 is a transition point from which this vibrant church went from being dismissed by those who rejected Jesus as Lord to receiving active opposition against it by the leaders, and by Satan, as they began to work against the growing kingdom of God.
- So out of the many signs and wonders the apostles performed, today's account of healing of the lame man is the one he takes time to fully detail because of the opposition it stirs up.
- And then building on that, Peter references these details as he preaches to those who witnessed the lame man now walking and as he gives account before the council about the name of Jesus in whose name the miracle was performed.
- The miracles we read of in the book of Acts highlight for us the power of the resurrected Christ. But this one in particular serves also to instigate more gospel preaching, the beginning of opposition, and the emboldening of the early church in their witness for Christ.

- The main point we'll see today is that the deepest need of those around us is spiritual healing, only by the power of the resurrected Christ, which brings praise and glory to God, as a part of his ongoing kingdom expansion plan.

II. THE NEED FOR THE MIRACLE TO BE PERFORMED

- Just like when Jesus sent out the disciples two by two in partnerships, we see Peter and John partnering up. They are ministering together. Preaching together. Praying together. We see them together in this for all of Acts 3 and 4.
- John was known for his kindness and his love. He wrote in his letters more about love than anyone else, encouraging the church to love one another.
- Peter was more brash and bold. He was the bull in the china shop ready to jump in and give a bold in your face proclamation of the risen Christ, the effect of the resurrection being the key to this unlocked boldness we see from him in Acts.
- In the household of God we come from different nationalities, backgrounds, cultures, have different temperaments, different spiritual gifts, but we can serve alongside each other having the common bond of Christ.
- It says that they were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour which was 3pm.
- In Jewish society they had 3 prayer times daily: morning, afternoon, and evening.
- Luke says that they were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, indicating they were going up as a custom, as Jews following the custom of evening prayer.
- This ninth hour was a busy time of time. Many people in the streets, going about, doing business, and of course many heading to the temple to pray. This sets the stage for a pretty large crowd to bear witness to what is about to go down.
- And in verse 2, Luke lays out the context to which they arrive at the temple - a lame man sitting in front of the gate of the temple begging from those who are entering.
- This man was lame from birth. He wasn't injured in a horrific accident, he was born this way. This was a congenital condition which he had lived with his entire life.
- To have a disability at that time was an immense strain on your family, who had to care for you. It was a strain on society - you weren't contributing to that society in any way, you were an extra mouth to feed. Not to mention that there was a stigma in the culture around having a disability.
- But that doesn't mean this man was doomed to anything other than a life of poverty. A life of begging for the very means to eat.
- Likely all that his family could do for him at this point was carry him daily to the gate of the temple so he could beg alms of those entering.
- Even this task was likely burdensome, as we see later on in chapter 4 that this man was more than 40 years old.
- The carrying of this man to the gate of the temple was daily. We don't know if it was his brother-in-law carrying him piggy back every day, or if a couple of his brothers carried him on a stretcher. But they did this daily it says, day after day for this man.
- There was also a stigma of the disabled person being morally or spiritually compromised - and the disability attributed to sin.

- In a general sense, disease and sickness are a result of a fallen, sinful world. Before sin there was no sickness nor death.
- But in a specific sense, sickness isn't attributed as a consequence of a sinful act. Now, if you're an alcoholic and you get cirrhosis of the liver, yeah, it's a direct relationship there.
- But if you get sick or have a disease, a lingering pain, and you go "I must have unrepented sin in my life causing this. I need to figure out what it is and repent - That's not how it works.
- Sadly there are churches that do promote that garbage. "God's plan for you is to be healthy and wealthy, and if you're not it's because you've got unconfessed sin. Confess it and be healed!" That's crap.
- Sickness and disease are consequences of our sinful broken world. Certainly God can use sickness for his purposes, and even for discipline, but ultimately there will be a day we look forward to a future day in glory when there will be no more sickness, no more pain, and no more crying.
- He is in great need of physical healing.
- That need is highlighted even more with contrast by where he sits - in front of the gate to the temple which is called "The Beautiful Gate".
- Gates generally in ancient times were huge doors serving as protective entrances, and also ornate in honoring the subject matter of the gate.
- It may reflect the King who had the gate built, the conqueror who attacked and defeated what or who was behind the gate, or they may reflect the deity that the gate ushered people towards the presence of.
- We should note that there is no other reference in ancient writing to a gate of the temple called the beautiful gate, but many believe it to be Nicanor's gate, which led from the Court of the Gentiles into the Court of the Women.
- All the Gates of the temple were very ornate. This temple was rebuilt and expanded by Herod the Great and was the great architectural accomplishment of his time. It was a magnificent sight to behold until its destruction in AD 70.
- But out of all the ornate gates of this wondrous facility, this lame man sat in front of the most ornate and wonderful gate of them all. It was likely built of bronze and completely covered with gold and silver, this thing was incredible.
- And in front of that backdrop, this immensely impressive and beautiful set of doors, sat this poor, lame beggar.
- And so as he sits there, here comes Peter and John about to go into the temple to pray, and as they come up, this lame beggar asks them for alms.
- Now in one sense, he asks for alms because he fails to recognize these two men, having no idea that they are apostles of the risen Christ, that they've been performing many signs and wonders as spirit filled ambassadors of the king who is building his kingdom.
- But in another sense, his failure was to see his true need in his dire state. He was honestly just looking for a temporary, insufficient solution to his condition. He asked for alms, for pittance, thinking just about getting enough of something, anything, to get him through one more meal, one more day.
- He wasn't seeking anything that'd bring him true life, or lasting healing or eternal blessings.
- He didn't realize that as dreary as his physical condition was, his spiritual one was even more dire.
- He was in great need of physical healing, but he was in greater need of spiritual healing.
- In order to trust Christ there must first be a recognition that our condition is dire, not because we are unhealthy physically, but because we are dead and lifeless in our sin and trespass.
- We need to understand that we have sinned against a holy and righteous God who requires just payments for those sins. That is our

deepest need! We need salvation, we need the sacrificial payment of Christ's blood on our behalf to atone for our sins!

- But, when we see the poor, the lost, the needy, do we offer them alms and charity for their physical condition, or do we offer them Christ, for the deepest need of a Savior?
- When your coworker shares that they are going through a rough time in their life, do you offer them good advice, or do you point them towards an eternal hope, a loving Savior who can sympathize with them in their trials and weaknesses?
- When the cashier at the store or the waiter in the restaurant is looking glum and hopeless, do you offer a nice tip to brighten their day, or do you offer the gospel, the good news, the means by which the Holy Spirit joins us together with Christ, the hope of glory?!
- Let this be a reminder to us that the greatest need of those we speak to each day at our jobs, in our neighborhoods, our families, during our errands, is Christ!

III. THE NAME BEHIND THE MIGHTY POWER

- And when this man calls out to Peter and John for these alms, this pittance, they direct their gaze upon him. They hear his cry for help. It says they directed their gaze at him.
- They see this man's condition. But what he asked for wasn't what he truly needed. And they recognize him as he was: a man, not in need of a couple coins, but a man in need of true healing, not just physical, but spiritual. This man needed the Lord, needed him to transform his life in a way that a couple alms never ever would.
- When we understand the deepest need of those around us, then it should transform our gaze to gospel driven gazing.
- How are you gazing at those you encounter in need?
- Because here in Central Florida we have many many broken, hurting, sick, and needy people. How are you gazing at them?
- How about clean looking people?. If they haven't repented and turned to Christ then they are in a condition just as desperate and dire as this man because they are lost sinners damned to judgement for their wicked deeds.
- Do you look past their own perception of their need, or their perception of their lack of their need, and see them as lost sheep without a shepherd?
- So Peter says "look at us" - He's calling this man's attention. The Spirit of God has come and indwelt his witnesses and God is about to work something amazing.
- And for us now who are reading this portion of Scripture, it's a call to pay attention to what the Spirit is going to do here.
- A miracle is about to happen. When Jesus performed miracles it was evidence that He was the promised Messiah. And now when his apostles perform miracles, they give evidence of the power of the resurrection.
- And the man fixes his attention on them, but he's expecting maybe a few coins. Maybe something trivial, something to get him through the day. He has no idea that these two men standing before him will be used by the power of the risen Christ to change his life forever!
- The apostles, like Jesus, didn't view the lame and the disabled and the unfortunate as ongoing opportunities to be charitable. They continually saw their spiritual poverty. Their spiritual brokenness, and they reached out towards that need first and foremost.
- We should absolutely be engaged in being charitable and generous with what we have materially, and the Bible absolutely stands against selfish use of what the Lord has entrusted to us.

- But we need to also remember the most valuable thing we've been given is our new life in Christ, and we need to share with them the hope that we have.
- The best thing anyone can receive from you is not your charity but sharing with them of the grace which you also have received.
- Our daily interactions with others are opportunities to share Christ.
- Peter says he doesn't have any silver and gold to give this man, but he'll give what he does have: it's the powerful and mighty name of Jesus!
- That is so much better! Jesus is so much better than any material wealth Peter could have given him.
- 2 Weeks ago we looked at Acts 2:21 where Peter preached the promise that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
- That verse set the stage for many mighty and powerful works to be done in the following chapters, starting here. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!
- It's all because of his powerful name! In verse 16 Peter confirms it's all because of and only possible by the powerful and mighty name of Jesus!
- Acts 3:16 *And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.*
- It's the name of Jesus! It's him we proclaim, it's him we trust in, it's him we glorify for his sacrifice and his powerful triumph over sin and death, rising again in victory and ascending to the right hand of the majesty on high! There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved!
- Back in Exodus God revealed his name to Moses at the burning bush - Yahweh. And in first kings 8:17 we read that the temple was built for his name. And Yahweh brought his people redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- And now in front of the temple, the name of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. And by the power of it, restoration and healing are offered to this man.
- It was offered by the apostles, but the power was from Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- This man was poor and lame, being offered the power of the risen Christ. The Christ who was from Nazareth, also a poor and lowly place. This Christ, in his humanity could sympathize with a lowly beggar because he too humbled himself to a lowly estate, coming as a humble servant. He is both the highly exalted Christ and the humble servant of all.
- When John the baptist sent men to Jesus asking "Are you the one?" Part of Jesus' response was: *"The lame walk"* - Luke 7:22
- In Luke 14:13 Jesus says *"13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,"*
- Then immediately after that, when Jesus tells them of the man who gave a banquet and everyone sent their excuses, Jesus said in Luke 14:21: *"21 So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'*
- Jesus cared for the lame! Came to save and heal the lame! This was just as it was foretold. Wait what?
- Yes! The healing of the lame and making them walk was associated in the Old Testament with the day of salvation!
- Jer 31:8 *"8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, ..."*
- Zeph 3:19 *"19 Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth."*
- That's what's happening right here right now for this poor lame man!
- Micah 4:6-7 *"6 In that day, declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have*

afflicted; 7 and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore."

- The lame walking is a sign, and indication that the day of salvation has come! Jesus has come, he's conquered sin and death and the grave, having risen and ascended on high, and as he ministered to the lame as he preached the gospel during his earthly ministry, now too his spirit filled witnesses are continuing his ministry, his ambassadors going to the whole world now, and so naturally, the lame walk!
- Let's zoom in on the healing effect to this man for a second. He takes Peter's hand, who pulls him up, and immediately, for the first time in his entire life, he walks! He's walking, he's standing, he's leaping around, and he's praising God!
- This is the greatest moment of his entire life! And he didn't even see it coming 5 seconds before.
- He's no longer confined to sitting and begging all day. His family won't have to tote him around everywhere like a sack of potatoes. If he's got a bit of rhythm, he can finally learn to dance, his lifelong dream no doubt.
- And Luke again, being the doctor, describes it somewhat medically saying "his feet and his ankles were made strong". They were completely transformed from these useless bones and weak muscles, tendons that never functioned, to strong and fully functional feet and ankles.
- When Peter took him by the right hand, and "raised him up", that's the same terminology as in Acts 3:15 where Peter says of Jesus "the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead."
- This is resurrection- language being used here. Same language as in Acts 4:10 where Peter says its "*Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.*"
- That same resurrection term is being applied to this man. He's been resurrected to new life. Physically and spiritually.

IV. THE NATURAL MARVEL AND PRAISE

- This man is so completely overjoyed that he's leaping around and praising God, he can't help it!
- This word leaping which describes what he's doing isn't commonly used in the Bible. But we do see it used in Is 35:6, where the title given to that chapter is "The Ransomed Shall Return" and looking forward to the coming kingdom of God.
- Look at what Isaiah says: *6 then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;*
- When the Lord has come for his redeemed, the lame man shall leap like a deer. This man leaping is symbolic that the Lord's kingdom has come, as well as being a historical testimony of the power of the risen, ascended, and exalted Savior.
- Now you might just think that this man going into the temple was natural because that's where Peter and John were headed and he just followed them in, but the fact that he's entering the temple is also significant.
- Back in Leviticus 21, the priests were instructed by God that priests who were lame or blemished could not come near the inner courts.
- But this man enters the temple now, fully healed. He is one of those that Peter wrote of in 1 Peter 2:9 "*9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*"
- He wouldn't have had access to the Jewish temple had he been a physically lame priest. But being healed spiritually, he is now part of the

royal priesthood, a member of God's new kingdom and nation where Jesus reigns as king, and now we see this man proclaiming the excellencies of him who called him out of darkness and into his marvelous light!

- Oh he's proclaiming alright. He enters the temple with Peter and John at the time of prayer. And as he goes in, he's giving God all the glory and the praise for his healing!
- He was healed in the name of Jesus, and recognizes him as God by going into the temple to praise God for this miraculous healing. He can't stop praising him. From the time he was healed, he's walking and leaping and praising God all the way in.
- God healed him, and to God be all the glory! God has given him a new life! Physically and spiritually.
- And he can't help but praise God! It's a proper response! It's our proper response as we too have been raised to new life! It was the proper response of the new community of spirit filled witnesses we saw last week in Acts 2:47 where day in and day out they were in the temple together, eating together, and praising God! Same term used there!
- It was the same response of the angels and shepherds 33 years before at Christ's birth in Luke chapter 2 when in verse 13 the angels were praising and glorifying God and in verse 20 the shepherds were praising God! How could they not when faced with the amazing work of God!
- If we are in Christ, our own testimonies of healing and deliverance are also amazing and wondrous brothers and sisters! We have been brought from death to life! From filthy rags of our own works to being clothed in the righteousness of Christ and relying fully on the merit of his work on the cross! We have gone from enemies of God to sons and daughters of God! So praise him church! You can leap if you want to but never cease to praise God for all that he has done for you!
- Are you thankful today for what he has done for you? Are you grateful today for what he has done for you? Are you giving him glory today for the amazing things he has done to call you, to draw you to himself, to sanctify you, to redeem you, to deign to use our short and seemingly insignificant lives for his utmost glory?
- Luke starts this story by describing a man lame from birth sitting in front of the Beautiful Gate begging alms. And now in verse 10 all the people around see and recognize a man who had sat in front of the Beautiful gate begging for alms, but not any more. He's walking. He's leaping about. He's praising God in the temple for all that he has done for him.
- And not just a few people noticed, no. This was public. This miracle was performed at the ninth hour, a busy time, many people around, and all the people saw him walking - and giving praise to God.
- The people saw this formerly lame man walking and praising God, and recognizing him as the man who had never walked, who begged alms from them, they were filled with wonder, and amazement. How can this be?
- This was clearly the same man they'd seen sitting there daily begging for alms. Probably for years. They knew he wasn't faking this. They knew how wretched his condition was. Maybe they have given him alms as they were able.
- But now he's here praising God in the temple with them for this miraculous healing.
- And all the people are completely filled with wonder, and amazement, at what had happened to him.
- They've likely heard of the miracles and signs and wonders performed by the apostles, or heard of this bold vibrant community of followers of Jesus, but now they are confronted by the reality of a man they all recognized, a man whose condition was known to them, that they were confident of, but now they see in front of them his walking about, which certainly was only by the power of God.

- In Luke's first account, Luke chapter 5, he records another narrative there of when Jesus also healed a lame man, the paralytic who was let down through the roof. And the response of the people to his healing resulted in the same response: astonishment. It's the same word meaning "astounded" that's used here in Acts.
- Luke 5:25-26 *25 And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. 26 And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."*
- Astonishment itself is absolutely appropriate, but it's not enough to save. No one is saved just by being astounded by the power of Christ. But, this astonishment leads to a gospel opportunity.
- The wonder of and amazement of it leads to Peter's preaching in Solomon's Portico. Having seen the evidence of this sign, this wonder, the people want to hear more of this Jesus in whose name this man was healed.
- And Peter does some preaching. Preaching which leads to 5000 new followers of Christ!
- Preaching which leads to opposition as well by the leaders, which in turn causes the early church to pray for boldness in their witness in the face of opposition, which leads to even more boldness in their witness for Christ.
- God had a plan to use these miracles for this man's good and for his glory. For the preaching that followed, the salvation of souls, and the emboldening of the church.
- This man had been lame since birth, over 40 years. And daily he was laid in front of the gates, day after day, year after. Jesus certainly passed by those very gates, and almost certainly passed by this man. Why didn't he heal him then? Why wait?
- He reserved it for his spirit-filled witnesses to do in his name. He reserved it for the appointed time when God would use it for his utmost glory, that this man would be healed at the crowded hour of prayer, evidencing to everyone around the power of God, leading to the praise and glory of his name and the salvation of 5000 souls!
- May we never lose our awe and wonder and amazement when we hear testimonies of how he changes lives, how he provides for his people, how he strengthens us when we're weak - we have 2000 years of history of examples of the power of God at work in people's lives in the name of Jesus.
- We have countless examples in our own lives of how he strengthened us when we were weak, restored us when we were broken, brought us near when we were far off, joined us together with a community from which we were distant and separated!
- If you've never experienced that, the bible says that today is the day of salvation! Repent of your sin and call upon Christ! There is nothing you can do to heal and restore your deepest need. There is nothing you can do to earn salvation which is offered as a free gift!
- And if you have trusted him, and you have received spiritual healing in great measure, your deepest need fully satisfied by the blood of Christ, then look upon the lost and the broken as Jesus does, as sheep without a shepherd.
- Look upon them as lost souls in need of coming to faith in a loving and giving Savior. Do you see them broken and destitute, not because they don't have the wealth of the world, but because they are spiritually bankrupt and broken and headed towards destruction because of their sin?
- And be bold like Peter with the good news which isn't to be withheld! It's not to be hidden! It's good news not for those who are nice and clean already but the poor, the broken, the lost, the afflicted, the ones in bondage to addiction, that is who the gospel is for, which is freely offered

to them by Christ, and that message has been entrusted to you and I to deliver! Don't be selfish with the message of the gospel!

- Make every use of every opportunity, it might be the last opportunity the person next to you ever has before they meet their maker.
- And lastly, be filled with wonder, and amazement at our great and powerful King. The Lord has done for us certainly as much as he did for this lame man, may we never ever cease to praise and glorify and worship our good and gracious King for all that he has done for us.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?