

3. The Healing of the Lame Beggar

Acts 3: 1-26

One day, Peter and John were going to the temple to pray at the hour of prayer, and they met a lame man. This man had been lame since birth and was carried to the gate of the Temple called Beautiful every day to beg from those going to the temple. When he saw Peter and John entering the temple, he asked them for money. Peter and John both looked at the man, and Peter said, "Look at us." The lame beggar looked at them, expecting to receive something from them 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." And Peter took the lame man by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his legs became strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk. Then he entered the temple with them walking, and leaping, and praising God! And the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who had sat at the gate of the temple, asking for money. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened.

Peter said to the crowd, "Why are you astounded as if we did this in our own power when it was the power of God who was glorifying his son Jesus? . . . You killed Jesus, the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. And it was by faith in the name of this Jesus that this man whom you know was made strong."

He then explained the scriptures beginning with Abraham all the way through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He then said, "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"

INTRODUCTION: (Ask a pre-story question to discuss in pairs or as a group.)

- **Think of a time in your life where you have witnessed a miracle? How did that make you feel? Who received the credit for the miracle?**

THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

OUTLINE VERSION (for teacher to use when teaching)

Details: What happened? To see what truths we can learn.

- **What were Peter and John doing? Where? When? What does that teach us?**
- **Who met Peter and John? What was he like?**
 - **How did Peter and John respond to him? What did they say?**
- **What happened to the man? How did he respond? Why?**
- **How did other people respond? What does this show us?**
- **What did Peter tell the crowd? What can we learn from this?**
- **How did the change that occurred in the lame man's body reflect what happens as the Gospel changes someone's heart?**

Summary: What do we learn here from the early church? What commandments or examples to follow are found in this story. Which ones still apply to us today?

- Regular pattern of prayer and worship.
- Pay attention to and care for the needy person in front of them.
- Respond to God's blessings with sincere worship and gratitude to God
- Preach with boldness and sound doctrine. Communicate the basic Gospel truths about Jesus Christ, rooted in all of Scripture from the OT through Christ.
- Call people to a response of repentance and entrusting their lives to Jesus.
- Rest in Him.
- Don't take credit for what God does!

General Application: (discuss with whole group)

- **In what ways can we as Christians be so busy with our activities that we walk right past someone who is in need? How do we sometimes prioritize our schedules and events over loving people?**

Personal Application:

- **In what way have you recently become so busy serving God and doing good things that you have missed loving or caring for someone in need?**

FULL VERSION (for teacher to use for study in preparation)

Let's look at the details that we observe describing what happened in the story in order to see what truths we can learn.

- **What were Peter and John doing? Where? When? What does that teach us?**
 - Peter and John were working side by side and going to the temple together to pray at the hour of prayer.
 - It teaches us that ministry is meant to do together. John and Peter were very different in their personalities in the gospels. John was known for being very kind and loving others while Peter was known for his boldness and brashness.
 - They were going to the temple to pray at the hour of prayer.
 - It teaches us that prayer was a regular part of their lives. They were consistently praying and observing prayer times.
 - Through their habits of prayer and faithfulness they were putting themselves in a place where God could use them, where they could respond to the Spirit to opportunities to minister in Jesus' name.
 - They were not opposing the traditional forms of prayer and worship. They were still Jews!
 - By going to the temple they were showing that this new life, this Gospel of Jesus, was not a rejection of the Temple or the faith and history of the Israelites. Rather it was a fulfillment or a continuation of what God had been going through Israel as He brought the Savior, the Messiah, to save sinners.
 - They also, without compromising their faith in Christ, were able to stay connected to or related to the surrounding culture so that they could have a platform for sharing the Gospel.
- **Who met Peter and John? What was he like? Where was he? What was he doing?**
 - There was a man lame since birth at the entrance to the temple right outside a gate. **What would life be like for this lame man? How would other people have thought of him?**
 - Desperate, dependent on others, outcast, despised, impoverished. He was stuck, hopeless, a slave to this daily life.
 - Others would have looked down on him, thought him of little worth, a nuisance. Would be seen as spiritually and morally inferior. People might have thought he was lame because of sin.
 - (Ex. John 9:1-3) - What did Jesus say about this?
- **How did Peter and John respond to him? What could they have done instead? What did Peter and John first tell him? Why? How can this help us deal with needy people? What can this teach us about relating to the poor and needy?**
 - The time of prayer would be a busy time at the Temple with many people passing by. It would have been easy to walk by and ignore him even if he was calling out.

- They said, “Look at us.” They wanted eye contact to show him dignity. They were not ashamed to look him in the eyes. He was special, worthy because created in the image of God. It was still true even though he had many problems.
 - We can learn to be more prayerful and sensitive to the Holy Spirit as we step into the world, to look at the needy the way Jesus would, seeing value and dignity. We can be willing sometimes to pause, take time and listen, look people in the eyes, connect with them.
- **What did they say next to him? What does this show us about Peter and John?**
 - “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”. They believed that Jesus was able to heal him.
 - He uses physical healing to preach the Gospel, to point directly to Jesus Christ, to show how God healed this man to glorify Jesus.
- **What did Peter do next? What does this teach us? Why did Peter take his hand?**
 - Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up.
 - He touched him, was not afraid of him being unclean.
 - It was like he was encouraging him to take that first step of walking out his new faith.
- **What happened to the man? What do you think was going through the lame man's mind after Peter told him to rise up and walk? How did he respond? Why?**
 - He could have felt doubt or unbelief at first. He was then encouraged by Peter taking him by the hand to help him walk out his faith.
 - He was immediately healed; his legs were strengthened so much that he leaped up, stood, and began to walk.
 - He then went into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God.
 - The right response when God works is praise and thanksgiving - whole hearted worship.
 - God is the one who receives the glory, not man. By entering the temple, the lame man is recognizing the source of his healing. The focus is not on the miracle itself, but the God of the miracle.
 - By responding so publicly he is bearing witness to others of the new life he has found in Christ.
 - He found that the new life he found in Christ was more beautiful than life at the Beautiful gate.
- **How did other people respond? What does this show us?**
 - They recognized him as the man who had been lame for years.
 - They were full of wonder and amazement, maybe thinking it was Peter's power that healed him rather than recognizing the power as being from God bringing glory to Jesus.
 - Our unbelieving earthly hearts don't naturally give glory to God but look for earthly explanations.

- **What did Peter tell the crowd? What can we learn from this?**
 - He pointed the attention away from himself and toward God, particularly toward Jesus.
 - He showed the main purpose for miracles in the New Testament - to bring glory to Jesus Christ and to establish His Church through His Word.
 - He used the opportunity to explain the Gospel of Christ, showing how all of God's Word, beginning with Abraham, was pointing to Jesus and his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. (It was Chronological Bible Storying!)
 - He did not just give them information. He called them to repentance and trust in Christ alone as their Savior and Lord.
 - Evangelists must turn attention away from ourselves and toward Christ our Savior. Likewise we must call unbelievers to do the same thing!

- **How are we to understand how in this story it is about one man, and in the previous story 3,000 men are saved?**
 - We are able to see that the individual is important to God. He cares about the masses, but also cares about the one man. We learn that even those who care about reaching many should also care about each individual. We must not be too busy trying to reach so many people that we miss reaching the person right in front of us.

- **How did the change that occurred in the lame man's body reflect what happens as the Gospel changes someone's heart?**
 - Went from bondage in his broken body to freedom to be walking, leaping, and praising God
 - Without Christ we are in bondage to sin in our spirits. His Gospel frees us from sin to be able worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

Summary: What do we learn here from the early church? What commandments or examples to follow are found in this story. Which ones still apply to us today?

- **Prayer and Worship.** Peter and John had a regular pattern of prayer and worship.
 - It put them in a place where they could listen to God and respond to his Spirit in ministry.
 - When and how we pray and worship can vary, but it is important that we all make it a regular habit.
 - Be sensitive to the Spirit's direction as you live a life of prayer.
- **Pay attention. Care for the needy.** Peter and John stopped, paid attention to, and cared for the needy person in front of them. Peter and John offered what they had to offer instead of just refusing to help. Many ways to reach out to meet people's needs - financial help, sharing our time, prayer
- **Gratitude and worship.** The man who was healed responded with sincere worship and gratitude to God. Was not embarrassed.

- **Preach the Word.** Peter's preaching was bold, doctrinally sound, and communicated the basic Gospel truths about Jesus Christ. Rooted in all of Scripture from the OT through Christ. He also called people to a response of repentance and trusting themselves to Jesus.
 - While styles of preaching or communicating the Gospel may vary widely, these basic principles always apply
 - The Gospel not only save people's souls but also is part of redeeming everything in the world that is wrong, including physical brokenness
- **Repent and believe:** People who heard the gospel message were commanded to repent and turn back so that the sins of people may be blotted out and times of refreshment may come from the presence of the Lord.
 - We need to remember the importance of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in our teaching, preaching, and discipleship. We are only saved from our sins once, but the ongoing life of a Christian should be one of repentance and faith as we grow closer and closer to God and live a more holy life.
- **Rest in Him.** Ultimately repentance and faith connects us to the Presence of God. This is where we rest. This is how our hearts are refreshed and made alive.
- **Don't take credit** for what God does!

General Application: (discuss with whole group)

- **In what ways can we as Christians be so busy with our activities that we walk right past someone who is in need? How do we sometimes prioritize our schedules and events over loving people?**

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