

"Jesus Christ in the Church"

Part 2

Acts 3

Introduction: Tonight in our study of Acts we have come to chapter three. But before we step into the third chapter, we need to go back to chapter two and look at a verse.

Notice Acts 2:43

Here in this verse we see that many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles. Have you ever wondered what the wonders and the signs were? We get to look at one of the miracles performed as we step into chapter three. The miracle that we are going to examine in Acts 3 will set the stage for Peter's second sermon.

I. The Situation

Notice Acts 3:1

There are a couple of things that we need to see in this verse. The book of Acts is a transitional book. It shows the transition from Judaism to Christianity. Here in this verse we see that Peter and John went to the temple at the hour of prayer. The early believers continued to worship in the temple. In the book of Hebrews. The writer shows that believers were to separate from Judaism because that old economy had become obsolete. Many of the church Truths were not yet understood in the book of Acts. They would come to be understood as time went on.

John 16:12-14

¹² *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

¹³ *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

¹⁴ *He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

The time they went to the temple was very important for there would have great multitudes of Jews at the temple for prayer. Peter and John may have had worship in mind, but God was leading them to a great platform of evangelism.

Application:

This is great reminder for you and me.

Proverbs 16:1-3, 9

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

² All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

³ Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

⁹ A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

There are many times in life when we plan out our days to go certain places and we follow through with our plans but along the way there are opportunities for ministry which show up. We must be alert to such situations and opportunities. It may be a simple trip to the grocery store, but God may have it planned for evangelism for we may just encounter someone whom God has been preparing to hear about the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Peter and John traveled together because this is what they had been taught by the Lord.

Mark 6:7

⁷ And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

Luke 10:1-3

After these things the LORD appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

² Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

³ Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Notice Acts 3:2

Here we see that there was a certain man who was born lame and he was laid daily at the Beautiful Gate. Let us notice some history on this gate.

The Jewish historian Josephus described this gate on the temple mount; made of fine Corinthian brass, seventy-five feet high with huge double doors, so beautiful that it "greatly excelled those that were only covered over with silver and gold."

This man because of his condition was forced to be a beggar. As he lay at the gate every day it was there that he was given what was needed to sustain him. It was the responsibility of the Jews to help out those who were in such dire need as this man was. The Jews who were able to help were to do so in a discreet way.

Matthew 6:1-4

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

² *Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

³ *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:*

⁴ *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

Let us now consider something interesting about this man who was lame. He had been lame from birth and we are told that he was laid at the gate DAILY.

Notice Acts 3:2 again.

This man was over the age of 40.

Acts 4:22

²² *For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.*

I show you this to help you to know that this man was laid at the gate DAILY for many years. Now we know that Jesus frequently came to the temple we can be sure that Jesus had seen this man. But as many times as He had encountered this man and possibly even spoke with him, He did not heal him. I therefore want to raise the question, "Why did Jesus not heal the man earlier?"

Let us notice a couple of verses that we have looked at on Sunday evenings and then we can understand why Jesus did not heal him earlier.

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Jesus did not heal the man while He walked the earth because the TIME was not right. There was coming a TIME in the future when the TIME would be right. It would be when Peter and John came to the temple. It will be the healing of this lame man who will open the door for Peter to preach the Gospel.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

² *A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*

³ *A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

I will go as far as to say that this man's lame condition was for that purpose and that purpose was about to happen.

Application:

We see this very Truth in the death of Lazarus.

John 11:1-4

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

² *(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)*

³ *Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*

⁴ *When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

What happened to Lazarus was so that Jesus would be glorified in his resurrection. Getting back to our lives; God uses what His children go through to glorify Jesus. He may exalt us in this life but if He does it will be on His time not ours. In the middle of the trial it is our responsibility to submit to Him and live to honor Him.

Notice Acts 3:3-6

The lame man asked for alms and Peter then got his attention. The man was expecting to receive something from them. Peter would give him not silver or gold, but he would give him what money could not buy.

Application #1:

There is an application here that fits our day so well. This man is a picture of many men and even men in the church. They are lame but not physically. They are spiritually lame. They have not learned to walk in the manner which God desires for them to walk. Like this lame man in Acts 3 they have been deceived into believing that money and possessions are the answers. This is what they are constantly looking for. They are always looking for ways to make more money, or to buy more things. What they do not understand is that what they need comes from Jesus Christ and it is free. They may be saved but they do not consistently drink from the well of Living water. They are focused upon the world, and they have bought into the world's philosophies. They are unable to do what they are called to do.

Colossians 1:9-11

⁹ For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

¹⁰ That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

¹¹ Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

They have no spiritual strength because they do not spend the time with the Lord and in His Word. For this reason they are defeated by the enemy. They are powerless because they are operating in the power of the flesh.

Ephesians 6:10

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

This "lame condition" is a spiritual sickness, and it manifests itself in many ways. One way is very little desire for church and the Word of God. Just like someone who has the flu has no appetite for food so the believer who is spiritually ill will have no appetite for the Word of God.

Application #2:

There is another application here that we need to see. This lame man is a picture of the entire human race. Because of sin man is lame in the sense that he can do nothing to help himself. Others in his life will help out in many situations but there is no other sinful human that can heal the sinner of his greatest need. Let us learn for this text that silver and gold are not the greatest need of this lost world. But what the world needs is what Jesus has to offer and that is the forgiveness of sin. There have been many churches who have turned to what is known as "THE SOCIAL GOSPEL." This is meeting the material needs of the sinner but doing nothing about his spiritual needs. It is giving them food but not giving them the Gospel.

Let us remember that it does no good to fill the bellies and cloth the lost and never share with them the Gospel. This only makes them comfortable until they die and go to hell.

Conclusion:

It is good to meet the physical needs of the lost but meeting their needs should be used as an opportunity to share the Gospel. We CANNOT neglect to share the Gospel. Do not allow people who disagree to discourage you. There will always be people who do not want to hear the Gospel because they say it offends people. It is better to offend them with the Truth than to keep silent and allow them to be deceived by the lies that they believe and go to hell. You may be the only believer who has contact with them.

Philippians 1:20-21

²⁰ *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

²¹ *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*