

"The Opportunity at the Temple"

Acts 3

Introduction: The past several weeks we have been looking at the lame man in Acts 3. We looked at how he is a picture of many people today including believers who are spiritually lame. Last week we looked at how Peter took this man by the hand and helped him to his feet as God healed him of his lameness. This is a picture of how we are not to walk around those who are lame, but we are to be willing to reach out and help them to get on their feet and move on in their spiritual walk. This evening we are going to continue to watch as the scene unfolds in the temple after this miraculous healing.

I. The Lame Man's Praise

Notice Acts 3:7-8

This man could not contain his joy. For over 40 years he had been lame and now he was free from the disabilities. He walked, he leaped, and he praised God. He did not praise Peter, but he certainly did praise God. This man was now qualified to enter into the temple.

Leviticus 21:18-20

¹⁸ For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous,

¹⁹ Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded,

²⁰ Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken;

This miracle was great, but Jesus had told His disciples that there would be greater miracles than this.

John 14:12

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

People healed of physical ailments cannot compare with the salvation of a soul. For someone who is lost deep in sin to hear the Gospel and to repent and then to turn to Jesus and accept Him as Savior and be born again is by far a greater miracle than a physical healing. It is greater in the sense that it is far more important. What good would it be for a man or a woman to be healed of a deadly cancer and then to die in their sins and go to hell? It is better for a man or a woman to die the worst possible death and be saved and

go to heaven than to live to be an old age and die in their sleep and go to hell. Suffering from physical ailments is temporary but suffering for dying in sin is eternal.

Revelation 20:11-15

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This event would be far more fearful to face than any negative news from the doctor. To be resurrected and to stand before the Lord as your Judge is by far the most frightening thing the unsaved will face.

Revelation 20:10

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

I show you this verse to help you to see that the Devil and the Anti-Christ who are cast into the Lake of Fire will be tormented day and night forever and ever and so will all unbelievers also.

All of this is why Jesus referred to greater works/salvation being greater than physical healings.

Notice Acts 3:9-10

This man was very well known. He had sat at the gate for many years. When they had heard and seen what had taken place with his healing, they were all filled with wonder and amazement.

Application:

What happened to this man was being used by God for His glory. His prior condition was known by all and now he was able to walk and leap with no assistance. The crowds were absolutely amazed by this. I am reminded of a verse that fits so well here.

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

This is a picture of what happens when a sinner is saved by the Lord. The people who once knew him or her now stand in total amazement because the individual is not who they were before. They do not talk the same, they do not live the same, they do not go to the same places, and they do not spend time with the same friends. They used to frequent the bars but that is no longer true. They used to curse when they spoke but that has gone away. In Christ they are new creations and people take notice. What we see in this man should be true of each of us who know Jesus Christ. We should be different than who were used to be because we are not the same person.

1 John 3:5-9

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

These verses do not mean that as believers we do not sin. The idea is that we do not live in sin, and we do not practice sin like we did before we were saved. Again, we are not who we used to be. Notice the words of an unnamed writer:

"The world is always astonished at the evidence of new life in Christ. Here is a man, a woman, who comes into the blessing of salvation. Suddenly all is changed. That person is missing from his old haunts. The bar, the poolroom, the racetrack know him no more. He is found instead in the company of the people of God, in the place where God's saved ones

gather to sing the praises of the Lord Jesus. He is walking new paths and praising the living God. The miracle of salvation is intended to provide astonishment."

Notice Acts 3:11

The lame man does not praise Peter and John, but he does hold on to them. The people then RAN to Solomon's porch to see the man and those who had been used of God to do the miracle.

Application:

The word "RAN" here speaks very loudly. It shows us that there was a desire within these people to know more about the miracle. This should remind us that there are many people today also who have a desire to know about the God and His Word. The problem is that there are very few who know the Scriptures and often the people who the hungry turn to are people who have a distorted view of God and His Word.

Matthew 9:36-38

³⁶ But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

³⁷ Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

³⁸ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Then we see a warning in the book of Jude.

Jude 1:3-4

³ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

⁴ For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude warned of the false teachers who would come in and twist the Word of God teaching that grace is a license to sin. These false teachers exist today and are leading many people down a path of destruction and damnation.

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ 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:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

**II. The Open Door
Part 1**

Notice Acts 3:12

Peter seized the moment. The people were curious to know what happened and Peter was quick to step through the door that God had opened. I say that God opened the door to preach the Gospel because He was the One who healed the lame man. He had waited for forty years to heal this man for this moment, and it had all come together.

Application:

Let us also be quick to seize the moment when God sets before us an open door. Those open doors often do not stay open long. We also must be alert to the open doors. It is easy to get caught up in our own lives that we miss what God sets before us.

Revelation 3:7-8

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

⁸ I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

The city of Philadelphia had a highway that ran through it, and it was one of the largest highways in the world. This city had millions of travelers. The OPEN DOOR which the Lord set before this church was most likely an opportunity for sharing the Gospel. An open door in the Bible often speaks of evangelism.

1 Corinthians 16:8-9

⁸ *But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.*

⁹ *For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*

2 Corinthians 2:12

¹² *Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord.*

Colossians 4:3

³ *Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

In each of these we see that the open door was associated with evangelism. Getting back to the point, God often sets before each of us open doors. Let us remember that if we, who know the Truth, do not step through Satan will supply someone with a false gospel to step through and lead the people to hell.

Conclusion:

Might we be sensitive to man's greatest need. It is fine to pray for a person's physical needs, but we must never forget that the greater need is spiritual healing. So, let us watch for the open doors which God sets before us and let us seize the moment as Peter does here in Acts 3.