The Power of Jesus' Name

Acts 3:1-10
Key Verse: Acts 3:6
“Then Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’”

As we go through life it doesn’t seem to get any easier. When we get to high school we look back and remember how easy grade school was all the while we look forward to college thinking it will be better. But then in college things get more difficult and we long for the day we’ll get graduate and have the freedom of adulthood. And so after graduation, we’re happy to get our first job, but as the years go by, we realize that adult life is also difficult with so many responsibilities and pressures and I find that it’s ironic that we look back and think how good we had it when we were in grade school when our parents took care of everything. We tend to think that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, that if we can just change something, we’ll be ok. But the truth is life can be tough every step of the way. Sometimes in life, we lose sight of what’s important because we are always looking for something else. So when life’s difficulties hit us smack in the face the devil can oppress us with a feeling of hopelessness and defeat. It’s during those moments that we must remember who Jesus is and that we are the children of the King. We must look up to Jesus who is seated at the right hand of God as Lord and Christ. And even though Jesus isn’t with us physically any more, we have access to him through his name. There is no name like his, for there is power in the name of Jesus. In today’s passage Peter and John heal a crippled beggar in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. When God changes one person, it changes history. This event became a catalyst for church growth, as well as fiery persecution. May God help us to put our faith in Jesus through this passage.

Take a look at verse 1. “One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ” An amazing transformation has taken place in Peter and John as they have become men of prayer. In the past they couldn’t stay awake long enough, but now they loved prayer because it was through it that they could spend time with Jesus. Not only did they have fellowship with God but they found that, the more they prayed, the more they received strength, courage and wisdom. And as a result, they were no longer men of fear who avoided the temple because of those who killed Jesus. Now, they boldly entered the temple because it was the house of God.

Verse 2 says, “Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.” This man was crippled from birth. He was born into a situation where he was never going to be able to live a normal life. This is a man who had never stood up on his own two feet, never taken a step or gone for a walk. Growing up, he would watch the other kids run around and play ball but he couldn’t. All he could do is watch. He was always isolated and left behind. If that’s not bad enough, he’s probably never going to marry or have kids because he has no way to support his family. His

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destiny is a dusty mat: as he will be subjected to a life of poverty. Their society didn't have the kind of disability benefits that exist in our day. There were no special parking spots or automatic doors, or wheel There were no companies to hire cripples. All he could do was throw himself at the mercy of God's people. So he would sit outside of the temple hoping to run into someone that was generous. Guys like their freedom and they usually can't wait to drive but he couldn't even take himself from point a to point b. He had to depend on his friends or family to carry him everywhere day and night. He had to hope that they didn't forget to pick him up and leave him out there all night. He wouldn't be able to defend himself. He's completely at the mercy of others, literally. His life consists of hoping, trusting, and praying that God's people would have mercy on him to give him enough money so that he can survive and not starve to death. And for a man, this has to be tough because God created men to be the provider, protector of the family. He would never be fulfilled as a man. And if that's not bad enough, think of all the people that looked down on him as some kind of sinner, because their attitude was like, "I wonder what he, or his parents did, to be punished like that from God." This man was in a dire situation. He was hopeless, helpless and defeated.

So what happened to him? Take a look at verses 3-5. "When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. **4** Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" **5** So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them." I don't know about you but I've had my fair share of interactions with beggars and I usually want to avoid direct eye contact with them because as soon as you make eye contact they come right at you. Unlike me, Peter and John looked straight at him. It must have caught the beggar by surprise. So Peter said, "Look at us!" Then the man gave them his attention, probably thinking, "finally someone that's not ignoring me." But then to his surprise Peter does something that he never expected. Take a look at verse 6. "Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.""

We learn a couple of things from Peter here. First, Peter had compassion for him. Most people don't have time for a guy like this. He's not going to be a benefit anyone. Usually people are looking to connect with those who can help them, but this guy is a total liability. Knowing that, Peter still embraced him, maybe even made him feel welcome. Instead of wanting to get some kind of benefit, Peter wanted to give something to him. It's interesting from the previous chapter we read that the early church had a little money. They sold their possessions and gave to those who were in need. (v2:45) So why didn't Peter give him money? That's what he wanted? For one thing he didn't have any, but Peter, having the mind of Christ, helped him anyway just not in the way that he expected. Peter helped him in a way that he needed most. Money wouldn't solve his problem. He needed to walk. He needed to be healed of his beggar's way of thinking. Peter wanted to get to the root of this man's problem and solve that. And Peter knew that only Jesus can do this.

Second, Peter had faith in the name of Jesus. Even though Peter didn't have any money, still he found something to give to the beggar. He gave him Jesus. Peter believed that Jesus could help the man walk. That Jesus could solve the man's life problem. When Peter said, "In the name of

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Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk," he was acting on Jesus' behalf as his servant. Peter had been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the name of Christ. Now he was not his own man, but Jesus' servant. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, Jesus was working through Peter. It was Jesus who that healed the man. Peter has grown into a man of faith. This is the fruit of Jesus' discipleship ministry. Even though Peter didn't write any of the gospels, still he was the guiding influence on John Mark, who wrote Mark's gospel, which we learn that more than any other gospel, it reveals how Jesus taught his disciples. One of the main points that Jesus taught was to have faith in God. Once, when they were in a storm at sea, their boat was nearly sunk. Jesus, who was sleeping soundly in the back, was woken up by his disciples asking, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and the waves. The wind died down and it was completely calm. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mk 4:35-41) They were amazed by Jesus' power and authority. Another time, during the passion week, Jesus saw a fig tree that had many leaves but no fruit. Jesus rebuked the tree and the next day it withered from the roots. When Peter saw it, he was amazed and very excited. Jesus said, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.'" (Mk 11:22-23) More than anything, Jesus wanted Peter to learn to put his faith in God, but while Jesus was with him, Peter seemed to remain powerless in unbelief. Now, however, Peter has become a man of faith who could say to a crippled beggar with full conviction, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

Some think that having faith in the name of Jesus is like casting a spell, (Ac 19:13) but that's not true. Peter was inviting Jesus into that moment. Peter could go to him when he was on the earth; and he could still go to him. "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth." There is strength of the name of Jesus of Nazareth. There's a reason why people will, when they take the Lord's name in vain, use Jesus' name because that's the name of power and authority. Philippians tells us, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2:10-11) There's something unique and special about the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This is encouraging because Jesus healed when he was on the earth, and now he's ascended into heaven. Can he still heal? Yes, because he's still alive, and now he's ruling and reigning as sovereign Lord, and we can come to him, and he will hear us and answer us, and he can actually heal from his heavenly throne. Thank God.

Now comes the critical point. Take a look at verses 7-8. "Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. **8** He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God." The reason I say that this is the critical point is because now they had to act on their faith. James wrote, "Faith that is not accompanied by action is dead." (Ja 2:17) If he didn't act on his faith, he probably would have missed this blessing, but thank God he didn't. Peter grabbed him and helped him up and amazingly his feet and ankles got strong but he jumped and walked. I'm not sure how he learned to walk so fast. Usually babies take a couple of months, and that doesn't include

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jumping. Sometimes in the Bible God healed people slowly over time, and other times, like here, it was immediate. This is a fulfillment of Isaiah 35:6, “Then the lame leap like a deer.” The promise was given 700 years ago: when Jesus comes, the lame would leap like a deer, and here is that promise being fulfilled.

Verses 9-10 tell us, “When all the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.” This was the first time he was able to go into the temple because people with physical disabilities weren’t allowed in. As soon as he is healed, he does not turn his back on God and walk away. He sets his face toward God and goes into the temple that he might worship and praise and celebrate the goodness of God, and the other people are astounded and they do the same. The result of this man’s healing is that God is worshiped. The ultimate goal was not the healing; that’s the secondary goal. The primary goal is the glory of God. And this happens because of the man attitude. After he was healed, he could have walked away just like the man, from John’s gospel, who had been a paralytic for 38 years did. (Jn 5) If we compare the two healings their results are very different. The paralytic had been that way for 38 years, this man had been crippled from birth. Both of them were miraculously healed. However their attitudes were completely different. The 38 year paralytic went away and basically turned Jesus into the authorities because he was healing on the Sabbath, which they didn’t approve of. So the result of his miracle was the persecution of Jesus. In contrast, when the man who was lame from birth was healed he went into the temple and worshipped and thanked God. And the place was filled with wonder and amazement and joy because of the beautiful thing that God had done.

And so what we learn from this is that the attitude of our heart matters. A miracle may happen right in front of us, or even to us, and if our attitude isn’t right we may miss the real blessing. Both men were healed physically but only one was healed spiritually; thus only one was healed fully. What we need is forgiveness and healing, body and spirit. Since sin entered the world, people are suffering, and they’re sick and struggling. Romans 8 puts it like this: all creation is groaning. It’s under this weight and bondage of sin, and it’s yearning for its deliverance back into its intended state. I’ve heard that something like 70% of Americans are on some sort of prescription medication for an injury or an illness. Over half of Americans are on at least two medications. But it’s not only physical suffering. Around us there are so many spiritually crippled people. They are suffering from selfishness, pleasure-seeking, lust, pride, arrogance to name a few. Things things oppress us. Spiritually sick people don’t know what their real problem is. Because of the misery of their sin, they become hopeless and helpless like this beggar.

But we’ve been given a promise by God, more than 2700 years ago, that’s over 700 years before Jesus was born, that his ministry would do two things: that he would forgive sins spiritually and heal physically. God gave the prophet Isaiah foresight to proclaim, “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isa 53:4-5) And two weeks ago we saw from Acts 2 how

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the prophet Joel prophesied 400-600 years before Jesus came that, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,” and they saw how God fulfilled his promise right in front of their eyes. And they recorded it for us. Why? The apostle John puts it this way: “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. **31** But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (Jn 20) The most important thing is the relationship we have with Jesus. The reason Peter and John were able to heal was because of the relationship they had with Jesus. The example is their prayer life at the beginning of the passage. Their will and God’s will was completely in sync. That’s why they could call upon the name of Jesus and heal this man. We need a vine and branch relationship with the one who made us so that he is in us and we are in him. They were in constant communication with God. And it not just about asking for things. We all have people in our lives that only call when they want something, you don’t want to be that person in Jesus’ life right? What a good a gracious God we have. Don’t miss the opportunity, have a deep two sided relationship with the Lord. Won’t you call his name today.

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