

**Acts 3: 1-16; “The Faith which Comes through Him”, Sermon # 16 in the series – “Laying the Foundations”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, in the Morning Worship Service.**

I want to speak to you this morning on the subject of faith. All of your salvation and all of your progress in learning to live the Christian life will only come about because of your exercising faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is a grace which comes to you through your being born again; being born from above by the Spirit of God. Real faith is not something that all people have by nature. It is not your trying to trust in God by the strength of your own will; it is God enabling you to trust in Christ in accordance with His Word, and the working of His Spirit. Christ, your Savior, is the author and sustainer of your faith. The spiritual life and strength of your soul, all comes from Him. But true and saving faith does not come to you apart from the Word of God; but rather it comes to you in connection with the hearing of it. Romans Chapter 10, and verse 17 says, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” If you ever expect to be saved from your sins, you must come and listen to good Bible preaching, where the gospel is presented. God speaks to men through His Word. It is here, where you can hear the preaching of the Word. It is here that you are going to be most likely to hear the gospel, and God do a saving work in your heart. Faith, if you have it, is a grace which is given to you by God in relation to hearing the Word of God, and God expects you to exercise faith when you hear the Word; to the saving of your soul. Then, after you become a Christian; you need to understand, that all of the works which you hope to do for your Master and Savior, Jesus Christ, must be done by faith in Him, if you would see lasting fruit from them; fruit which will then tend to the glory of God. And so this morning I would like each of us to come to understand better; what faith is, and what faith does, in order to further the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ, in our hearts. We see, first in this passage, the faith of doing miracles evidenced in the Apostle’s healing of this lame man. (Verses 1-6) Second we see the faith of the lame man himself in response to the miracle. (Verses 1-8) And then 3<sup>rd</sup>ly – We see that the faith which comes through Christ brings perfect soundness of body and soul when Christ wills it. (Verses 9-16)

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – We see the faith of miracles evidenced in the Apostle’s healing of this lame man.**

Peter and John were going up to the temple to pray. In the original Greek, the verb “were going up” indicates that this was something that they customarily did each day. It is called “the hour of prayer, the ninth hour”, in verse one. This was 3 o’clock in the afternoon. The Apostles were men who devoted themselves to the Word of God and Prayer. It was not only their calling; it was also their joy. They were, in those days, teaching and preaching in the temple, in the outer porticoes, and so they no doubt were seeking an opportunity to preach Christ to those who were there. The preaching of Christ ought to be preceded by prayer and followed

up by prayer. It is then that God chooses to do His miracles. The Apostles knew that in prayer that they could hold sweet fellowship and communion with their Lord who would, by His Holy Spirit, cause them to understand what He would have them to do and to say for Him. Let me ask you if you have come to know this blessed truth? Are you regular in prayer? Do you have any stated daily times of prayer? This is how you come to know Christ better. This is how you become more useful to Him in service. This day, as the Apostles came toward the gate Beautiful they saw a certain man, it says; a man who had been lame from his mother's womb. Each day he was carried to the gate of the temple and laid there in that prominent place so that people entering in would have mercy upon him as he begged for alms to provide for himself. He did not know that this would be the most significant day of his life. We never know what a day will bring, and what it might mean for us personally. God is able to change everything for us, for the better, in a moment. But for how many years had this man been lame? It is told to us in chapter 4, verse 22, that he was over 40 years of age. But it is most appropriate that the gate at which this man laid was named "Beautiful". For this was indeed a most beautiful gate that he was laid by. It was made of the most exquisite Corinthian Brass. It would become the gate at which his healing and his salvation would take place. Josephus says, "Nine of the gates were covered all over with gold and silver, likewise the side posts and lintels; but there was one, without the temple, of Corinthian brass, which in dignity greatly exceeded the silver and golden ones." This gate was called Beautiful, and a most Beautiful thing was to take place there that day.

The Apostles were men of faith who had a special power conveyed to them by the Holy Spirit, at certain times of the Lord's ordering, to be able to perform miracles. They did not have this special power at all times and in all situations to be able to perform miracles at will. They had it with them when the Lord was present to give it to them, and conveyed to their minds when and how it should be used. As we read the gospels we see that our Lord Jesus Christ had this special power inherent in Himself, but even He did not exercise it at His own discretion apart from the Father. I would like you to turn over with me to Luke Chapter 5, verse 17. "Now it happened on a certain day, as Jesus was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judah, and Jerusalem." "And the power of the Lord was present to heal them." This power, I believe, was present in Jesus always to heal people; for He was God manifest in the flesh, but Jesus never did any of His healing works unless it was the Father's will. He says in John 9: 4 – "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day." This was just before He healed the man who was born blind. But in this passage in Luke 5, it goes on to say in verse 18, "Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him." "And when they could not find how they might bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed

through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.” “When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” “But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”— He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

So the power to heal was a demonstration of the Lord’s power to save people from their sins, if He so determined to do so. This is the faith of miracles; miracles being done by Jesus, which is also what we see in the passage that we are studying this morning. It is not just the faith of the paralytic man himself that Jesus recognizes here; it is the faith of those who carried him to Jesus so that he might be healed. It is not just the body that Jesus healed in this case; his soul was saved even before his body was healed. The faith of miracles is not necessarily saving faith, but in this case it was. But what I want you to see from this passage is that the faith of the men who carried this paralytic man to Jesus was the faith that Jesus took notice of primarily. It was not the man himself. The same is true in our text. When Peter said to him, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk,’ he was exercising the ability to heal that had been given to Him by the living Risen Christ Himself. This healing of this man’s lameness was a demonstration of the power of the Lord Jesus to also save the man’s soul through the preaching of Peter. The miracles were designed by God, in their nature and in their timing, to show forth the glory and power of Christ. People having seen the miracles; God then expected of them that they would also believe in Christ, not only for physical healing, but more especially, for the salvation of their soul. The miracles and the teaching went hand in hand.

Turn over now to John Chapter 4, and verse 46. “So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine.” “And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.” “When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.” “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.’ “The nobleman said to Him, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your son lives!’ “So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.” “And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, ‘Your son lives.’ “Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better.” “And they said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’ “So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives.’ “And he himself believed, and his whole household.” “This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.” This faith in Jesus doing miracles led to the father’s salvation in this case. There are,

however, people who have had this kind of faith, who are never saved from their sins. This is because they do not see the connection between the miracles and the teaching concerning salvation.

This is one of the grave problems with the Charismatic movement in our own day. It is wrongly believed that if a person has a supernatural gift, or gifts, by which they can think that they can help others around them, that they somehow then have the authority to start a healing ministry, or a ministry to cast out demons. This power is inherently with them they think. It is often automatically assumed that the person who has this gift has been saved from their sins and really knows God. It is automatically assumed that they are a wise and spiritually mature person. But this is not necessarily so. For a person can have gifts and even use them in humanly impressive ways, and still in the end lose their soul. The examples in the Bible are found in Judas, Saul, and Balaam. How can this be, you say? Well, turn over with me to Matthew Chapter 7, verse 21. Jesus is speaking here and he says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" What was the problem here? It was this; that these people who were lost, were lost because they only had the faith of doing miracles and believing that God is a God who does wonders. They did not have the saving faith, which is the grace given by Christ which leads to practicing righteousness. They did not learn to do the will of Father and practice righteousness. Worst of all, they did not really come to see Christ as the sacrificial substitute for their sins. They were more enamored with spiritual gifts than they were with becoming holy. They were caught up with the greatness of what the gift could do, rather than the greatness of what the grace of Christ can do, to change and transform the person's life, so that they will depart from evil, and practice righteousness.

Let me ask you this morning where you are in this regard, my friends? Are you more enamored with the healing of the body, than you are with the saving of the soul? There are many persons who are this way; and some of them are professed Christians. It is a very dangerous place to be. There are some professed Christians who really believe that they are more spiritual than other Christians if they believe that they can speak in tongues and prophesy, when all the while they have not understood that those gifts have ceased. They go about to try to manufacture their own great spirituality. Now, do not get me wrong. It is not as though God does not heal; He does. But the extraordinary gift of miraculous healings coming by the hands of men, as happened often in the days of the early Church; this is no longer with us. It is not as though the Church today does not have the gift of preaching and teaching; but it does not have the direct revelation from the God; the revelatory gift of prophecy. The focus of all believers now should be on the

written word of God being proclaimed by the power of the Spirit; not direct revelation from God Himself. When will we learn that the Bible is the “more sure word of prophecy?” When will we understand that we have the “perfect” in the complete and canonized Word of God. “The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul.” The gifts of tongues and prophecy, and the gifts of healings; these were for the infant stage of the Church. She did not have the completed New Testament Scriptures and so it was very necessary to have all of these extraordinary gifts. They are not needed today. What we need today is to pray for more light to be shined into our hearts so that we will understand the Scriptures, and more grace so that we will be able to do and keep Christ’s Word. I hope that this is what you pray for. The Holy Spirit distributes gifts as He will, and there are the ordinary gifts of the Spirit with Christ’s Church today. And we ought to believe in, and pray for, the great miracle of the Holy Spirit regenerating the heart, and the Father drawing people to Christ; the miracle of Christ in you, the hope of glory. Let us pray for the faith of these kinds of miracles to be taking place in our midst.

**Then 2ndly - We see the faith of the lame man, himself, in response to the miracle.** (Verses 1-8)

Now, it may not be apparent that this man had faith in exercise at all here in this case. He did not know what was going to happen to Him until it did happen. As a result of this, you might think that the Lord, through Peter and John was doing it all, but that was not the case. There are indications given to us here that the Lord gave this man the gift of regeneration leading to eternal life, and that he had true and saving faith in exercise at the very time in which he was healed. When Peter and John approached this man, he was asking for alms. He only was thinking of how he could provide for himself. He was a lame beggar. He could do nothing but ask for a gift. But ask he did. This man did not understand the greatness of what he was about to receive, but he obeyed the simple command which Peter gave to him. “Look at us”, Peter said. If he were a sinner who had no desire to keep this simple command, He might have lost out. But he obeyed this simple command to look at Peter and John. This is how it is when a person comes to saving faith in Christ. They look at, and they look to the people who can give them help concerning the salvation of their soul. They look to the preacher of the Word, and they look to other Christians. Verse 5 says, “So he gave them his attention expecting to receive something from them.” It does not say, “He highly doubted whether they would give him any help.” No, he had an expectation that he would receive something. This too, is how it is when a sinner who is ignorant of the Word of God, but is being led by the Spirit to think about spiritual things, begins to turn his attention to consider the preachers of the Word, and other Christians who are fellow-believers. When the Spirit is working, he expects to receive something from them. When he is first being led to Christ, he may think that it is only some money, or help in a time of need that he or she will receive. And then suddenly they realize; through the preaching of the Word, or some truth

shared with them that something far more is there than what they had realized. Christ Himself is there, and they are lying next to the gate Beautiful; the entrance to everlasting life. They may have never thought, and never realized that it was possible for them to walk spiritually; to be able to live the Christian life; to have their heart changed and strength given to them through grace to learn to do what pleases God; to be able to begin to do and to keep His commandments. And suddenly, it may be just one sentence of one sermon that changes them forever. "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." You see, it is not earthly riches that brought this man's healing; it was the miracle of Christ's touch and his being given faith in His name. It is the heavenly riches which are obtained when faith comes; when suddenly you stand on your feet for the first time spiritually and begin to walk. Let me ask you if you know something of these riches. For if you have received of the riches of Christ, you will be rich toward God. Not many persons who are rich in this world's goods will take the position of a beggar, to beg of God to be saved, to beg to be healed, and to walk with Him. Most rich people do not see their need. But the beggar does. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. If you lay up treasure for yourself, you may not be rich toward God. Do not let this happen. Come and place yourself humbly under the teaching and preaching of the Word, to receive the Word with all meekness, and you will soon find it to be the gate Beautiful to you.

Another indication that this man was saved from his sins that day and became a new creature in Christ was that he leaped up; he stood and walked and entered the temple with Peter and John. And all of the people saw him walking and praising God it says in verse 9. These are not the actions of one who has only been healed in his body. He was praising God. This is an evidence of the New Birth and the New Heart. This is evidence of the graces of love and joy. In fact this is evidence of the fulfillment of the Scripture in Isaiah 35, verse 5 and following. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." "Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing." "For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert." Verse 8 says, "A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness." Verse 10 says, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads." "They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Is that not a description of what took place at the gate Beautiful that day? This man had real, everlasting spiritual joy on his head that day. He was not only able to walk physically; he was now able to walk spiritually. This was why he clung to Peter and John. He was on the Highway of Holiness. He did not want to go back to the teaching of the Pharisees. That was the highway to hell. Verse 9 says, "No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; it shall not be found there."

“But the redeemed shall walk there.” The Pharisees and the rulers of Israel, most of them were ravenous beasts against Christ and His Apostles.

I believe that all of this walking and leaping and praising God are indications of redemption accomplished by Christ, and applied to this man. We sing Charles Wesley’s hymn, “*O For a Thousand Tongues*”, and we love it very much. But there is a verse that someone has wrongly removed from it, in our Trinity Hymnals. It goes this way: “Hear Him ye deaf, His praise ye dumb, your loosened tongues employ; Ye blind behold your Savior come, and leap ye lame for joy!” Christ had not only touched this man’s ankles and feet with His healing power and strength. He touched his soul. “He touched me; O yes He touched me.” “And O, the joy that floods my soul.” “Something happened, and now I’m whole.” “He touched me, and made me whole.”

**3<sup>rd</sup> - We see that the faith which comes through Christ, brings perfect soundness of body and soul when Christ wills it.** (Verse 16)

Another indication that this man was truly saved that day was the fact that after he was healed, it says in verse 11 that, “he held on to Peter and John, and all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed.” He stayed with those who preached to him the Word of life to him and healed him. He wanted to be with other believers, especially those who could teach him the way of the Lord. Is this the way that it is with you, my friends? When you become a Christian, you have a new family. Not a physical family, but a spiritual family. You will want to go the temple of God, which in the New Testament is the church. You will want to confess Christ before men, and identify with His people, and be a part of their lives and the life of the church. The people who ran together to see this man were greatly amazed because they had seen a miracle of a lame man’s legs and ankles becoming perfectly sound. But this man, Peter declares to us in his sermon in verse 16, that he had been given “perfect soundness” in their presence. Perfect soundness no doubt refers to the physical healing. But could it not also refer to his being spiritually healed and saved as well? I think that it can in this sense. This man now had saving faith. He had been made strong physically, but He was now being made strong spiritually to do the will of God. Oh praise the Lord that such miracles take place today as well. Yes God can heal physically if He so chooses. But the greater miracle is the healing and strengthening of the soul of a sinful man, to be given the ability to walk on the path of righteousness for His (Christ’s) name’s sake.

