

A Miraculous Healing

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Turning the World Upside Down / Miracles; Gift of Healing; Problem; Sin; Cure of Souls / Acts 3:1-10

Acts 3:1-10 shows us what Jesus did by a miraculous healing.

Introduction

Jim Jones was the founder of the Peoples Temple, a religious movement that began as a progressive and racially integrated community in Indiana.

Eventually, Jones and his church moved to San Francisco, CA. However, as Jones's influence grew, the group became increasingly authoritarian and cult-like.

Jones promised his followers a utopia in the jungles of South America after proclaiming himself the messiah of the Peoples Temple. On November 18, 1978, Jones orchestrated a mass suicide/murder in Jonestown, Guyana, resulting in the deaths of over 900 people, including children.

Hundreds of people believed that they were following a man who was teaching them the Bible. But, tragically, they lost their lives.

The Jonestown Massacre underscores one of the greatest needs of our day and that is to know what Christianity is.

What is the message that has been given to the Church?

It is vitally imperative that we know the answer to that question. For to get the answer wrong not only can lead to an unnecessary death but it will also lead to an eternity in hell.

Luke opened his second volume, the Book of Acts, by writing that his first volume dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach ([Acts 1:1](#)). Therefore, the Book of Acts is a continuation of all that Jesus began to do and teach.

Luke wrote about the giving of the Holy Spirit and Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost when 3,000 people were converted.

Then he described that first-century church that was populated by believers who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

We read of a church that was pulsating with the life of God. Believers were studying the word of God. They were enjoying fellowship with one another. They worshipped together. They served together. And they shared the good news of the gospel with unbelievers.

As Jesus continued "to do and teach" through the believers in that first-century church, Luke gave us an illustration of that truth.

Luke shared the story of a man who was lame from birth.

In today's lesson, we learn what Jesus did by miraculous healing through the apostles to the lame beggar.

Scripture

Let's read [Acts 3:1-10](#):

¹ Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ² And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. ⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ 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!" ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Lesson

[Acts 3:1-10](#) shows us what Jesus did by a miraculous healing.

Let's use the following outline:

1. The Problem That Was Presented (3:1-5)
2. The Cure That Was Offered (3:6-10)

I. The Problem That Was Presented (3:1-5)

First, let's examine the problem that was presented.

In verse 1, we read, **“Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.”**

The apostles believed that Jesus was the Messiah who was promised in the Old Testament. So they naturally continued attending the prayer services at the temple.

The prayer services took place three times a day. There was one in the morning, a second in the afternoon at **“the ninth hour,”** which is 3 p.m., and a third one in the evening.

Scholars suggest that the afternoon prayer service was the best-attended service.

Luke said in verse 2, **“And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple.”** [Acts 4:22](#) states that this man was “more than forty years old.”

We are not told who carried the man. Perhaps his parents had died and so he now had to take care of himself. Regardless, day after day he was taken to **the gate of the temple**, where he begged for alms.

Luke tells us that the man was placed at the gate that is called **“the Beautiful Gate.”** Scholars disagree about its precise location. But its precise location is unimportant to us.

What is important is that the man was placed in a strategic location to beg for alms. You see, people were about to enter the temple to engage in a religious

duty. So, he was in a place where people could hardly say, “I am on my way to worship God and I don’t have time to help one of God’s creations.”

“Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms” (v. 3).

Have you ever encountered a person who was begging for money on the street? I am sure you have.

What do you do?

Well, if you want to just pass by and not help the person, you don’t look at the beggar.

But, if you do want to help the beggar, you look at him.

And that is exactly what Peter and John did, as we read in verse 4, **“And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, ‘Look at us.’ ”** The lame man was so used to people passing by and, if they did give him something, they probably just dropped a shekel or two into his cup and kept walking.

So the man was surprised by Peter’s firm command, **“Look at us.”**

Verse 5 says, **“And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.”** The man was hopeful that he was going to receive a nice sum of money so that he could have a good meal that evening.

What happened to the lame man, however, was something that he never expected.

II. The Cure That Was Offered (3:6-10)

And second, let’s note the cure that was offered.

Peter said in verse 6a, **“I have no silver and gold.”** As soon as Peter said those words, the lame man must have been bitterly disappointed. He was hoping for a big payday but Peter said that he had no money.

Peter’s next word is important: **“But....”** That word is a coordinating conjunction that expresses a contrast.

And what a wonderful contrast Peter was about to state!

He had no silver and gold, **“but”** he had something far better. What was it?

Peter said in verse 6b, **“...but what I do have I give to you.”**

And then Peter said these glorious words, **“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”** (v. 6c).

Peter did not stand back and see what would happen. No, **“he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong”** (v. 7). Peter took the man by his right hand and helped him up to his feet.

The lame man must have been taken by surprise.

If anyone had tried to do this before, it had not worked. He had no strength in his legs and he would have just buckled to the floor.

But as Peter took his right hand and raised him up, he discovered—no doubt to his utter surprise—that **“immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.”**

An astonishing miracle had taken place. The man did not require physical therapy to strengthen feet and ankles that had never been used in over forty years.

But this formerly-lame man was not only standing on his legs by his own strength but he also did far more. Verse 8 says, **“And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.”**

Luke did not tell us how long the formerly lame man had been begging for alms at the Beautiful Gate. Perhaps it had been decades. However long he had been lame and begging for alms, the people instantly noticed that he was now walking and leaping and praising God.

Luke told us the reaction of the worshippers in verses 9-10, **“And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”**

Conclusion

There are several lessons I would like to note from this narrative of the miraculous healing of the lame beggar.

The first lesson is that this miracle was a sign.

It is helpful to define what I mean by *miracle*. We live in a day in which many people don't believe that miracles are possible. They say that they are scientific, that the laws of nature are fixed, and that miracles therefore do not take place.

A *miracle* is when God acts contrary to the laws of nature. We affirm that God is in sovereign control over all nature. Yet, there are times when God acts contrary to the laws of nature. Perhaps the best example of this is when the sun stood still "for about a whole day" in the book of Joshua ([Joshua 10:13](#); see also [2 Kings 20:9-11](#); [Isaiah 38:8](#)).

God acts according to natural laws. After all, he gave them.

And yet God sometimes acts in ways that are contrary to natural laws.

So, God acts in ordinary ways and God also acts in miraculous ways.

When I was receiving radiation treatment for prostate cancer, I frequently read John Piper's booklet titled, *Don't Waste Your Cancer*. He begins with these words, "I originally wrote this on the eve of prostate-cancer surgery. I believed then, and I believe now, in God's power to heal—by miracle and by medicine" (John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Cancer* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011], 3).

Although God does in rare instances heal by miracle, he more commonly heals by medicine. That is why we pray for healing, "by miracle or by medicine."

Clearly what happened to the lame man that day when Peter and John met him at the beautiful gate was a healing by miracle.

The point of a miracle is that it is a sign. The miracle is the healing. The sign is something to which the miracle points. In fact, [Acts 4:22](#) tells us that the healing was a sign, "For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old."

The miracle of this healing is that it is a sign pointing us to the power of God in salvation.

That leads me to the second lesson.

The second lesson is that the lame man at the Beautiful Gate is a picture of humanity in a state of sin.

The man was “lame from birth.” He was born like that. He had never been any different. He was physically disabled his entire life.

The first truth of the Gospel is that every one of us is born in sin. We are born spiritually disabled. We are all spiritually incapable of doing anything to save ourselves.

We are not born innocent. We do not become sinners. We are each born sinners. David said in [Psalm 51:5](#), “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

People think that they have spiritual capability. But they do not. They are dead in sin.

You know this. Where does a little toddler learn disobedience? Where does a child learn to say, “No!” “My way!” Every child is born in a state of sin. Eventually, all of us can see it and experience it.

“What’s wrong with the world?” a newspaper editorial once asked.

G. K. Chesterton wrote in reply, “I am” (*Galaxie Software, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations* [Biblical Studies Press, 2002]).

That is true of every one of us.

The third lesson is that the world cannot help us.

At some point, we realize that there is something wrong with us. So we look for answers. We try to find help in education, materialism, pleasure, entertainment, relationships, success, recognition, or any one of several things.

But, all that the world can do is give us alms. It satisfies the hunger we have for a little while.

But, deep down, the problem is still there.

We have no peace. Even if we do not know who wrote it, we agree with Paul who wrote, “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.... For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on

doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me” ([Romans 7:15, 18-20](#)).

The fourth lesson is that the message that has been given to the Church is Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Peter and John did not have silver and gold with them.

But they had Jesus!

They had spent almost three years with Jesus. They had heard his teaching. They had seen his miracles. They had seen his resurrection. They had received his teaching after his resurrection and before his ascension into heaven.

They had finally understood all that Jesus had done and said.

The Holy Spirit had been given to them. They were now filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. They were transformed men.

They had come to realize that the cure for their souls was not education, materialism, pleasure, entertainment, relationships, success, recognition, or any one of these things.

They came to understand that all the trouble in the world boiled down to a single, three-letter word: S-I-N.

Sin was the cause of suffering.

Sin was the cause of lameness.

Sin was the cause of pride, anger, hatred, and jealousy.

Sin was the cause of broken relationships.

In our world today, people want the church to do that which it is not called to do. They want the church to accommodate the culture. They want the church to accept what the world accepts.

Some people want the church to provide services that relieve their consciences—if only for the time that the person is in the worship service.

They want the church to make people feel good. So, the church must never talk about sin. The church must not offend people.

But, my dear friends, the church has no other message than “Jesus Christ of Nazareth.” That is our message.

The most basic problem in the world is sin.

And the church is the only institution in the entire world that has the cure for sin: Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

When I was a new associate pastor, my senior pastor sent me to an Evangelism Explosion conference in Ohio. It was a week long and it was hosted by a pastor of a large Lutheran Church.

At one point during the week, he shared his testimony with us. He was tall and had a basketball scholarship to college. When he graduated, he still had a year of basketball eligibility left. So, he went on to graduate school at the college so that he could keep playing one more year of basketball.

He decided to do his degree in theology in graduate school. Eventually, he graduated with a master’s degree in theology.

He did not know what he wanted to do with his life but he was encouraged to plant a church in Ohio.

The denomination gave him a large sum of money, enough money to build a church sanctuary.

While the sanctuary was being built, the pastor canvassed thousands of people in the neighborhood and invited them to the opening service.

I believe he said about 300 people showed up on that opening Sunday.

A few years later, he developed a pain in his abdomen. After a while, he went to the doctor.

The doctor performed test after test to discover the source of the pastor’s painful problem. But he could find nothing.

Then, one day the doctor said, “Pastor, I do not believe there is anything physically wrong with you. I believe that your problem is guilt. You need to find an answer for your guilt.”

The pastor left the doctor and realized that he did not know Jesus.

Over the next few days, he confessed all his sins to Jesus and repented of his sins. He came to trust in Jesus Christ of Nazareth alone for salvation.

Astonishingly, he discovered that his pain went away and he found peace with God.

Friend, the message of the church—indeed, the only message of the church—is Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” ([Acts 16:31](#)). Amen.