

Lame Man Leaping – Acts 3:1-10

Wouldn't it be **wonderful** if we could go to our **medical professional**, and he could **deliver us** from the **penalty** of our **sins** the way he might **set a broken leg**? If we could take a **newly developed pill** which could **cure us** of the **effects** of the **curse of sin**, we might be **willing to buy** it even if it **wasn't covered by insurance**. If **radiation** or **chemotherapy**, **physical therapy** or **shock treatments** could enable us to **walk** all the way into **Heaven** there might be a few more people willing to make that trip. But, of course, this will **never happen**. *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* This is why Christ said, *Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born again.* Nevertheless, there are a **few scriptural cases** where **physical** and **spiritual healing** went **“hand-in-hand.”** Or perhaps a **better cliché** might be – **“They went together like a hand and glove.”**

There was **once a crippled man**, who was **laid daily** at one of the **gates** of the **Jerusalem temple**. By the **direction and providence** of God, **Peter and John** entered that gate one afternoon and spoke to him. *“Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.”* **Judging** from the **context**, that man was **not only physically healed** but **spiritually saved**. And it is **that context** that I'd like us to **consider** this evening. Things **similar to these** found in this man, should be **visible in our lives** as well. **If they are not**, then perhaps we should **reconsider** whether or not **we have been cured** of anything.

We aren't surprised when a new believer is seen slowly testing or exercising his God-given faith. *“And he leaping up stood, and walked...”* **Verse 8** tells us that this man **“sprang to his feet”** – **with** the **encouraging hand** of the apostle. **For forty years**, his weak ankles had been **unable to support** his weight. For nearly half a century, he had **never been able to stand** upon the **promises of God**. This was **new territory** for this **redeemed sinner** – this **former unbeliever**. And for a few moments **all he could do** – all he **dared** to do – was to **stand**, not knowing what to expect. Peter and John had been **standing all their lives**, so they **may have smiled** to watch this man **standing like a year-old-baby** – with his arms outstretched for balance or to catch himself if he fell. **But he didn't fall**, so he **gingerly took a step** – then another – and another. He had **seen others walk**, just as he had heard others **speak of their faith** – but he had **done neither** to this point in his life. As I say, this was **new ground**, and **yet his feet and faith** were standing on it.

Christians, as they mature, **may sometimes forget** what it was like when they were first saved. They **may wonder why** that new saint **doesn't understand doctrines** which they have believed for years. *“Why can't you believe God chose to save you before the foundation of the world? And as far as that goes, why can't you believe that God founded that world less than 10,000 years ago? No, you can't lose your salvation, because you were saved by God's grace. Your righteousness didn't contribute to your salvation, and your sins can't negate God's saving grace.”* **New believers** may have **trouble believing all** that they **read in the Word of God**, questioning this verse or that verse. And just as a **new father must not spank** his toddling **infant for falling**, the experienced Christian needs to **be patient** with the toddling babe in Christ – **instruct** and **guide** – **don't reprimand**. Just **reach out** and let **that child grab** your **arm**, your **leg** – or your **heart** if he needs to. **You had to learn to walk** yourself years ago. **Be patient and help** this babe in his walk.

Shortly after standing, the man began praising God – verse 8.

That is **such a simple statement** – **“he began praising God”** – but **behind it** lay several **important considerations**. And in this is **one** of the **critical confirmations of his faith**. **As much** the man might have **instantly liked**, and even **loved**, **Peter and John** – the men who led him to the Lord – **it was God whom he praised**. Reading between the lines, I'm sure **I can see his joy** at being able to walk. The word **“rejoicing” isn't found** in **Acts 3 or 4**, but the **sentiment is undeniable**. The point is, the man's **heart began filling his lips** with **praise to God** for his newly **restored health**. There was **no confusion** in his **overjoyed heart** about **the source** of this great blessing. He **wasn't praising his baptism**, as many do today, because as yet he hadn't been baptized. He **wasn't praising his church**, because he knew nothing about God's assembly. And he **wasn't praising** the name of **Peter**. His **joy and rejoicing** was **in the Lord** – **no one else** – **nothing** else. Along **with** his restored **feet and ankle bones**, was a **spiritual rebirth** which could have **only one source**.

There is something else – which perhaps **I shouldn't stress** too much, but the implications are **tremendous**. **What did Peter say** to the man in **verse 6**? *“Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”* *“In the name, and with the authority and power, of JESUS CHRIST rise*

up and walk.” Maybe there was more said than what the Holy Spirit has recorded for us, but I think we have the gist of the discussion – if not all of it. And I don’t read where Peter referred to “Jehovah” or “Elohim” – two of the more prominent names of God in the Old Testament. He only spoke of Jesus, the Christ – the Messiah. How much had this man learned about the Messiah – the son of David? We don’t know. Did he know him to be the Son of God as well?

According to Peter’s words, it was Jesus Christ who healed this man, BUT His praise was to GOD. For the spiritually instructed, this is so elementary they might not give it a second thought. But coming from a new Christian, this is quite profound and shows evidence of genuine conversion. For him, Christ Jesus was Lord – that is – Jehovah God.

Once the man knew his legs were functioning, he used them to enter the temple.

Perhaps he had longed to do this since a child; now he has the freedom to do so. No one could forbid it. I wonder if he found it to be as special as he imagined? Was it another in a string of the great thrills that day or did it involve a tiny let-down?

In applying this, I was tempted to make this an illustration of immediately going to the Lord’s church. The original temple had been the House of God, as the Tabernacle in the Wilderness had been before it. But this particular building was rightly called “Herod’s Temple,” having been commissioned and financed by a half-Jewish, Christ-denying, religious liberal. I’m going to withhold our protagonist’s church relationship for a moment, while I apply his entry into the temple in another direction.

Might we not say, he immediately began showing some of the signs of outward religion. For Israel, prior to the purification which Christ brought to the nation, the temple was their religion. “The temple, the temple, the temple,” they tried to tell Jeremiah – despite the hollowness of their words. For any Jewish male, who was not otherwise forbidden because of some uncleanness, to keep himself from the temple, told his neighbors that he was a rebel. Now this man was temple bound – it was expected – it was natural for a religious man.

Could I use entering the temple to illustrate some of the things which should come with new life in Christ? Instantly there was a desire to clean up his old, filthy, blasphemous mouth. Christians don’t swear. When he saw that man who daily tried to cheer him up with a dirty joke, he now stopped him by pointing to the temple and saying that kind of talk didn’t belong here – it belong to him either. Do you suppose that the men who carried him to the temple every morning, took him to the tavern every evening on the way home? If they did, they won’t do it any more. Many non-Christians, know that Christians don’t smoke pot or cigarettes, so this man immediately stopped. There was now a spring in his step, which had, obviously, been obviously missing in his old life. There was a smile hidden behind that beggar’s face, which now became a part of his new life. “And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.” There is nothing as powerful as the testimony of a newly saved soul. And that is my next point.

This new child of God willingly became the catalyst for a number of things in others.

“And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?”

The man “held Peter and John.” I was hoping some research would find something special in that word “held” – but it didn’t. The man simply grabbed and held on to the apostles. But why? Do you suppose they were trying to slink away into the shadows? I doubt it, but perhaps. He forced them to remain at the center of the stage. But how did he hold them? He did lock them in some sort of manly embrace? Or did he grab the shoulders of their clothes to keep them from moving? Did he grab one of their hands with each of his own and raise them into the air as some victory signal?

May I apply the term to simply suggest that he encouraged them in their God-given duty to preach the word? For the rest of the chapter, Peter preached the gospel of repentance to the religious sinners around them. He said in verse 18 – “Those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.” The formerly lame man permitted himself to be used as the text for a gospel message. “Why look ye so

earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?"

There is **nothing which encourages** the minister of the gospel like **newly redeemed believers**. The new Christian **may know very little more** than – *“Jesus Christ cured me – He saved my soul.”* But that same babe in Christ **can build a fire** in the **soul of the preacher** that can **ignite a conflagration**. **Acts 4: 4** says, *“Many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand.”* **As Peter was preaching** that day in one of the courts of the temple, the **former crippled sinner** was standing **by his side**. Many were **looking back and forth** from Peter to this man whom many had **seen so many times**. Perhaps **some** of them **didn’t look at the Apostles at all**, but while **hearing Peter’s words**, they were **staring** at the **joy on the face** of the man who had been cured. **The leaping lame man** became a **part of the salvation of thousands**. **I picture and hear him** shouting *“amen”* to every other statement Peter made.

With Peter’s sermon we come to the **end of the chapter**. **And with that** the former crippled man **isn’t directly mentioned again**. We might be **tempted to bring our message to a conclusion**, but a **Christian life doesn’t end** on the **day** of his **salvation**. And **even though** the new believer **might begin to blend in** with the other thousands of God’s saints, he is **still there** and his **own personal ministry continues**.

I believe this man willing accepted arrest at this point.

Acts 4:1 – *“And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.”* Throughout the first part of **chapter 4** we have the pronoun *“they,” “they,” “they.”* Who are those *“they”*?

Is there a clue in the **first clause**, *“And as they spake unto the people... they laid hands on them....”* **The three hour sermon** that was preached that afternoon came from the **lips of Peter** – **Acts 3:12**. But **Acts 4:1** says **“THEY spake unto the people.”** **You may disagree** with me if you like, but **you’d probably be wrong** – Peter, John and this man **all testified** to what had happened. Besides, **judging** from the **cured man’s behavior**, **I don’t think** you could have **kept him quiet very long**. *“And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.”* As I said, he was **shouting “amen”** to every other statement Peter made.

Things were getting **stirred up** there in the temple that afternoon. In fact, things were **beginning to get out of hand**. **To keep the Romans** from sending in **troops** from the Fortress of Antonia, **the Jews sent** in their own **temple police**. The **three trouble-makers** were **arrested** and **incarcerated without trial or bail**, because the evening sacrifice was about to be made. Then *“it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set THEM in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?”*

Again, who are the *“them”*? I must assume it is a reference to **the same three people**. But *“then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth THIS man stand here before you whole.”*

The leaping lame man was still **at Peter’s side**. He was **willing to suffer** for his brand new **faith in the Lord** – and for the **blessing he had received**. *“Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”* This is the **kind of new Christian** who has **significantly glorified** the Saviour throughout history. This is the **kind of Christian** who can make an **impact on any godless society** – even ours.

Peter then boldly addressed the leadership of Israel, **magnifying** the name of **Jesus Christ, the Saviour**. *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* – **verse 12**. **Not only** was the **lame man cured** of his **deformity**, he had been **spiritually saved**. He was hearing and **learning Biblical doctrine by leaps and bounds** – something he couldn’t do prior to the restoration of his legs. **Once again**, he was **shouting “amen”** as Peter spoke.

Verse 13 – *“Now when (the rulers) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.”* So they **threatened everyone**,

commanding them to keep their **mouths shut** about **Christ**, about his **resurrection** and about **salvation**. **To which** Peter and John **famously replied**, *“Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”* And **once again** the leaping lame man **shouted** *“amen.”*

Then, I believe, all three of them walked to the true House of God.

“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord...” And they praised God. The **same pronoun “they”** is **still being used**, and there is **nothing** encouraging us to **redefine it**.

I don’t for a moment think that Peter and John **permitted** that former lame man **to get away** without joining them at the **next assembling of the Lord’s church**. **We don’t read** here that he was **immersed as a testimony** of his new life in Christ, **but I believe** that he was sometime in the next few days. **We don’t find** here that he became a **member of the church**, but, in truth, there were so many becoming members it was hard to keep track of everyone. **We aren’t** told that he became a **deacon**, or a **preacher** of the gospel, but it is a **possibility**.

It is **not only a possibility**, but a **responsibility** of new believers to **associate themselves** with other believers. They **need the fellowship** and **encouragement** of the Lord’s assembly, so that they **can grow** in the knowledge and truth of the Word of God. And they are also **needed FOR fellowship** and the **encouragement** by the Lord’s assembly. That **new believer** might be all that is **needed to ignite a fire** in an otherwise **cooling church**. So God’s people should **encourage new believers** to become a part of **God’s local church**. **That man** who had been a **catalyst in the salvation of 5,000** on the **day of his salvation**, may have **later been instrumental** in the salvation of **others as well**.

This leaping lame man should be **studied as an example** of what a **new convert** should **do and become**. He was **on fire for the Lord**, and probably he **warmed the hearts** a few other saints as well. **May God give this church** a man like the **leaping lame man** from the Beautiful gate.