

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

OPPORTUNITY (ACTS 3:1-5) FAITHFUL JEWISH PEOPLE

The early Christians were still faithful Jews in many respects. At the beginning of chapter 3 we see Peter and John going to the temple at the "hour of prayer" similarly to how we attend church today. They were on a mission to share Jesus with the devout Jews who had Him crucified.

A LITTLE DETOUR ON THE WAY

As they were passing the gate that led to the temple, a beggar who had been crippled from birth asked Peter and John for help.

- People with physical defects were not allowed to enter temple worship, but oddly enough it was seen as virtuous to give alms to the poor. This was a time with no social institutions to help.

AFTER 3000, WE HAVE THIS 1...

The disciples were right off the heels of massive "church" growth, but God now leads them to engage in this one outcast because he's every bit as important as the 3000 (Luke 15).

- God is not only interested in how many people we disciple, but if we're **looking for and seizing the opportunities to share the love of Jesus.**

"LOOK AT US"

There would have been dozens of beggars brought out to the temple gate daily, and this process would've been routine to the man. Unexpectedly though, Peter and John look him in the eyes and command his attention.

- **We must show the world, and remind ourselves, that Jesus is the champion of the underdog.**

POWER (ACTS 3:6-10) DEFLATING THE MAN'S HOPES

The beggar went from excitement about 2 men actually engaging him, to disappointment when they said they had no money, to utter shock when they told him to stand up and walk!

- **God doesn't ask us to give what we don't have.** They didn't have money, but **they did have the Spirit, and that's what they offered.**

PETER AND JOHN HELPED HIM UP

As they grabbed the man's hands to help him up, his legs became strong and he walked into the temple complex with them.

- Look at the lesson! **It took the Holy Spirit working through people willing to hold others up until they were strong enough to walk on their own.**

WE LEARN THAT IT IS A BIGGER COMMITMENT

Being the "hands and feet" of Jesus goes beyond just tossing money at someone in need and extends deep into their lives.

- **We're to help others financially, but more importantly we create lasting relationships that open the door for God to make an eternal impact. We take the long, hard, messy road.**

THEN HE JUMPED RIGHT INTO WORSHIP

A man who was never allowed inside the worship service now dances, jumps, and praises his way into the temple! Everyone saw this, and they were in awe as they recognized the change in the man.

- **Whether it's physical or spiritual healing, people will be shocked by the transformation God does in our lives.**

BACK TO THE UNDERDOGS

Look at this scene. Two men who had no religious credentials walk into the temple courtyard and astound the crowd by being vessels of a healing.

- There's nothing wrong with education or success, but **we must know that God is our Equipper, Provider, and means to true success.**

EVEN BETTER THAN MONEY

Look at the contrast between what the man expected and what he received. He was excited about a little money, but was overwhelmed when he received healing.

- **In such a materialistic culture, it is so easy to miss the truly great blessings of God! Wholeness and contentment far outweigh material possessions.**

THERE WAS AN EVEN GREATER MIRACLE

We must also contrast the physical miracle with the spiritual one. This beggar became a follower of Christ and was transformed spiritually by God.

- In a time when a "perverse generation seeks a sign," we must remember that **Jesus taught us that forgiveness of sins is greater than physical healing** (Matthew 9).

THE SOURCE (ACTS 3:11-16) PETER ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE

As the crowd moves towards the healed man, Peter steps into the portico that surrounded the temple and began to teach the crowd. The first thing Peter does is deny any credit that would have been given to him or John.

- **The first step in ministering to others is denying self and focusing on the power of God.**

THE GOSPEL STARTED A LONG TIME AGO

Peter informs the crowd that the good news of Jesus Christ had started developing with the fathers of the Jews: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

- But, even though the prophecies should've been clear to them, they still chose Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

"YOU KILLED THE SOURCE OF LIFE" (V15)

Imagine the horror on the people's faces as they realized that in their ignorance they took the breath from the One that created it.

- Also imagine the humility that came when they realized Jesus resurrected and wanted to give them a new "breath," His Holy Spirit, even though they'd sinned.

THE SOURCE OF ALL HEALING

Peter told the crowd exactly how the man was healed and how he had come to believe in Jesus, a man he probably saw come through that gate a hundred times.

- **Effective ministry proclaims the name of Jesus Christ. We must give all credit to Him and educate people about how He loves and wants to lead us.**

THE POINT (ACTS 3:17-26)

A MIXTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND GRACE

Peter shows grace when he acknowledges that they killed Jesus out of ignorance, but he still demands that they need to repent.

- There's a difference in sin because of ignorance and willingly disobeying God (Hebrews 10:26). **If we're honest most are not as ignorant as we claim, nor is ignorance a valid excuse in our day.**

ONCE WE ARE EDUCATED, WE MUST RESPOND

Peter had educated the crowd on their sin now he encouraged them to respond so they could have a "refreshing" from God.

- **If we will stop to hear and respond to the truth that is presented virtually everywhere around us, God will restore us.** We can connect and find restoration with **God, family, and society.**

"UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE RESTORATION" (V21)

Though we need to be careful not to get kooky with this, it seems as though Israel as a nation will repent to Jesus before He returns for the Church.

- Peter quotes from Deuteronomy 18 to show that Moses even prophesied the Messiah and that he alluded to many Jews coming to faith in Jesus.

THE PAST PAVED THE WAY FOR THE FUTURE

Peter was saying that belief in Moses and the Prophets of the OT should have made the belief in Christ easy because they all looked forward to the Savior.

- Peter's Jewish audience was the natural heirs of God's promises dating back to Genesis 22, but fortunately for us we're also grafted into the promise

EVERYTHING HAS LED US TO HERE

- If we are grafted into the same promises mentioned by virtually every author of the Bible, that means **that at this moment everything that has happened in our lives up to this point has led us to this room, and right now we have the opportunity to experience restoration.**
- The opportunity for us to be **forgiven and healed** is now. We must also **recognize opportunities for others to be invited in.**
- We've been **empowered** by the Holy Spirit
- The Source is Jesus Christ
- The point is **to be shown the love of Christ and to show it to those around us.**