

## O Church Arise!

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 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. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 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!" And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 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.

Acts 3:1-10

Intro: Acts 1:1-2 All Jesus began to do

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

Acts 1:1-2

Situation of the Church

### The Church Faces the World

#### A. In the Regular Rhythms

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 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 3:1-2

Peter and John are going to the temple **at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.**

-This is 3pm in the afternoon.

The author, Luke, introduces us to "a man lame from birth [who] was being carried, whom they laid **daily** at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms..."

Pastor Britt helped me see this in the text as we were talking-that Luke is subtly showing us there's a regular rhythm happening.

-and it is in the rhythms that the Spirit tends to move.

It's the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. 3 in the afternoon when a miracle takes place. In the midst of a daily occurrence.

Luke also tells us in Acts 10:3 that Cornelius, a devout man who gave alms to the poor, had a radical vision in the ninth hour.

The Church is being the Church. Peter and John's sustenance is communing with God.

-Let me encourage you, brother and sister to sit down with a cup of coffee and consume his Word and pour out your heart to him in prayer.

-And I believe if we are to see the kind of miracles and to treasure Jesus the way they treasured him, we'd be wise to start with regular rhythms of being with God.

transition: and it's in the daily rhythm that Peter and John face a jarring juxtaposition

### **B. A Jarring Juxtaposition**

they [him] laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the **Beautiful Gate** to ask alms of those entering the temple. Acts 3:2b

-The gate was most likely made of brass, gold, silver...“75' high and had huge double doors.”<sup>1</sup>

Double doors towering toward the sky, wrapped in precious metals. And a man, crippled from birth begging on the ground.

Now not only are Peter and John face to face with a crippled man, but the Church is confronted with the world: MLJ describes the reality:

“Here is the church in action, the church facing the world. There they are, the first Christians. They have had this tremendous experience. The Holy Spirit has come upon them. They are filled with the Spirit, and they are rejoicing, praying, and praising God with singleness of heart. But now they face the world as it is- and this is the business of the church. That is why she is here- to help the world. The Lord came from heaven to help men and women.”<sup>2</sup>

What will she do?

### **He Sees Them, She Sees Him**

Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

- The lame beggar sees them entering the temple and asks for something
- Then Peter does something we often fail to do...Peter directed his gaze at him
- He sees, “Look at us.”
- And he fixed his attention on them

Peter didn't turn away, he didn't see and avert his gaze, he didn't pull out his phone to distract, HE believed he had something to give to him.

The beggar sees them, Peter intently gazes at him, he sees him, and he says, Look at us, and the man who lays daily at the towering double doors lifts up his eyes and expects a couple coins

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!” And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him

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<sup>1</sup> Stott, John, *The Message of Acts*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downer Groves, IL: IVP, 1990), 90.

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd-Jones, Martyn. *Acts 1-8*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 216.

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.

Acts 3:6-10

Why do we have this story and what are we to glean from it?

I have melancholy bent. One thing that I've found incredibly helpful is to read the biographies of Christian men and women who have gone before us and see how God moved in their lives.

-I see in Charles Spurgeon that God moved through a man who was often downcast

-I see in George Mueller a man full of faith who expected God to meet his needs

-I see in John Knox unwavering Spirit-empowered courage to live by God's Word

And these are all great, but in the Book of Acts we have "the prophetic word more fully confirmed", God's Spirit-breathed account of the Church. Surely here we find encouragement. Surely here we are built up and taught the Truest Church history.

So as we read and study the Book of Acts, let it bear its weight on our souls. And let us read thoughtfully and ask good questions of this text.

Why do we have this story?

### **1. To Show Jesus is Still Working through His Church**

Remember, Acts opened with Luke writing that in his first volume, he recorded all that Jesus began to do, thus implying that Acts is the story of all Jesus continues to do through his Spirit-empowered Church!

He hasn't left us as orphans. He's still working!

There is even, in this miracle a messianic fulfillment of Isaiah 35:6 that says when God comes to save his people

"then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy."

Isaiah 35:6

Jesus, ascended at the right hand of the Father is still at work through his Spirit-empow. Church

### **2. To Inspire Our Faith and Show Us Our Heritage**

Our heritage is in what Peter had to give the man.

"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!"

Acts 3:6

Now, I want to be very honest. I was tempted at this point in the message to say God still heals today, BUT let's just talk about the greater healing of salvation.

Maybe it's a lack of faith, maybe it's my heart that no one misses the Giver for the gift...but as I wrestled with the text, I don't believe we have this true story so we can say God can heal BUT

I believe we have this story so that the Church more earnestly desires to see the power of God and so that our faith rises to ask God for more healings.

### 3 Questions About Healing

#### 1) Does God still heal today?

- Yes, absolutely.
- We have many stories of God healing throughout history and many of us know
- But more importantly, we are given accounts of healings in the Spirit-empowered Church, commanded in Scripture to pray for healing, and instructed that the Spirit gives gifts of healing.
- And there is nothing in Scripture that would tell us God isn't in the business of healing people anymore. There is nothing in this book to suggest that.

#### 2) How should we pray for healing?

- There's not just one way
- There is no formula
- In James 5, we see the Church instructed to have the elders pray for the sick

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.  
James 5:14–16

Here we see the elders should be called, the need for faith (belief that God can heal), the possibility of needing to confess known sin, the instruction to use oil in the name of the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 12:9, we're told that within the body the Spirit gives gifts of healing to some.

And in Acts, we see

- Peter's shadow heal people in Acts 5
- Paul's handkerchief heal people in Acts 19
- Paul stretch out on a dead guy and heal him in Acts 20

The multiplicity of ways God heals people in the Bible should lead us to assume there's not way sure-fire way to heal, but rather that it should be done "In the name of Jesus".

To pray in the name of Jesus is not a recitation of those words, that would be a spell or witchcraft. It's to pray according to the person of Jesus.

To pray in the name of Jesus is to come to the Father as his child, only on account of what Jesus did on the cross for you. It is to come humbly, knowing it's nothing you did to deserve your request, but it's also to come boldly because you are truly his child and he loves you.

So we should pray for healing with real belief that God can and will heal and trust him with the results.

#### 3) What do we do if he doesn't answer our prayers for healing?

- we keep asking
- we trust that he is gracious and good and wise
- I think we pray along the lines of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."  
Daniel 3:16-18

God, you are able to heal, I believe you will heal, but if not, I will still worship you.

How can we realistically pray in this apparent paradox?

I think it's because we have Jesus.

You see signs and wonders are great. They inspire awe and amazement, but they are SIGNS

Meaning, it is not the end in itself. Let us never stop thinking physical healing in this life is good, but it's not ultimate, it was always meant to point to Jesus!

See what Peter does with this healing:

And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all."  
Acts 3:12–16

Peter points the crowd to Jesus.

-Physical healing is good and should be asked for, but let us keep going on the road of which healing is a sign.

Peter says, this is a sign of the power of Jesus, therefore repent from your sins, that your times of refreshment may come.

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,  
Acts 3:19–20

You see, we all were met by God as beggars who couldn't just get up and walk. But in his mercy, according to his grace, he put us down somewhere we heard the gospel.

He said, "Look at me."

And we looked at Christ upon the cross and simply trusted in his generosity.

And he said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, RISE AND WALK"

And he grabbed us by the hand, thrust us to our feet, and immediately our ankles were made strong

And immediately he gave us a new heart.

So let us all be filled with wonder and amazement and the God who heals. At the God he reaches down. At the God who doesn't only give us silver and gold. At the God whose name is Jesus!

May we be a church full of faith, praying for the sick, seeing God move in our midst.

May we be a church that does not doubt he is ABLE to heal and may we say WE BELIEVE YOU WILL

But even if not, I will praise you.

Let us pursue healing with faith **AND** let us tell the world about JESUS