

## How to Experience Refreshing and Blessing (Acts 3:11-26)

Last week we saw Peter and John heal a man who had been lame from birth (begged at Gate Beautiful)

- It happened in the crowded temple courts during the gathering for the afternoon prayer meeting
- Many present had known the man, saw the miracle, and “were filled with wonder and amazement”
- That is where we pick up the story... **Read verses 6-26**

Notice: (1) What Peter did (2) What the healed man did not do (3) What the crowds discovered

### What Peter did...

The people began to do what people do—make a big deal about people

- But Peter deflected the glory, and drew the attention to Jesus (verse 12-13a)
  - The disciples used to argue about which of them was the greatest
  - In the **shadow of the Cross** and under the **sway of Pentecost** we see a different Peter
    - So quick to give all the glory and draw all the attention to Jesus
    - Peter admits that this miracle was not about his **power** or **godliness** (a real temptation)
    - “**God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble**” (Cf. “**I must decrease...**”)
- **Faithfully**, Peter reveals the source of power and grace (verse 16)
  - As Travis said last week, miracles are meant to be **signs** (not an end in and of themselves)
  - **Signs** that point to Jesus (verse 13a)
    - Peter and John did have to have **faith**
    - But it was not faith in themselves, or their own merit, or in faith itself (as a force; Peter Pan)
    - It was faith “**in the name of Jesus**” (**name** = His Person and Work; Identity and Power)
  - So, Peter does well and acts **faithfully** in directing their attention to Jesus

But, Peter did not go on with some generic musings about Jesus—**He took his friendemies to the Cross**

- The Cross and Resurrection of Jesus are always central
- **Romans 1:16a**, NIV then **1 Corinthians 2:1-2**, NASB

We have been talking a lot (through Acts) about being **witnesses** for Jesus

- Sometimes we can get overwhelmed at the thought (what to do and say)
- God's work in the world gives His people opportunity to minister and proclaim his message
- There is power in the message of the Cross (that is the crux of it all)
- Do what Peter did... take people to the Cross of Christ (no other way) (real power in that message)

Yet we feel so inadequate, so ill-prepared to respond like Peter. But, let's not forget their struggles in the Gospels... how ordinary they were, how incompetent, how ill-fitted for tasks Jesus sent them to do.<sup>1</sup> (**risen, power**)

### What the healed man did not do...

Look again at **verses 8-11**

- **Solomon's Colonnade** was back past the **Gate called Beautiful**, across the court of Gentiles
- The newly healed man had walked with Peter and John right past the place he used to **beg** (**cripple**)
- Listen to me—**the man, having been touched by the power of God walked with the people of God**
  - **And: Here is what the man did NOT do: He did not return to his former life**
  - He did not say to Peter and John, “**Thank you for everything... I am going back to my old way of existence. I liked my lame, constricted, and crippled place of need.**”
  - That would be ridiculous (but God's people have often done that—Israel; us)

**Let the man, in his previous crippled condition, be a picture of the life of sin**

- Every day the man had found himself **constricted, afflicted and needy** (verse 2)

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, Acts, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998). 50.  
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- After He was touched by the power of Jesus he was **liberated, light and happy** (verse 8-9)
  - **See the juxtaposition and do not let the power of it be lost on you**
    - The man, having been touched by the power of God walked with the people of God
    - And did not return to his former way of life—he walked away from it

### **We were once all beggars made lame and impoverished by sin**

- But we have been healed and set free by the power of God through the Gospel!
- So, we do not return to our former ways of being (spiritually lame and destitute)

And the sight of this transformed person walking away from His past drew a crowd (picture of witness)

### **What the crowds discovered...**

#### **The Cross of Christ, only, always, ever, proves us to be guilty (See: verses 13-15a)**

- (4 times Peter says, "**You...**") = Their crime was immense; their guilt enormous
  - But no more really than anyone's—our sin bears the same culpability (cf. any rejection of J.)
  - **The point is:** The fact of the Cross illuminates the fact of our guilt (key to witness) (E.g. invited to E)
- But Peter does not leave them there—he lands the plane by saying, "**But God...**"
  - This is what YOU did—but this is what GOD has done
  - "**But God raised Him from the dead**" (verse 15b) = Basis for our salvation
- So, we see: (1) the guilt of humanity; (2) the intervention of God; **and... (3) the testimony of Scripture**
  - **See: Verses 17-18, 21-25**
  - There we have a great template for witness
    - (1) What we have done (2) What God has done (3) Based on What the Bible says

#### **Not only did the miraculous sign point to Jesus, but the Holy Word did as well**

- To reject Jesus and His work is to dismiss thousands of years of History and His Word
- If you reject Jesus/Bible, you had better have some astounding, time-enduring evidence to do so!

**For Witness: The Bible does not need to be so much defended, as it does proclaimed**

That is what the crowd heard from Peter (1-3)... **but see what they discovered: Verses 19-20 and 26, NIV**

- **These promises were for them! (The kindness of God) (Romans 5:8)**
  - God was offering to them: **Refreshing** and **Blessing**
  - By **wiping out their sins** and **turning them from their wicked ways**
  - Jesus brings us blessing and refreshing
    - By saving us from the power and penalty of sin
    - Sin promises good but only ever delivers curses and weariness
    - Principle here: No repentance, no **refreshing** and no **blessing**
- **What they needed do is repent and turn to God (v. 19)**
  - Repent = a change of mind and so direction.... Cf. **Turn from their wicked ways** (v. 26)
  - We think that we will live the good life if we go our own way
  - But, we discover that our way and our sin leave us weary and feeling cursed
  - God has a way for us and in His way we discover **refreshing** and **blessing**
    - Verse 19 = **repenting of our sins is refreshing**
    - Verse 26 = **turning from our wicked ways is a blessing**
- **Wherever we refuse to do this we will lack blessing and refreshing (= what the crowds discovered) (all)**

Response:

- Whose experience from that day most resonates with you today? (Peter, The Man, The Crowd?)
  - Maybe what you need to do today is humble yourself in light of Jesus' great power and determine to be a witness for Him (like Peter)
  - Maybe you need to determine to stop going back to your lame ways and walk in freedom with God's people (like the man)
  - Maybe you need to realize that you are guilty before God, but God has sent Jesus for you!