

ACTS 3

The emphasis in Acts chapters 3 and 4 is on the name of the Lord *Jesus* (**Acts 3:6, 3:16, 4:7, 4:10, 4:12, 4:17-18, and 4:30**). In the Bible, a name implies much more than identification; it carries authority, reputation, and power. And there is no name that carries greater authority than “Jesus” because all authority has been given unto Him as stated in **Matthew 28:18**. Because Jesus’ name is above every name as stated in **Philippians 2:9-11**, Jesus deserves our worship and obedience. Now regarding **Acts 3:1-10** we will discover a factual account of a lame man healed in the name and authority of Jesus. This text affirms there is life transformational power in the name of Jesus...we need to stop merely going through the motions of church attendance only...and begin praying for and following up on the divine appointments God prepares for us.

Vs. 1 - Notice 2 apostles – 2 sent ones – 2 church leaders are mentioned as they were going to the temple to pray “at the hour of prayer.” The phrase “*at the hour of prayer*” means it was a “planned for” a designated corporate prayer time frame. The *ninth hour* would have been 3pm. Now “shucking the corn down to the cob” this text should be encouragement to TMFBC’s servant leaders and the membership to come and pray during TMFBC’s designated corporate hour for prayer every Tuesday night from 7pm – 8pm in what we affectionately call S.H.O.P. **Psalm 55:17** says, “*Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.*” The Jews observed 3 times a day for prayer – Morning (9am) - Afternoon (12pm) and Evening (3pm). Now we don’t have to pray at 9am – 12pm and 3pm to be a Christian – the essence of the **Psalm 55:17** is that we need to be intentional and

consistent in setting aside time frames every day for prayer. *(It was that verse, that the first person to ever tell me that perceived I would be a preacher/pastor - Mrs. Ada Green asked me to pray at 9am – 12pm and 3pm and ask God to show me His plan for my life. I was 9 years old and I was reading the collection of the Psalms and when I read that verse...I began to pray at those times earnestly seeking God's will for me life).* We must know the church began in a corporate prayer meeting – when Jesus ascended back to heaven in **Acts 1:9**, He told the disciples to go and pray for the comforter and about 120 people were faithful and did that - then the Holy Spirit came and the church was birthed. A requirement to serve God faithfully means we must have a dedicated prayer life.

Vs. 2-3 - This man had been lame from his mother's womb. His *physical* condition is symbolic of man's *spiritual* condition at birth...**Ephesians 2:1-5** tells us, that all humans are born spiritually dead – but God is so rich in mercy and He loves us so much that even while we were spiritually dead because of our sins...the opportunity for spiritual life is afforded to everyone because Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead with all power. God heals the spiritually lame by His mighty power and He does it as a gift - we cannot work to earn it. We just have to accept the gift of spiritual healing by faith. The lame man was born in an era whereby there was no surgery or

medicine that could help him – they had no wheelchairs - in fact, if this man left his house, it was only because his friends came over and carried him. The lame man’s friends took him to the *Gate called Beautiful* that was near the Temple thinking if people went to church to pray; they could not see this need and not help. But just like in our day and age we can see what we want to see. Typically, a person would not look a beggar in the eye – they just like us, would ignore or act like they don’t see a beggar and go about their business.

Vs. 4-5 – Regarding the phrase Peter said, “*Look at us*” since the lame man was not saved at this point and his reason for being at the *Gate called Beautiful* was to beg to get his needs met; one of his thoughts probably was “I’m about to get paid now – here are two preachers coming my way!”

Additionally, when Peter said, “*Look at us*” – that phrase also carries the idea Peter and John were not going through the motions that day – they recognized the divine appointment God had set for them and they were not too busy doing ministry that they failed to minister.” We need to be very careful about how we treat strangers because we never know if we are entertaining angels unaware. The spiritually lame people who are in our sphere of influence can have their lives transformed into a life of wholesomeness - a life of holiness based on the power within Christians called the Holy Spirit if we would yield ourselves to Jesus’ will. You know sometimes all it takes is for us to take

notice of those around us...a welcoming smile – a firm handshake or a genuine statement looking at the person in the eye and saying, “Hello how are you doing.” A word of encouragement can go a long way with helping somebody go on another day. I wonder where I would be if I had not been encouraged along the way. I praise God for the divine appointments God sent my way to encourage me.

Vs. 6-7 – these verses teach us Jesus desires to use Christians to help lift up the downtrodden. We must have compassion on those who are struggling with an addiction – with those who are not saved – with the homosexual and transgender people – and with those homeless and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work through us to bring about spiritual healing. Notice Peter said “Silver and gold I do not have...” and He was telling the truth. Peter and John were really just two broke preachers on their way to a prayer meeting – but when Jesus sent out the disciples, He told them He would supply all they needed – they did not have to carry a money sack – two cloaks, or extra gear. Peter was not being disrespectful to the man either. In **vs. 6**, Peter is suggesting if I had money to give you, I’d do it...But what I do have - I give to you. Church, if your expectation from God is only for money or a majority of the time only money, then your expectations from God are too low and too little. Often times we may ask God to give us something we want or we ask

God to solve a “specific problem” we have but you must know God desires not only to solve some “specific problems” we call on Him for...but God desires to give us a whole new life and help us with all our problems. Sometimes, we don’t receive our answer in prayer because God is saying *I have something even greater I want to give you.* When the text says in **vs. 6b** - “*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*” It is as if Peter said, because of who Jesus Christ is, by virtue of Jesus’ character, by the authority in His name, rise up and walk. Peter is saying, I stand here as Jesus’ ambassador – his designated person to speak on Jesus’ behalf. Peter and John were healing through the Holy Spirit’s power, not their own. Peter and John did not select that man to heal, God did. It is verses like these that give rise to false teaching and fake healers. If Peter and John could heal whenever they wanted to; or heal whomever they wanted to...then why did they not go down to where the lepers dwelled and heal all of them? It was because they knew healing was of God and they could only heal those whom the Holy Spirit led them to heal. How many of you know for yourself there is “power” in the name of Jesus? When we are tempted to do something we know is wrong – we must know we can call on Jesus, and He will help us. Demons tremble at the name of Jesus...there is wonder working power in the name of Jesus and its most evidently seen and experienced *after we confess and repent of our sins.*

Regarding **vs. 7** it highlights the fact it is time out for spending a majority of our time with people who are seemingly always about putting people down instead of lifting people up. In the text, Peter and John were going to the temple to pray...if we are ever going to find “some lifters” you ought to find them going to church. The only time a Christian ought to look down on someone is to reach out our hand to help lift someone up. Pay special attention to *when the miracle occurs*...it occurred during the “lifting” process that the lame man was healed...it was while he was being lifted up that he received his strength. If we start lifting up more people instead of tearing them down we’ll see more people given strength in their area of weakness. I don’t care what the doctor says...God has the final say...so we need to keep on lifting up people and allow God to decide the final outcome. Also, notice *this man was healed instantly*. Peter grabbed his hand and pulled him to his feet and before he was upright, the strength pulsed through his feet and ankles. This process reflects when you are born again – it happens in the instant moment we exercise **Romans 10:9** – this phase of the salvation process is called Justification – when we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart God raised Jesus from the dead we are saved – instantly Justified – instantly we are enveloped by the Holy Spirit – instantly we are saved from the penalty of sin. Church, we need to not only pray for people to be physically healed we need

to pray for people to be spiritually healed – we need to pray they come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. I believe if we get more people to participate in corporate prayer and engage in the prayer segment we call “praying for the unsaved”...If we lift them up, God will save more people.

Vs. 8-10 - Notice the process this man went through. First, the text declared the man was lame from his mother’s womb; next he was lifted up in prayer by those who were saved and walking in the spirit. Peter and John did the lifting and God began healing while the lame man was being lifted and finally, after the lame man was lifted and healed, he then began to walk. And then he began to leap for joy and worship. A reason God healed him is God knew this man would live out *Psalm 50:15* (get a reader to read it). This text suggests if we did more lifting – more praying for those who are lame – both physically and spiritually, then God will do more healing and delivering...and then more will come into the church house leaping for joy. *Because of what Peter and John had done outside of the church – the formerly lame man followed them into the church.* So be careful what you do on the outside because when you treat people right outside of the church house – when you lift up people who are outside of the church house - when God delivers them, they will want to follow you inside the church house. When was the last time you leaped for joy for what God has done for you? In heaven they have a party – they rejoice

over the fact one soul got saved (*Luke 15:7*). When the lame man received his blessing he did not go into hiding – he was not selfish with his blessing. When you testify to others about what God has done for you it encourages others in the same or a similar situation to have faith – and if God did it for someone else, He can do it for you.

Peter Preaches in the Temple (vs. 11-26)

Vs. 11-12 - In these verses the healing of the lame beggar drew a crowd around the three men. Peter then sees another opportunity to tell people about Jesus – this was a divine appointment. *Are you responding to the divine opportunities God provides you to share Him with the unsaved?* Solomon's Porch was on the east side of the temple and was a corridor where Jesus often ministered (*John 10:23*) and where the church worshiped (*Acts 5:12*). In Peter's sermon at Pentecost, Peter had to refute the accusation that the believers were drunk. But in this sermon, he had to refute the notion that he and John had healed the man by their own power (Paul and Barnabas would face a similar situation after healing a lame man in *Acts 14:8-18*). Peter knew that the phenomenon of the miraculous in and of itself brought no one to Jesus, it merely aroused interest. So Peter wisely took advantage of the gathering crowd to tell them about Jesus, not himself. Peter immediately

identified the source of the miracle – Jesus the Christ. Wisely Peter said that this was the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Holy Spirit gave Peter boldness as he reminded the Jewish people of the way they had treated Jesus. They had denied Jesus and delivered Him up to be crucified.

Vs. 13-16 - This might have been a good time for a testimony service, for the healed man certainly had a great experience. Yet Peter knew what the crowd needed to hear even more than the healed man's experience was the gospel of Jesus Christ and a call to repent and believe. The healed man didn't know enough yet to share that, so Peter did the talking (read *1 Timothy 3:6*). Peter knew that saving faith did not come by seeing or hearing about miracles, rather faith comes by hearing, and what you heard was the word of God (*Romans 10:17*). In order to convince the people of their sins, Peter used several different names and titles for our Lord: God's Son, Jesus, the Holy One, and the Prince of life in these verses. Peter was making sure they knew "This" was no ordinary man they had handed over to the Romans to crucify. **Calvary may have been man's last word, but the empty tomb was God's last word.** God glorified His Son by raising Him from the dead and taking Him back to Heaven. And then He sent the Holy Spirit who works through His church. The healed beggar was proof that Jesus was alive.

Vs. 17-20 - There must be conviction before a sinner can experience conversion. Unless a patient is convinced he/she is sick; he/she will never accept the diagnosis or take the treatment (this is a primary issue with the homosexual/transgender community and the racist community living inside of the church. They do not think they are spiritually sick – they do not think what they are doing is sin; hence there is no conviction so there is no need to repent in their heart/mind). In **vs. 17-18** Peter does not leave the people without hope. This is the job of the preacher/teacher even when we have to teach on tough and unpopular subjects. We must not only point out sin but remind the people there is an antidote; there is hope and a remedy and it's called confess and repent; Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness when we do that (**1 John 1:9**). In these verses Peter almost seemed to defend the Jewish people by pointing out that they had acted in ignorance in **vs. 17** while at the same time they had fulfilled the word of God in **vs. 18**. Ignorance of the word of God does not remove a sinner's guilt, but it does mitigate the circumstances when confession and repentance takes place. Notice the phrase in **vs. 18** that says, "*Christ would suffer.*" Read **Philippians 1:29...**before we start complaining about hard times and trials we must realize as a Christian, they have been promised to us we will have them. As it relates to the word **ignorance** in **vs. 19**, look closely at what Jesus said in **Luke 23:34** (get a reader

to read **Luke 23:34**). *Feeling sorry for yourself and/or for something you did is not repentance; acknowledging what is sinful based on the word of God and turning away from that sin is repentance.* False sorrow for sin could be mere regret that you got caught. Such feelings have a tendency to pass away quickly. Regarding the phrase “*be converted*” - Being a Christian is not “turning over a new leaf,” it is being a new creation in Christ Jesus (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). Having announced the crime, presented the evidence, and explained the nature of their sin, Peter then offered them pardon. Peter shifts from being the prosecuting attorney to become the defense attorney and the pardoning judge. Peter’s burden was to encourage his people to trust Christ and experience His gracious forgiveness and salvation. It is because of this reason, the preacher can have confidence that even when he preaches that portion of the Gospel that highlights sin, even when his message rebukes and calls out sin for what it is – sin; the preacher has the forgiveness card – the grace card to lay before the people. The phrase in **vs. 19** that says, “*That your sins may be blotted out*” - this was the first benefit of repentance Peter presented to the guilty was they could still have their sins blotted out. The one who repents and is converted is *forgiven their sins*, and the *record itself is erased* And when Peter says “**Blotted out**” – this carries the idea of wiping ink off of a document. Ink in the ancient world had no acid content and didn’t

“bite” into the paper. It could almost always be wiped off with a damp cloth. Peter said that God would wipe away our record of sin just like that. (Read ***Micah 7:19***). So God instead of sending judgment to the people for crucifying Jesus, God sent the Holy Spirit to empower His church to teach the truth to His people that will lead to conviction of their sins and then to confession and repentance. This is why it is so critically important for the church to teach and preach the entire Gospel; we cannot talk only about the love of God; we must also teach there will be a wrath of God coming to those who reject Jesus. We reject Jesus by rejecting His word and the Holy Spirit. And then in **vs. 20** we see the promise that comes in response to confession and repentance – there was a promise for individual (sins forgiven) and a promise for the nation (times of refreshing).

Vs. 21-22 - Peter referred to the time when Jesus will return and rule the earth in righteousness. Peter went so far as to say, “*that He may send Jesus Christ,*” thus implying that if the Jewish people as a whole repented, God the Father would send Jesus to return in glory. When we confess and repent of our sins God can send times of refreshing (a true revival) – there will be no guilt because we have been forgiven. God desires to send *times of refreshing* to His people today. Therefore, we should pray for and believe God for seasons of revival and refreshing. Peter made it clear that Jesus will remain

in heaven until the times of restoration of all things, and since the repentance of Israel is one of the all things, there is some sense in which the return of Jesus in glory will not happen until Israel repents. In these verses Peter announced the crime, presented the evidence, and explained the nature of their sin, then Peter offered them pardon. Peter's charge was to encourage the people to trust Christ and experience His gracious salvation.

Vs. 23-26 – The emphasis in these verses is on the prophets who had announced the coming of the Messiah. Peter quoted from Moses (**Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19**) and reminded his listeners that Moses had predicted the arrival of a Prophet, and this Prophet was the Messiah (**Luke 24:19; John 1:19-28; 6:14**). Not to obey or hear this Prophet meant condemnation. And Moses was not the only prophet who foretold the coming of the Messiah (Jesus the Christ) for all the prophets were united in their witness of the coming Messiah. In **vs. 24** when it says "*foretold these days*" the days Luke is referring to are the life and ministry of Jesus the Christ; the times when Jesus would speak to His people and offer them salvation by faith in Him. **Vs. 25-26** highlight Israel's rejection of Jesus made them especially guilty because the Jews were the privileged sons of the prophets and of the covenant. God intended for Israel to be a separate and holy nation that would

teach the world about God, introduce the Messiah, and then carry on His work throughout the world.