IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Acts 3:1-26

Key Verse: 6

“Then Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’”

The name of our Lord and Savior is Jesus. When we believe in Jesus’ name, we believe in Jesus’ finished work that was his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. There is no magical power in the name of Jesus just like a magic phrase, “open sesame. But there is power in Jesus Christ himself. In today’s passage, Peter healed a lame beggar in Jesus’ name and gave a spirit filled address to the onlookers who were amazed by the healing miracle. As we explore today’s passage, we will see that the lame man’s healing miracle is God’s sign to reveal Jesus and his power. And let’s think about God’s message to us through this passage.

I. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk (1-10)

Look at verse 1. **“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.”** To our amazement, Peter and John together were going to the temple to pray. They had changed a lot. Once they had competed with each other. Now they worked together. Once they had not taken time to pray. Now were going to the temple at the time of prayer. They became men of prayer. Right after Jesus’ crucifixion and death, they had been hiding behind locked doors in Jerusalem. They were now living boldly in Jerusalem, testifying to the power of God in Jesus’ resurrection. They were no longer fearful of the temple courts where the Jewish religious leaders were around, because the living God, the Holy Spirit resided in their hearts. Truly in Jesus’ name they were transformed into courageous and prayerful men of God.

Look at verse 2. **“Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.”** This man was lame from birth. He could not walk or run. So he always relied on other people to move him from place to place. Today, people with disabilities are cared for and protected by the government and society. So they have rights of full participation in our society. But the Jews in the first century regarded people with disabilities as people under God’s curse. They were ignored and shunned in their communities. This lame man was crippled from birth and he could do nothing but just sit and beg. So, he was carried to the temple gate called Beautiful. What a contrast! The beautiful gate and the ugly lame beggar. He was put there everyday to beg from those going into the temple courts to worship God. Those going to worship were likely to be more generous in giving. Perhaps other beggars acknowledged the severity of his disability and yielded the best begging spot in Jerusalem to him.

This man symbolically represents all unsaved mankind. He was sick from birth, so he could not walk and function properly. In the same way, all men are born sin-sick and cannot live the life God originally intended them to live. After creating mankind, God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it (Ge 1:28). God wants mankind to work hard with a worldwide vision and be fruitful for the glory of God. But the lame beggar could not work, so he suffered from a sense of worthlessness and despair. His situation had formed a dependant spirit deep in his mind, making him unthankful and bitter toward others. He didn’t know about giving or joy of giving because he always received from others. Sin-sick people are just like the man. The lame man was put at the temple gate, but he could not enter the gate to worship. In the similar way, sinners are separated from God and cannot enter his kingdom by their own strength. While worshippers entered into the temple to seek God and fill their spiritual hunger, the lame man sought money for his physical need, but was indifferent to his spiritual need. Likewise, many people seek physical things ignoring their spiritual needs.

The man was pathetic because of his disability. Because he was lame, he justified his begging. But what made him more miserable was his dependant spirit and beggar mentality. He needed healing physically, mentally and spiritually. People just saw his physical need and helped him by giving him some changes. But money could not heal him. People’s pity didn’t heal him either. He needed God’s grace of healing. He needed a miracle from heaven. In the same way, all people need God’s grace of healing, a miracle.

Look at verses 3-5. **“When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.”** Sometimes, I encounter panhandlers at the junction of Morningside Av and Highway 401 exit ramp on the way home from work. I realize that panhandlers try to make eye contact with drivers and once I make eye contact, they come right at me in a begging posture. So, people avoid direct eye contact with them and pass them by quickly. How did Peter and John respond to the beggar? Did they avoid eye contact? No. Instead, they looked straight at him while others passed him by as if they didn’t see anyone. Peter said, “Look at us!” The man lifted his head and gave them his attention, thinking that they would give him a hundred-dollar bill. But then what did Peter say?

Look at verse 6**. “Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.””** Realistically the lame man needed money to survive. But Peter had no money to give the man. Still, Peter wanted to help the man by giving what he had. He said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” This was God’s visit through his servant. Giving some money to the beggar was good, but it was not the fundamental solution to his problem. The man’s fundamental problem was his disability to walk or run or move. Peter wanted to get to the root of this man’s problem and solve that. And Peter knew that only Jesus can do this. So he said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” By acting on Jesus’ behalf as his servant, Peter commanded him “Walk.”

Look at verse 7a. **“Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up…”** Peter here was not an old Peter. He had compassion and faith to stretch his right hand and helped the smelly beggar up. People just saw the man born lame. They didn’t see the inner suffering and fatalism of a soul created in the image of God. But Peter saw the man with compassion and hope of God. He remembered Jesus’ words, **“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”** Peter shared God’s shepherd heart to restore him into a new life. And he knew the source of the power which heals and transforms—Jesus Christ. Peter had experienced the power of Jesus Christ. Peter was not a cripple; he was a muscular fisherman. But he was an inwardly crippled man due to his selfishness and fear. When Jesus first predicted his death and resurrection, he rebuked Jesus (Mk 8:32). On the night Jesus was arrested, he had vowed to die with him. But he denied Jesus three times before a servant girl. That was the night Peter first realized he was a sinner who needed healing. Jesus shed his blood for him, and he reinstated him after his resurrection. By meeting Jesus Christ who died for him and rose again, Peter was healed and became a new man. Peter confessed, *“He himself* [Jesus] *bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” (1Pe 2:24).*  Based on this experience, Peter believed that Jesus had power and love to heal the man. When we remember what Jesus did in our lives, we can help other people as the Apostle did.

What happened? **“…and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.”** Through the faith of Peter and the man, miracle happened. Amazingly his feet and ankles got strong but he jumped and walked. Can you imagine what the legs of a man who has never walked in 40 years look like? They must have been just bones covered with skin. But without going through physio therapy sessions, he began walk and even jump at once. This event reminds us of Isaiah 35:6, **“Then will the lame leap like a deer.”** Through Peter’s faith, Jesus healed the man. The man now entered with Peter and John into the temple walking and jumping and praising God. It was the first time he was able to go into the temple courts. As soon as he was healed, he went into the temple that he might worship and praise and celebrate the goodness of God, and the other people are astounded and they do the same (9-10). A man in sorrow and despair became a man of joy and vitality. A man who was powerless and dependent became a man who could walk and work. A man who suffered from fatalism and self-condemnation now praised and worshiped God. Salvation has come; restoration has come. For this, God sent his only Son. This is God’s work by the power of Jesus’ name. This is what the Holy Spirit is doing through faith in Jesus’ name.

II. Peter testified to Jesus Christ (11-26)

Seeing what had happened, people came running to them. They stared Peter and John with big eyes as if Peter and John were superheroes, like Superman. Instead of waving to them or giving them the ‘peace sign,” Peter took the opportunity and delivered a message. What was the point of his message?

First, Jesus is God and Christ. Look at verses 13-15. **“The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus….You disowned the Holy and Righteous One….You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.”**Peter called Jesus “God’s Servant,” “The Holy and Righteous One,” and “The Author of Life.” Through the Prophet Isaiah, God had foretold that his Christ would come as a child, though he is Mighty God (Isa 9:6). Through his perfect obedience and righteousness, the Christ would restore the failure of the first man, Adam. Peter testified that God declared Jesus as the promised Christ by raising him from the dead.

Second, Christ must first suffer. Peter continued, **“Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer” (17-18).**Isaiah prophesied, *“After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities” (Isa 53:11).* The Jews waited (they still do) for a political messiah who would liberate them from world superpowers. They did not comprehend a suffering Messiah. Peter testified that it was God’s will to first liberate his people from the power of sin and death through the suffering of the Christ. Look at verse 21.**“He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”** Christ will come again to restore God’s kingdom on earth as God promised.

Third, “repent and turn to God.” Look at verses 16 and 19. **“By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see…. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord…”** God glorified Jesus and gave him all authority in heaven and on earth. The restoration of the crippled beggar was a vivid manifestation of his power and grace. Peter explains how man can receive the restoration. **“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out…”** Now salvation and judgment is set for all people on earth. For God said, **“Anyone who does not listen to him (Christ) will be completely cut off from among his people,”** and he also said to **Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’” (23-25)** Every man must choose either to repent or to reject for his life and eternal destination.

Today’s passage teaches us what man needs most. Sin makes people get sick, experience pain, and die. What man needs most is the forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness of sin brings restoration. Like the lame beggar, many people live under curse, seeking physical things while ignoring their spiritual bankruptcy. They beg for money; they beg for comforts. They beg for love and for others’ attention. None of these can heal nor save them. Man can never feel happy or fulfilled with these things. People look all right outwardly. But they are not OK inwardly. Let me conclude this message with a story. A man went to see a psychiatrist because he was extremely depressed. The psychiatrist just could not get him to snap out of it. So he said to the man, “Tonight, I want you to go to the circus in town because they have a clown named the Great Rinaldi, he is the funniest clown I have ever seen. Whenever I go to see the Great Rinaldi it always lifts my spirits.” The man responded. “You don’t understand, doctor. I am the Great Rinaldi.” People need Jesus. They need to get up by faith in Jesus. When they repent and turn to God, Jesus will restore them to a new and fulfilled life. May God change us through our repentance.