

Acts of the Apostles - Acts 3

Peter Heals a Lame Beggar

3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 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. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Obedient Jews in Jesus day went to the Temple to pray three (3) times a day. They prayed during the morning sacrifice, during the afternoon sacrifice and at sunset. Peter and John were entering the Temple with plans of worshiping and praying and were most likely not looking for an opportunity to witness. They encountered a Beggar who was lame. This tells us that as we go through our daily lives, we should expect to have the opportunity to share the Gospel.

Earlier this year Terry and I went to hear Dr. David Jeremiah speak. During his sermon, he talked about the beggars that were sitting outside the arena. He said that it was important that we SEE them. Peter and John looked directly at him. The first thing that Peter said to the man was “Look at us!”

3:6 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.” 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

I can’t imagine that Peter’s response was what the beggar expected. Peter told him “I don’t have money but I can make you walk.” Peter then helped him up. Peter gave credit for the healing to Jesus Christ. Peter, John and the beggar went into the temple courts. This was significant because a person with a defect was not allowed into the temple. Leviticus 21:16-18. This man probably hadn’t ever gone inside the temple courts. The people that recognized the beggar were filled with wonder and amazement. Put yourself in their place. What would be your response?

Peter Speaks to the Onlookers

3:11 While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. 12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.

Peter said that they shouldn’t be so surprised because the onlookers should have seen or at least heard about Jesus. These verses are the same as in Acts 2:22.

3:13b “You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. 14 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. 15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. 16 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 completely healed him, as you can all see.

Peter charges them with putting Jesus to death but credits God with raising Him back to life. This is the same as in Acts 2:23-24. This approach seems counterintuitive. In verse 16, Peter gives credit to God/Jesus for his strength and the healing of the lame beggar.

Peter was not afraid to confront their sin, and he shows amazing boldness. "One commentator says that the miracle of the speech of Peter is a far more wonderful one than the miracle wrought in the healing of the man who lay at the Beautiful Gate." (Morgan)

3:17 "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. 18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. 19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. 21 Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. 22 For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. 23 Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.'

In verse 17, Peter says the root cause for them putting Jesus to death was the ignorance of them and their leaders. Peter is explaining to these Jews that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ who was foretold by the Prophets. Peter calls on these Jews to repent. This means more than apologizing but it is a change in their lives.

"Repentance does not describe being sorry, but describes the act of turning around. And as he used it in chapter two, here also Peter makes repent a word of hope. You have done wrong, but you can turn around to get it right with God!" (Guzik)

Peter keeps going back to the Old Testament/Book of the Law. In this case he quoted Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19 to show that Moses prophesied about Jesus as the prophet and if they didn't listen to him, they would be cut off or destroyed. (NASB). The Greek word used here is 'exolethreuō' and it means to be "utterly destroyed". It is only used once in the Bible.

These religious Jews had to be thinking Peter was a fisherman. Acts 4:13 says "they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."

3:24 "Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. 25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' 26 When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Peter starts in these verses with the Prophet Samuel. He then connected them with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through the covenants that God made with them. He pointed out that they were heirs of the promises made by God through the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah.

Finally, he connected Abraham to Jesus and the initial or first offering of salvation was given to the Jews.

“Just as the lame man was hindered by expecting something from God, but expecting the wrong thing, so it was with the Jewish people at this time. They were expecting the Messiah, but not the right kind of Messiah. They were looking for a political Messiah, not one to turn every one of you from your iniquities. Are you expecting the right things from God today?” (Guzik)