

**As we go...**

Through the book of Acts, we will keep re-emphasizing that Jesus is ascended to Heaven, The Holy Spirit has come, the disciples have been commissioned, the church is born, and the word is out that Jesus saves! Just like Jesus encountered all manner of brokenness and damage due to sin (while His disciples walked with

Him), they are now seeing the need for His coming greatly expanded. It wasn't just for the Jews who were under Roman rule and oppression of their own leaders, it was widespread. It was in every territory they will be sent to (or driven-to) – to minister. **Acts** is going to help us see that the problem was not just limited to the Jews, but to the world at large. It was not just a “religious” problem, it was a world-problem. It wasn't just discrimination and oppression, it was moral corruption. It wasn't about social, cultural, ethnic persecution, it was SIN. I'm going to call it our “**S**everly **I**mpaired **N**ature” that describes our state of being after the life of God departed from mankind leaving him a biological or physiological instrument but no longer a spiritual vessel (see **Genesis 3:4** – “...you won't surely die”).

As we go through the Scripture in Acts 3, we will get a better sense of why Jesus had to die in order to save us. Look at the text closely. Notice that the first “witness” we see the church being is one of healing. This is so appropriate because we live in a sick society. Not only our bodies, but our world is “broken.”

This man in Acts 3 didn't just have an affliction, he had a “situation.” The agenda of sickness is to **d**isable us, **d**iscredit us **d**ismantle us (as a body), **d**istract us (by making us focus attention on our brokenness instead of His strength and then ultimately **d**estroy us (remove us/subtract us from the equation - a counterfeit of being fruitful and multiplying). Sickness is bigger than “not feeling well.” We must understand the whole strategic plot behind affliction. Otherwise, we may tend to minimize it, dismiss it and just “live” with it. Sickness is not “living” all. It is a precursor to death.

Play close attention to the following elements in the passage:

1. The strange request - “look at us,” gives us some powerful information. Apparently the man had a tendency not to look at those who were giving him money. Yet, when he looked, he looked with expectation. How many of us have expectation of receiving (meaning of “hope” in **Hebrews 11:1** - confident expectation). The man gave them what he had - his attention! These are necessary ingredients for receiving God's power in our situations.

2. Spiritual power is better than material provision. The world conditions us to want what is physical. Jesus came to offer the greater thing. We should condition ourselves to stop minimizing the power of the Spirit. This is a strong message in the book of Acts. How can we embrace the ministry of the Holy Spirit more in our lives?
3. Powerful concept in Scripture and life. Money can only serve for a moment. Empowerment serves for a lifetime. What oppressors want to take is your empowerment ultimately because with it you can climb out of distress. What this man needed was a way out. This is a statement of salvation in general. It doesn't just offer immediate relief (what people in oppression often want - e.g. the Jews), but eternal solution. And now the text...

## Acts 3

### **A Lame Man Healed** *I wonder if there was someone laying at the entrance of our sanctuary...*

<sup>3:1</sup> Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*. <sup>2</sup> And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, **whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms** from those who entered the temple; <sup>3</sup> who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. <sup>4</sup> And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, **"Look at us."** <sup>5</sup> So he gave them his attention, **expecting** to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." <sup>7</sup> And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. <sup>8</sup> So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

*He didn't just walk casually – he went "hard" as an expression of his gratitude and praise. We will find a lot of this in the Book of Acts – where "ALL The PEOPLE SAW HIM" – it was a visible demonstration of the power of the Kingdom of God. We have to be very MINDFUL that Jesus is (introducing/exposing/demonstrating/advertising) the Kingdom of God. We have to see this theme in everything we encounter in Acts. The Kingdom "Already-Is," and it (at the same time – "Not-Yet"). The Kingdom of God has come to earth and is being accomplished in salvation = the power of sin is broken, healing, deliverance and transformation. The Kingdom has not yet been expressed in its fullness = when sin, death and Satan are eliminated and creation renewed.*

**Keep our eyes open for those who were seeing and those who are seeing the multiplication of the Kingdom.**

<sup>9</sup> And all the people saw him walking and praising God. <sup>10</sup> Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

*Keeping people broken, begging and dependent upon "them" as if they themselves were God!*

**NOTE: Yes it is true** that there are many who won't try to improve their own conditions themselves (BUT) – that too is sin. Those who won't do for themselves are perhaps revealing just a different form of the same infectious spiritual disease called SIN. The thing that heals them will be the same thing that heals us.

## Preaching in Solomon's Portico

<sup>11</sup> Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. <sup>12</sup> So when **Peter saw it, he responded to the people:**

*Here's Peter speaking up again...*

**"Men of Israel,** why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? <sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. <sup>14</sup> But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, <sup>15</sup> and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, **of which we are witnesses.** <sup>16</sup> And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. **NOTICE: Peter Preached Jesus! Not – the situation but the solution!**

<sup>17</sup> "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. <sup>18</sup> But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, <sup>20</sup> and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. <sup>22</sup> For Moses truly said to the fathers, '**The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren.** Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. <sup>23</sup> **And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'** <sup>24</sup> Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. <sup>25</sup> You are sons of the prophets, and of **the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'** <sup>26</sup> To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

**THEY should have anticipated and recognized Him. It was the whole story of their lives – not just a "Sunday Situation" (the same as we should today). We often live double-lives: ONE INCLUDING JESUS AND another without Him. We must begin to see that Jesus in fact IS the story of our lives and not just an incidental inclusion to our own private stories.**

**APP:** Here is Peter fighting again to convince the "Men of Israel." They are the ones who were entrusted with the message that Jesus commissioned them to give to the world. Yet, they found themselves fighting to convince their own – "team members" about salvation in Jesus Christ. We cannot be an effective church if we can't agree on the message that God wants us to share with the world, right? Two things were fighting these apostles. The first is the internal battle to get everyone on the same team. The second is that they had to carry the message about a "KINGDOM" into the world where rulers were trying to establish their own kingdoms. We have to be so careful that we don't position ourselves as ADVERSARIES of God by rejecting His authority over us, our lives, our churches, our world – in favor of trying to establish a kingdom of our own – with our own rules.