

“The first of many recorded miracles”

[Study of Acts 3]

Acts 3:1 (KJV)

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour”

- * I have always discovered that break powerful manifestations of God come forth during seasons of prayer**
- * Most of the time its when I have stayed true to my designated times of prayer**
- * There is a lesson to be found here that points us to the importance of corporate prayer – set times of pray – assembled times of prayer**

The Bible tells us that Peter [petros: "a rock or a stone"] and John [Jehovah is a gracious giver"] were on their way to the temple **AT THE HOUR OF PRAYER**

- * Peter [a rock – a stone]**
- * John [Jehovah [the one true God] is a gracious giver**
- * This was not just two men on their way to have a religious meeting**
- * No true men of the one true God**
- * Heading to the Temple at the hour of PRAYER**

This is the church's first recorded miracle

- * God was now ready to reach another great harvest of souls**
- * The day of Pentecost thrust into this world the birthing of the Church**
- * The nations of the world were introduced to the Great Commission in a mighty manifested Holy Ghost empowerment!**
- * Many were converted and the Church came alive!**

It was now time to attract the attention of the people, so He reached down and healed a single man, a man whom everyone knew, and filled the man so full of the Holy Spirit that he just went wild with excitement and joy

Such a miracle and behavior naturally attracted the attention of the public

* The miracle was more than just a miracle

It was a sign, a demonstration

* Jesus is alive - His power is just as active upon earth today as it was when He walked upon earth

* Jesus is now working through His followers - Through them, He is reaching out to save and heal the world

His followers are now His instruments, His emissaries, His ambassadors, His representatives, His messengers, His witnesses to a world lost in suffering and death, sin and shame

In this first recorded miracle of the church, God is demonstrating His power, and bearing witness through His followers

In so doing, He has given us some of the greatest lessons on witnessing to be found anyplace – We find this in Acts 3: 1-11

* Jesus is now working through His disciples (v.1-5)

* Jesus is alive: His presence and power are still active upon earth (v.6-8)

* The results (v.9-11)

Acts 3:1-5 (KJV)

“1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

2 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 of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them”

Jesus is now working through His disciples

- * This is one thing Jesus wants people to know
- * His presence and His power are still at work, still available to me

If we do not go and do and speak the work of God, His work does not get done

Jesus works through those who are faithful in prayer

Peter and John were faithful prayer warriors

Note - The phrase "*the ninth hour,*" which was around *three o'clock in the afternoon*

The Jews observed three stated times for prayer...

- * **The third hour (9 a.m.)**
- * **The sixth hour (12 noon)**
- * **The ninth hour (3 p.m.)**

The very fact that Peter and John were going into the temple to pray indicates they were men of prayer

- * Imagine having *three specific times* for prayer every day!
- * Not just praying while on the run, not just praying always while we go about our daily affairs, which is what we so often claim and use to salve our consciences.

But imagine! Actually having...

- * **Three set periods,**
- * **Three concentrated times,**
- * **Three prayer sessions - when we can shut the world out and focus solely upon God**

This was the prayer life of Peter and John

This was the reason Jesus was able to work through them in meeting the Desperate Needs of suffering people!

Acts 3:1

"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour"

Acts 10:9

"On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour"

Psalm 55:17

"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice"

Daniel 6:10

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime"

Jesus works through those who look and see the needs around them

- * How many years had this man been sitting there begging
- * A cripple from birth
- * Imagine – never having walked a single step - Had he been carried and placed at the temple's entrance to beg... for many years

Acts 3: 2

2 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 of them that entered into the temple

- * Sitting at the entrance of the Temple
- * Never fitting in, never being accepted

This man was hurting inside as well as in his crippled body

He was a living picture of so many in the world...

*** People who are wounded and suffering so much (both within and without) from the neglect of men—from an unconcerned and selfish and hoarding world—from a world that will not let go and share what it has with those who do not have**

But even more critical...

*** Persons who are suffering so much from the neglect of God's people, the very people who profess to know the love and care of God for all, and yet who act just as unconcerned and selfish and hoard just as much as the world**

Jesus can work only through the people who see the desperate needs of hurting men

*** Oh Lord help us to have a heart for the hurting**

Jesus works through those who fasten their eyes upon the need

The great need of the hour is to see the needs of the world and to fix our attention upon them

Jesus works through those who reach out to meet the need

*** It is not enough to see the needs of the world**

*** It is not enough to fasten one's attention upon the needs of the world**

Just seeing and being concerned over the needs of the world does not meet the needs

Peter acted; in fact, he did something dramatic

Acts 4

“4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.
5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them”

* The need existed; it was there

Peter knew the Lord cared, and He was the representative of the Lord

* It was up to him to show the Lord's care

Note the words:

"Look on us"

* The words were authoritative and arresting

* They stirred an expectancy within the man to receive something

The words of Peter demonstrated that...

* He had a sure confidence that he himself belonged to God; he was God's representative

* He had a plan to help the man

* He had an expectancy, a genuine faith that God would help him to meet the need

* He had a willingness to act, to reach out by faith and meet the need

All this is essential if we are to reach out in the power of God to meet the needs of the world

John 4:35

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?
behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest"

Acts 20:35

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive"

Romans 15:1

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves"

Galatians 6:2

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"

Peter acted; in fact, he did something dramatic

* Hey, Praise the Lord for the Dramatic!

* Hey, Dramatic Faith

* Dramatic Witness

* Dramatic Authority

Acts 3:6-9 (KJV)

"6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God"

Jesus is alive; His presence and power are still active upon the earth

* This is *the most important thing God wants people to know*

* His Son, Jesus Christ, is alive. He is not dead, having passed from the scene of world history

* He is alive and exalted to the right hand of the Father forever

His presence and power are still active upon the earth and will continue to be active in the lives of His true followers until He returns

His power is still available to men

*** He still loves and is still greatly concerned for the world and for every person in the world**

Jesus' presence and power are not found in silver and gold

Peter had...

- * No silver or gold**
- * No money or material goods**
- * No food or clothing**
- * No housing or shelter**
- * No social or community services**

Therefore, Peter could not give those things to the man

*** It was such things that the man wanted and expected, and it was what the man seemed to need in the eyes of the world**

1 Samuel 16:7

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart"

Silver and Gold was not what the man needed

*** It was not the basic need of the man**

The man needed to be changed both within and without

*** If he was changed physically and spiritually, he would be able to walk and be motivated to work and be a witness for God**

*** When God looked at the man, He saw the man's spiritual need and his physical need.**

God's concern was to cure and change the man *completely*

* God was out to take care of the whole man, and the answer to changing the whole man was not found in silver and gold.

The necessities of life are just that, things that are necessary to life

* But having the necessities of life are not the basic need of man

* Man's spiritual welfare is his basic need

If his spirit is right, he is right with God and man

* If his spirit is wrong, he is at odds with God and man

What God is after is to change man by making him completely whole, so that man can be productive: fulfill his purpose in the world and make the contribution he is supposed to make

Jesus' presence and power are found in Jesus' name

Jesus Christ, Name: to call upon the name of someone means to call upon the authority, power, office, nature, and character of the person

The person's name stands for all that the person is

* A king may send a decree throughout his kingdom

* His decree goes out under his name, under his authority

A government or business *official* may send a memo throughout his department – but he is representing the Leader whom he serves

* The memo goes out under his name, under his authority

When Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," he was proclaiming: "It is the name, the power, the authority, the Person of Jesus Christ who will heal you"

Jesus Christ is alive—His power, His authority, His name, His Person is still active upon earth

*** It is the name or the power of Jesus that meets the need**

*** It is not Peter, nor is it silver and gold**

*** Silver and gold can never bring health, not permanently**

***Bad health or disease or accident eventually catches us all; and when it does, no amount of money is of any help**

It is Christ alone—His presence and power—that can meet our need

*** Peter knew that the power of Jesus Christ dwelt within Christ Himself and only in Christ**

*** But he also knew that he possessed the presence and power of Christ within his body, and that he was a called representative of Christ upon earth**

What Peter said: "Such as I have give I thee"

*** He had the presence and power of Christ**

*** It was that which he could give**

In fact, that was his very purpose for being on earth, to represent Christ and to share Christ's power with those who were sick and hurting throughout the world

*** Peter acted first, not the man**

*** Peter was the Lord's representative (ambassador)**

The same is true of us

Just think of the awesome truth: we are the ones who must act and take the first step

John 20:21

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you"

Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"

2 Corinthians 5:20

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God"

Jesus' presence and power are still at work, working miracles and meeting the needs of people

- * Peter reached down to take the man by the right hand and lift him up. (What faith!)**
- * The man let him. (What trust!)**
- * Jesus healed him. (What power!)**

His presence and power

John 14:13 (KJV)

"13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son"

Matthew 17:20

"Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you"

John 16:24

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son"

Ephesians 1:19

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full"

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power"

Ephesians 3:20

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"

The man was completely changed, his whole being, attitude, and life

* He was no more shy and reserved, embarrassed and ashamed about not fitting in and being accepted

He was saved and healed, inside and out; his whole personality was changed, and he wanted all to know it.

He was...

- * Standing
- * Walking
- * Leaping
- * Praising God

Acts 3:8-11 (KJV)

"8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering"

The results

* The people knew the man had been truly healed

* They had seen the man for years sitting as a cripple and begging for help

* There could be no question about the miracle

They were filled with wonder and amazement at the change, "at that which had happened unto him"

They were attracted, wondering and wanting to see what had caused such a miracle

* A changed person, a person who is truly changed by Christ, will cause people to stand in amazement and to wonder

* A changed person will stir people to desire the same miracle in their own lives or in the lives of some loved one

Matthew 5:16

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"

1 Thessalonians 1:8

"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing"

1 Peter 3:15

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"

Psalm 66:16

"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul"

Conclusion

A great lesson on witnessing and being a representative of Jesus Christ