

What we Have to Offer - Acts 3:1-10

Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Our text this week really is an incredible story. Peter and John come on a man who has been placed near this “Beautiful Gate” in the Temple by a few people who feel sorry for him so he can hold out his can and beg for help. He has been lame from birth, meaning completely unable to walk, hence, having to be carried. In Acts 2 we were told that the Apostles were performing signs and wonders leading to awe in the city and the fear of the Lord in the church. This man is exhibit A demonstrating the power of the Holy Spirit on display in the Apostles as they heal this man in Jesus’ name. What an incredible blessing for the man and what a powerful moment for the crowd.

This is also one of those moments in the story where we have to do a little work to understand the descriptive and prescriptive elements of the story. In other words, as we read Act, Luke is reporting history showing us the work of the Holy Spirit in the spread of the Word of God to the nations resulting in the formation of the church. As we read, we need to realize that in one way, Luke is telling us what happened, showing us a succession of important moments in a story. The story is descriptive, and is mostly not something that repeats over and over again. On the other hand, in all the stories the Holy Spirit is inspiring Luke to write so that there are things we can glean from the story which are true for all and applicable to the church. These prescriptive elements are embedded in individual stories but also echoed throughout the text.

The healing of this man is an amazing moment. But what is the application for us? Should we run downtown and begin a healing ministry for all the street people begging for alms? Or maybe we should go to one of our hospitals walking up and down the hallways healing everyone we see. Maybe we should hold a miracle crusade. As we read this story we do have to wrestle with healing miracles and ask ourselves if healing still happens, and if so, why don’t we see it more often. I am choosing to address this question here in the sermon notes rather than other content of the sermon for clarity on this question. So, the question, should we expect God to heal people like this today and in the same way? The answer is actually no, and yes.

But to understand why we have to get to the core question, why does God heal? There are three core reasons for healing miracles in the Scriptures. We can start with the easiest, for the glory of God. Whether here in Acts, or in the ministry of Jesus, or in the present when a person is healed, the ultimate reason is for the glory of God.

The second reason is a bit more complex thought, yet it is important. In the Scriptures God often empowers His messenger with miraculous abilities to authenticate the message they bring. We see miracles coming with the Word of prophets like Elijah. The miracles authenticate the message, so that people will know that the message the prophets bring is not their own, but is in reality God’s. We definitely see this in the ministry of Jesus, miracles and healing that put His messianic identity on display and let people know that listening to His voice is equal to the voice of God. And now, in Acts, Peter and John heal this man as evidence of their Apostolic mission and message, revealing that the Gospel they are proclaiming is not their own, it is the very Word of God. In the Scriptures, a significant number of the healings and miracles are tied to this second reason. And here is the reality, we do not believe in the succession of Apostolic ministry. The prophets in the Old Testament and the Apostles in the New have given us the Word of God. No longer is the message and the messenger tied together, so I do not need to perform a miracle to let you and the world know that my message is from God. Rather, we have the self-authenticating Word of God, and you are to test my and every other preachers message by its faithfulness to the Gospel revealed in Scripture. Therefore, generally, God no longer

heals or performs miracles through people for this reason (although there are still stories of missionaries healing people when they go to completely unreached peoples).

The third reason for healings and miracles is for the good of God's people, an act of love and grace to hurting people. We should pray for, hope for, and even believe for healings and miracles as an act of Divine love for people. And the promise is actually that God will heal every believer in Jesus, for "By His wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Yet, we know that ultimately this promise is true in eternity as our resurrected bodies are fully healed. We too shall leap with joy and praise on that day. Yet, there are times when God chooses to heal people on this side of glory as an act of love for them, their family, and their church. We should pray over people in this direction and believe God for it. And then trust God's will knowing that His purpose is perfect.

Yet, as this story does show us, we are still the people who come in the healing and saving name of Jesus, and the offer of redemption in Christ is greater than any physical healing. So let's spend this Holy Week making much of Jesus.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 Samuel 6	2 Samuel 7	2 Samuel 8	2 Samuel 9	2 Samuel 10	2 Samuel 11	2 Samuel 12

Reading from this past week: Acts 3:1-11

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 3:11-26

Family Worship

Song - *Something Greater*

<https://youtu.be/S1jc0O4NO1s>

Gospel Project

Unit: Into the Land

Story: Joshua challenged the people

Big Picture Question: What is a miracle?

Answer: A miracle is something God does that usually cannot be done so that we can know He is all-powerful.

Scripture: Joshua 23-24

New City Catechism

Question #15: Since no one can keep the Law, what is its purpose.

Answer: That we may know the holy nature of God, and the sinful nature of our hearts; and thus our need of a Savior.

Verse: Romans 3:20

Scripture

Acts 3:1-10

- Imagine you are this man. How would you feel about yourself and your life? Why must we see this healing as much more than strong ankles and feet?
- By what power do Peter and John heal this man? Why is this important to remember?
- What do we have to offer our world and neighbors in Jesus' name? How can we offer the name of Jesus to them this week?

Prayer

*Pray that we would freely offer the name of Jesus to our world.

*Pray for our Easter gathering and for people who need Jesus who will be in attendance.