

The Lame Beggar Healed

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Date: 08 June 2025

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[0:00] Good morning. It's so good to be with you. And we are continuing our series in the book of Acts. And if you're here for the first time, just a quick summary.

! Jesus has risen up into heaven and he tells the disciples, power is coming. Jesus is going to send the Holy Spirit to be with you.

And you will be my witnesses in Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. And so the church was in a room maybe like this, a hundred of them, and they're waiting for the Holy Spirit.

And then the Holy Spirit comes in fire and in wind. And they start to speak in all sorts of different languages, right? English and South African. I don't know how it sounds.

Australian. Oi. Yeah? Australian. Canadian. We don't say aboot, by the way. I've never heard anybody say aboot. Only in commercials. Chinese, Malay, Tagala, all these different languages.

[1:04] And Peter says, we're not drunk. We are filled with something supernatural. And that is the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that is how the early church has started and begun. And so we're going to look at chapter three today. And we're going to all stand. And we're going to have some of the youth read chapter three for us.

So, yeah, let's all stand. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the beautiful gate to ask alms of those entering the temple.

Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, look at us. And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

[2:11] But Peter said, I have no silver and gold. But what I do have to give you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up.

And immediately his feet and ankles were made strong and leaping up. He stood and began to walk and enter the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God and recognized him as the one who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what happened to him.

While he clung to Peter and John, all the people utterly assounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. And when Peter saw it, he addressed the people, men of Israel, why do you wonder at this?

Or why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate.

[3:29] Pilate, my bad. Pilate, my bad.

All right. Thank you. You may be seated. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this passage in Acts. And as we look into it, may you lead us by your Holy Spirit.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. We're going to look at four things today. The first is we're going to look at the scene. What is the scene that is happening? And then there's a surprise encounter.

There's a surprise encounter. And then a supernatural healing. And finally, there is a sharing by Peter, which we just heard. So firstly, there is a scene.

There is a prayer time. There's a place. And there's a person. Usually, the Jews had three times of prayer. As was their custom, it would be a 9 a.m.

[4:49] morning prayer, a 12 noon prayer, and then a 3 p.m. prayer, known as evening prayer, because the sun usually set around 6.

And what's interesting here is that Peter and John are still continuing to pray at the temple. Still continuing to pray.

They probably didn't go to the sacrifice, which was before the evening prayer, because they believed that Jesus was and is the ultimate sacrifice for them.

But we see here that John and Peter, they continue the spiritual discipline of prayer and being at the temple and being with the people.

The next thing we see is the place. They're at the temple gate, and it's called beautiful. Why is it called beautiful? Well, Josephus said that this gate was made of Corinthian brass, 75 feet high, with double doors.

[5:53] So beautiful that it was called greatly beautiful. And so we see a picture here in the next slide. We see a picture here in the next slide.

Yes, that's modern-day Jerusalem, and the temple gate would have been outside of it. And it's probably not here anymore.

But we see that this gate would have been five to seven stories high. And who is there? The person that is there is a lame person.

A lame person who is physically helpless. It's said that every day his friends would need to carry this person to beg at the temple gate.

Now, some scholars believe this man is around middle-aged, maybe around 30, 40 years old.

Imagine being carried there for years and years to beg and ask people for alms.

[6:57] Now, nowadays, if we are physically lame or crippled, we can ask Mark. Is Mark here? Mark's not here. Mark makes prosthetics. And hopefully, we can live a normal life.

Veterans who've come back from war and are amputated, they can have some sort of normal life. Or you can do things online now and program. We'll see how long that takes since AI is taking over. But people can live normal lives nowadays. But back then, if you were crippled, it meant you were socially outcasted. You were marginalized because you couldn't live a normal life.

And that was the situation of this person. He depended on his friends and family to carry you, carry him, every day. Do we have friends that would carry us every day?

Would you be that friend that would carry your friend every day to beg? And if people didn't give, your survival would be in question.

[8:09] How would you survive? It would be very hard. And at that time, if you were born crippled, what do you think that meant?

What do you think that meant to the religious people, Jewish people of that time? Pardon me?

Yeah. Maybe your parents sinned and caused you to be crippled.

Or maybe you have some sort of sin and are crippled. And so you were socially outcasted. It's interesting. This person was placed outside the temple.

Maybe he was never allowed to go in because of his crippledness. And so here we see the scene.

A scene where we see religion without power leaves people helpless.

Religion without power leaves people helpless. How many people come to church that don't experience the transforming power of Jesus and are still crippled?

[9:18] Maybe it's financially. Maybe it's financially. Maybe it's financially. Mentally. Some of us are going through different things. And so firstly, we see the scene.

And then the second thing we see is the surprise encounter. Surprise encounter. What does it say? Peter and John were about to go in to the temple.

But there was a man asking for alms or gifts or money. Peter looked directly at him as did John.

And he said, look at us. And he fixed his attention onto them. We've all seen beggars before.

Usually they might be face down, looking on the ground, not looking up.

But here, Peter and John says, look at us. Look at us. He's giving this person attention.

[10:27] Usually he's ignored, frowned upon. But he's giving this man attention. I know you're there.

God knows you're there. God sees you. God sees your need. God sees you. He says, look at us. And this man looks up.

Expecting what? Expecting gold or silver or alms or denarii. But Peter and John say, gold and silver I do not have.

But what I do have, I give to you in the name of Jesus. This man was expecting something temporary.

A temporary fix. A band-aid. To continue to survive. But what he received and what he got was so much more. It was transformational.

[11:29] Transformational. Before COVID, our church used to go out to Samsopo and Mongkok area.

And we would hand out food boxes every Friday. We brought the youth. Some of them came. And we handed it out. We handed out food boxes. And you know what?

It can be easy. You spend an hour or an hour and a half. You have the food boxes. You know, the homeless line up. And you give it to them. That's easy.

You're just handing things out. What's harder is getting to know these homeless people.

Understanding what they go through. Looking them in the eye.

Have you looked at homeless people in the eye? Had a conversation with them? Sometimes it's not pretty. You know, some of them, you know, keep a lot of things.

[12:27] You know, they're hoarders. They have all their belongings with them. Some of them are living on the street. And you see that condition. It's not easy.

One of our deacons, actually. Yeah, Deacon Stanley. He goes every Friday. And he's gotten to know one of them.

And he's led them to Jesus. He visits him in his cardboard box that he's made as a home. Under those tunnels. You know, those walkways that you go under.

And some of the homeless build their own home out of cardboard boxes. Because he's gotten to know him on a weekly basis. Visit him. Give him food.

Converse with him. Spend the night talking with him about God. Do we see the broken that is around us?

[13:27] Do we see the people that are in need? Not just an easy handout. Here you go. But actually get to know them.

Look at them. Get to know them. So that was the surprise encounter.

The surprise encounter. Actually, let me share another story. Yes, I play ball at Southern.

Sometimes quite regularly. And I was there this Thursday, actually.

And I was balling with Stanford, who's not here today. But another student. And we played with an American guy. He looks like a footballer. Like an American footballer.

And we got to know him. And he's like, yo, how do you guys know each other? And we're from church. And then he's like, oh, that's pretty interesting.

[14:25] Because I've just gotten to know the Lord recently. And he says, and we ask him more about, you know, oh, how did you get to know the Lord?

And he's like, oh, I was looking at near-death experiences online. And somehow, you know, the interest of God stirred up in my heart.

And then I watched the passion of the Christ. And that led me on my knees in a week of fasting. And I committed my life to the Lord.

And I'm like, wow, that's such an amazing story. That God found you on your own. That God led you to himself. That's an amazing thing.

And I invited him to church. And he was like, oh, where's your church? And my church is in Admiralty. And we're in the 14th floor. And he's like, I think I know somebody that goes there.

[15:27] One of my clients goes there. He's a personal trainer. And he's like, yeah, his name is like Daryl. And he's 15.

And I'm like, Daryl, 15? That's one of my GU kids. What are the chances? This is Daryl that was reading the scripture. That's Daryl that was reading the scripture.

And he said he would come today to church. And he's here. This is Chris right here. Talk about surprise encounter.

Surprise encounter. And we took a selfie, me and Chris. And we sent it to Daryl. And I was like, Daryl, what's going on, bro? Why didn't you invite him to church? Because we talked about this. You know, he actually, he brought, where's Marcus? Where's the other Marcus? Oh, he brought Marcus, actually. He brought his friend. And he's been talking with some of his atheist friends about Jesus. And we're like, yeah, this is how you invite people.

[16:30] You know, how you, you know, get to know them, see where they're at spiritually. I was like, bro, you should have brought your personal trainer weeks ago. And I'm like, because you didn't, God had to send backup.

And I guess I'm backup. And so we see a surprise encounter. This is totally out of the blue. What are the chances?

How many people are there in Hong Kong? How many people? Huh? Eight million. And somehow I get to ball with Chris on his team. And me and Stanford get to know him because we're from church together.

And what are the chances that out of everybody, he personally trains Daryl, who needs it, obviously. You should get more sessions, Daryl.

What are the chances? Surprise encounters. Lead to a supernatural miracle. And that's what we see here.

[17:38] That's what we see here. The apostles were given the authority to perform signs and wonders as the Holy Spirit dwelled inside of them.

It says, Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up. And immediately, his feet and his ankles were made strong.

And leaping up, he stood and began to walk. And entering the temple with them. Walking and leaping and praising God.

I just noticed this recently. The first thing he does is obviously jump up with joy. He's walking. Wow. Imagine, you've never walked before. And then now you're walking. You're like, whoa, what is this feeling? Right? You're just like, whoa, I'm like flying or something. Right? And immediately, he praises God.

[18:36] And he enters the temple. He enters the temple. The place he was probably not allowed to go. Because he was a social outcast.

And so that was the supernatural miracle. Imagine 30, 40 years.

Imagine waiting 30, 40 years to be healed by the Lord. It's a long time. It's a lot of prayer.

That's a lot of friends helping you every day to survive. I lead another youth group on Saturday.

It's called Titus. And we've been going through the Alpha series. And one of the episodes is about healing. Does God still heal today? And as we went through that series, we were just reflecting as a group.

[19:40] Wow, God has really healed our group. God has really healed our group. One of our kids has religious OCD. OCD is compulsive, obsessive compulsive disorder.

Right? And so you become obsessed about, you know, religion. I have to meet these standards.

And through counseling and through medication, God has slowly helped him to become normal.

And he can come to church again. And not be judging everybody and judging himself and thinking that he's all that. We see another person whose mother died when he was 13.

Imagine your mother dying at 13. You'd be angry at God. I would be angry at God. God, why did you take my mother away? Right? And this kid started going to church a couple years later.

Actually, just six months ago. And God has healed him of that pain, that hurt. And he has started to go to church regularly for six months.

[20:57] And his relationship with God is healed. It's a miracle. It's a supernatural thing. To restore that relationship with the Lord. We've had kids who had physical healing of eczema.

It was really bad. It was really bad. But God had healed him. We had people who had Asperger's. And they couldn't really connect with people socially.

They wouldn't even want to come to church because there's too many people. And he's afraid. And we've seen him take steps of faith to come to church.

And ask Jesus for healing. It's been amazing. It's been amazing. To see the kids in my group. Have healing in some way.

Now, God heals in his own time. And in his own way. But sometimes, God allows this. To be a thorn on our side.

[21:58] Just like Paul. Paul prayed three times. Take this thorn away from me. But God did not. Because he said.

What did he say? My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness.

Sometimes, God heals us. Immediately. Sometimes, it takes 30, 40 years. Sometimes, God leaves it as a thorn for us to continually rely and depend on him.

A supernatural miracle is followed by a sharing. A sharing by Peter. The first thing we notice. Is that he says. Why do you stare at us? As if we did something special. Why do you stare at us? [23:06] We did nothing special. Instead, he points them. To the true power. That is Jesus. True ministers.

Point to Christ. Not themselves. True ministers. Point to Christ. Not themselves. The first thing that we see in Peter's sharing.

Is that he points them to Christ. And then he tells them. The relevance. Of what they are seeing. Once again.

Peter. Is speaking to the Jewish audience. And he tells them. Your God. The God of. Abraham. Yeah. Abraham. Isaac. Jacob. He is the one.

Who has promised you. The Messiah. However. You. Denied him. It says in verse 14.

[24:05] Let's bring up verse 14. But you denied the holy and righteous one. And asked him for. And asked for a murderer. To be granted to you. And you killed.

The author of life. Whom God raised from the dead. To this. We are. Witnesses. Wow. It's pretty harsh. Right. He's like.

You killed him. The author of life. You. You chose a murderer. Over. The Messiah. You denied him. In order to share the good news.

We need to first. Help people to understand. Why they need it. You know. Me and Chris. We're having a conversation.

And he's like. I've tried. All the different things. That the. That the world offers. Self-help. You know. You can do it yourself. Positivity. He's tried it.

[25:08] It doesn't work. The only thing. That works. Is Jesus. Jesus. And the first thing. We need to realize. Is that we need to repent.

And repentance. Is I was walking one way. My own way. Trusting in myself. Going my own direction. And then now.

I see. See another way. A better way. The Jesus way. And I turn 180 degrees. And I walk towards Jesus. I deny that way.

And I walk towards. The Christ way. Repentance is 180 degree turn. And Paul.

A Peter. Is sharing this. He's saying. Repent. And be. Forgiven. In verse 19. Repent. Therefore. And turn back. That your sins.

[26:12] May be blotted out. The gospel. Exposes. Our sin. Our brokenness.

And it turns us. Towards. Restoration. Restoration. Of our relationship. With Jesus Christ. In verse 20.

It says this. That the times. Of refreshing. May come. From the presence. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. That he may send. Christ. Appointed for you.

Send the Christ. Appointed for you. Jesus. Whom heaven. Must receive. Until the time. For restoring. All things. About which. God spoke. By the mouth. Of his holy prophets.

Long ago. Repent. So that you may be. Refreshed. Restored. In that relationship. With Jesus.

[27:13] Remember. Remember. When you first. Asked Jesus. Into your life. Were you. Restored. Were you. Refreshed. Did you.

Experience. A peace. That this world. Cannot offer. True peace. Isn't. Oh. I'm not going to. Fire missiles at you.

I'm not going to. Fire missiles at you. That's not true peace. A ceasefire. Is not true peace. A true peace. Is restoration. Of that relationship.

And we were enemies. Of the Lord. The Bible says. We were enemies. Of the Lord. And Jesus came. To restore. That relationship. With us.

So we are no longer. Enemies. But we are family. We are adopted. As sons and daughters. You are adopted. Into this family.

[28:08] Of God. Restored. You're no longer. Outcasts. You're allowed. In the temple. You're allowed. To worship. You're allowed.

To be in the presence. Of the Lord. You. Are restored. And that is what. Peter. Is sharing with them. The changing. Saving power. Of Jesus Christ. And so from this story. What can we learn?

From this story. What can we learn? There are three things. We can learn. As a church. Because the church. Is what the book of Acts.

Is all about. The first thing is. The church needs. To see the broken. The church needs. To see the broken. Are we seeing the broken?

[29:09] It could be. People that. Are in the church. That are struggling. With different issues. Relationship issues.

Financial issues. Mental issues. Emotional issues. Do we see the broken. People around us. In the church. As we gather.

And then as we gather. Are we seeing the brokenness. Of our city. Now I know Gabs.

And Joe. They do prison ministry. And they're going out. To see the broken people. We need to do more. Peter and John.

Saw the broken. And. They gave. Them. Attention. Prayer. And proclaimed.

[30:05] The power. Of Jesus. The second thing is. The church uses. Ordinary people. To do. Extra. Ordinary. Things.

Supernatural. Things. What did Peter. And John do. As a living. What do they do? They were fishermen. Just.

Ordinary job. They didn't have. PhDs. Or. You know. Owned a business. Or. Was a CEO.

No. God used. Ordinary people. Who are willing. To step out. In obedience. To pray.

To proclaim. The power. Of Jesus. God wants. To use. Each one of you. Each one of you. God has placed. Each one of you.

[31:02] With unique. Circles. Of friends. Family. Schoolmates. That only you can reach. God wants you. To be a pastor.

To the people. Around you. Who are the two. Or three people. That are broken. Around you. That really need.

Prayer. That really need. The saving power. Of Jesus Christ. And lastly.

The church. Offers more. Than programs. It must offer. The saving power. Of Christ. We can have the best.

Basketball games. We can have. The best Muay Thai. Wine tasting. Youth groups on Friday. Day. Baking.

[31:58] Outings. We can have. The best programs. But if we have not. Shared. The changing power. Of Jesus. We are missing. The point.

We are missing. The point. God help us. That our church. Would be leading. People. To the saving. Power.

Of Jesus Christ. I just want to take us. To have two or three minutes. Here now. To reflect.

Who are some of the people. In our life. That God has placed. That need. The saving power. Of Jesus Christ. Let's take two or three minutes.

Just to reflect. Ask the Lord. To reveal to you. Who are some of the broken. That are among us.

[32:53] I want us now to go in.

Twos or threes. And let's pray for the people. Specifically in your life. That God has revealed to you. that need the transforming power of Jesus.

Twos and threes. Share with the people beside you. Get to know them. And pray for the people that God has placed in your heart. Share with them.

Heavenly Father, we pray for the friends and the family that you've placed in our lives. We pray that, Lord God, you would use us in our obedience to you.

To lead them to Jesus. To proclaim the power of Jesus. Guide us by your spirit, we pray. And the church said, amen. Let us stand and respond to the Lord.

[34:22] Jesus, may you be glorified. May we recognize today the power of your name.

The salvation comes through no other name but you, Jesus. And Holy Spirit, would you show us who are those that are around us who need to see you.

Those who are around us who you are seeking to point to Jesus. You are our helper. You are our comforter. You are our guide.

You are our advocate. Let us spend now just a final few moments to allow the Holy Spirit to just highlight to us what it is that Johnny may have shared to us.

Lord, we seek to hear your voice.

[36:22] We trust your voice. We obey your voice. We follow you. May we be a people who truly understand the good news of Jesus.

Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. In your name, in your powerful, precious, beautiful name we pray.

Amen. Please take a seat. We've come to the end of our service and I just wanted to honour Johnny and just thank him.

For the heart that he's had always, his heart to share the gospel with us. But most often with the young generation growing up in Hong Kong, just his heart to do that has just been second to none.

[37:57] So just honour you. I wanted to take this chance. Actually, he's been really wanting to, eager to involve as many people as possible to walk in the lives of young people. He mentioned GU on Friday nights.

We're still praying for people, adults, who are willing to walk with these young people. They're not scary. Some of them just need someone to hang out with. Some of them need an education on the basketball court.

A continued one. But really, it's just what Peter and John did when they told the lame beggar, hey, look at me. Look at us.

It wasn't a demanding thing where they were like, hey, we demand this of you. It was, we want connection with you. We want to restore integrity to you. You no longer need to keep your head facing down on the floor.

You are seen. And that is really the thing that we're praying for, that there are more and more people. You're sat here. Don't think it's someone else. You're sat here. Who you can go, well, actually, there is something that I can offer.

[39:01] If it literally is just to spend time with people, then this is it. So I encourage you to do that. But if we're to summarize the whole book of Acts, it's, of course, it's the believers who are filled with the Spirit who point to Jesus.

And we as a church, are we willing to see the broken and then point the broken to Jesus so they can see Jesus? That's it. Is the church willing to see the broken and are we then able to point the broken to see Jesus?

The only way we can do that is if we recognize that we are broken. If we see Jesus.

That's the only way. And I keep saying, let's not do anything out of the goodness of our own hearts. Let's see how broken we truly are, that we are that lame beggar. We are the one that couldn't help ourselves.

And yet Jesus came down and crouched down to us and said, I see you. Look at me. If you look at me, if you trust in me, you will be saved. Can we be that people?

[40:12] So I encourage you, continue to think about this. Don't just think about this when the lights are dimmed, when there's nice emotional music behind you. Think about this as you walk downstairs and go grab lunch.

Think about this when you're heading to work tomorrow morning and go, wait, who am I actually working for? What am I actually doing on this planet? Who should I show love to? Who should I point Jesus to?

Let us do that as much as we can, wherever we can. Next week, actually, so far, it's been pretty rosy for the followers of Jesus.

They've had favor with all people. They've managed to heal people. The hype is growing. Next week, things turn. Things start to go wrong for them. And we'll catch up there and I'll open the word in Acts 4 for us there.

But in the meantime, would you be blessed? Would you be filled with the Spirit? Would you be cut to the heart? Would you see the broken and would you help the broken see Jesus? Bless you and we'll see you next week.