

## Enjoying God and Engaging His Mission – Acts 3, 4

### Scene 1

*3 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.*

The disciples still attended the public prayers of the people...they prayed with new eyes however. It was the busiest of prayer times so they were part of a mass of people.

*2 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. 3 Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. 4 And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 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 had happened to him. 11 While he **clung** to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's.*

### Do We Remember What Is Most Needed?

When Peter encountered this man, when they encountered this suffering...they were capable of differentiating between what this man thought he needed and what he really needed. *His healing was a sign of God's work to heal what sin has broken, but a picture of the deeper healing that is needed in us all. We think we know what we need, but God has so much more.* As a church, we walk a tightrope. We want to fight the effects of pain and suffering in the world around us...even as we hold out a message of a greater salvation, the hope of a deeper need being met. This is the balance we hold...we fight against temporal suffering knowing that it will not all go away (hunger, homelessness, abuse, injustice).

**How are we doing with the balance? Which one do we tend to over emphasize? Why? In living out our Ambassador and Servant identity, are we aiming at just benevolence or a narrow view of making disciples? Do we get sidetracked by benevolence and check a box? Or do we have a holistic view of making disciples? How can the balance be played out well through our Community?**

### Are We Willing to Give What Is Most Needed?

*12 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?"*

As Peter gets up to speak, he doesn't speak of the miracle, but of Jesus. He explains that it's all about Jesus, not about Peter and His piety.

*13 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, when he had decided to release him. 14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.*

Your verdict of Jesus was that He was weak and cursed, you killed Him. But God crowned Him. But God raised Jesus from the dead and has glorified Him. The one who had no sin but took on sin...defeated death.

*16 And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.*

What you see here is Jesus' work, not his name that works like magic. It's b/c of Jesus being glorified that this happened. He is glorified and seated in Heaven. This is what Acts's is about...all that Jesus continues to do.

*17 "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 **Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, 20 that times of refreshing may come***

**Acts describes the 30 years after Jesus rose from the dead. What will our 30 years look like? Not comparing the events, but the hearts, the devotion, prayer and obedience?**

*from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, 21 whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. 22 Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' 24 And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. 25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' 26 God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."*

Summary:

- If Jesus has been Glorified, then the Prophets have been fulfilled, He is the One that you have been waiting for. From the suffering servant (18), to the Great Prophet who speaks God's Word (22), the Seed of Abraham that blesses God's People (24-26).
- The miracle shows that Jesus is vindicated and these are all filled in Him, and through Him all people's on earth will be blessed. Therefore: Repent!
- There is hope, verse 26: Despite your wickedness and wicked ways...God still wants to bless you. Your sins can be wiped out, times of refreshing may come.
- You repent and your sins will be wiped away...refreshment may come from God.
- And finally restoration (vs.20). God is not just after taking your sins and refreshing you...His plan is for restoration. A re-weaving of what has been unraveled...a shalom.

**In light of this, what do people need most? (sin removed, repentance, faith, times of refreshing, etc) Are we willing to get to folks deepest need? How do we get there? Are we in touch with our deepest need ourselves? We will naturally draw people to that which we deem most valuable to ourselves. If we have trouble getting to this with others, perhaps we are still looking to temporal things ourselves. We must be willing to be witness' of the Gospel message and Gospel reality.**

**Though we balance the tension between meeting temporal needs, we do that through the proclamation of the greatest need.**

## Scene 2

### **Are We Willing to Do That Regardless of The Response?**

*4 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.*

As it was evidently too late in the day to hold a legal hearing, the Jewish leaders tossed Peter and John into jail. Possibly the healed beggar too, because he was with them in the following events (see 4:14). What was he thinking? Crippled for 40 years, now dancing like a rock star...and thrown in jail for it.

*5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?"*

This was the same crew that had tried and condemned Jesus some 60 days before. Remember, Peter was a fisherman, not a scholar or social elite. He's knows what they're capable of, they orchestrated the murder of Jesus. He also remembers in the back of His mind what happened on that day...how he was filled with fear in the face of being associated with Jesus...how quick his resolve left him when faced with possible persecution...a young girl asked him if he knew Jesus and 3 times Peter cowered and lied. Now some 60 days later...here he is.

**To Give What Is Most Needed Regardless of the Response will take a boldness that only Comes from Being With Jesus.**

*8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you*

*well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14 But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.*

Peter is now a different dude. This is what the HS can do in the life of a man or woman. From fear to fearlessness. They saw a boldness in Peter and John...a boldness that is linked to being with Jesus. Here's the thing...it didn't come from their proximity to the person...it came from Jesus' proximity in them.

**Do you notice the difference spending time with Jesus through his word and prayer makes? Would you say you are waxing or waning in this area? Are your devotional times consistent? Satisfying? Have you born fruit? Has your boldness/conviction suffered? Are you making strides in this or are you simply tolerating? How can the gospel motivate a change? (Encourage one another here...)**

### **Boldness to Give What Is Most Needed Only Comes From God's Spirit.**

Preaching about this text, Joshua Harris said, "it's born from a heart of faith that believes that the power of the gospel is not hindered from our weakness or inadequacy. It's believing that God is at work and His Spirit is enabling us and that the Gospel is the power of God for all who believe."

*15 But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, 16 saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." 18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." 21 And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. Imagine what the believers were feeling during this. The last time that someone was taken in on a bogus charge and falsely tried, what happened? He was crucified. So look at what happens when Peter and John get back to them.*

*23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed"— 27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.*

*29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*

### **What Is Our Greatest Need?**

- They don't pray to be delivered or for God to wipe out the enemies...they ask Him to take note of the threats...
- "They are Your concern...our concern is with our hearts...may we continue to be bold."
- They didn't pray for the house to be shaken...notice that. They weren't after an experience. They wanted God's power to obey...they wanted to Enjoy God more deeply and Engage His Mission More Fully...that is the posture of one who will be filled and empowered.
- Not for the sake of that in itself...but so that God's Glory may be made known.
- And they were all filled and enabled to continue.

- It wasn't just for the leaders and the ones with the big personalities. They were empowered in their everyday lives. In their homes and jobs and communities.

**Do we pray like this as a Community? If not in our larger gatherings, in our smaller ones? How can we make room in our hearts for this? Room in our schedule?**

**Conclusion:**

- If we desire for God's glory to be seen we'll see that we can't do it in ourselves and we'll be driven to God for His Spirit.

**Reflection questions:**

- **If you made a list of the top 5 things you need most, what would it be?**
- **How would it line up with what we've seen here?**
- **Is a deeper enjoyment of the Gospel in there?**
- **What about Spirit-empowered boldness?**