

PP Acts: To the End of the Earth

Part 6-Acts 3:1-10

10/31-11/1/2020

PP 1-The Man

“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.” 3:1-3

The two Apostles were heading to a prayer service at the temple at 3 pm, when they drew near to a lame beggar at the Beautiful Gate that led into the temple

The temple grounds were massive, more than 35 acres big

For perspective, the footprint of Lincoln Financial Field where the Eagles play is 15 acres

That includes the 4-cell jail that they used to use for their unruly, unholy fans

Here we have an encounter that took place at one of its many gates, which served as the unemployment and disability office for those in need

The sick as well as those looking for work would be at the gates and foremen would find their day laborers there, and compassionate people would support those unable to work

No better place for a beggar to ‘set up’ than where people go to worship God with glad hearts

This man had never walked, lame from birth (3:2), more than 40 years old (4:22)

He was not just broke, he was broken, but a miracle is on its way

PP 2-The Miracle

“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.” Acts 3:3-5

One thing everyone in a city learns, don’t make eye contact with a sidewalk beggar

But that’s exactly what Peter and John do

“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!’ 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 entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.” 3:6-8

No one with any deformity was allowed to go into the Temple, so for the first time in his entire life, he went into that great temple with Peter and John, leaping in joy and praising God

This wasn’t just a healing of his body, it was a healing of his soul ***“And all the people saw him walking and praising God” 3:9***

They were ***‘filled with wonder and amazement’*** (10), the phrase means out of their minds

The man ***“clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon’s. And when Peter saw it he addressed the people” 3:11-12***

Peter knew he had an opportunity to witness of Jesus for word spread like a wildfire, and people ran to meet them in Solomon’s portico

Friends, how often opportunities to witness come to us, and we miss them

But Peter was quickly learning, when God does something miraculous, it is to prepare people to hear the gospel

The role of signs, wonders, miracles is to draw people to the messenger and message of Jesus
And Peter would not miss this divinely-given opportunity to speak of Jesus

PP 3-The Message

PP Always direct unbelievers to Jesus Christ

“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?...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.” 3:12, 16

There can be no effective witness of Jesus if we do not direct all glory to Jesus Christ
Peter and John could see their astonishment turning to reverence for them as miracle workers
And how seductive that adoration can be, but the Apostles immediately deflect to Jesus
The lame man had no faith, but Peter and John, who witnessed resurrecting power, remember what Jesus had taught them, and with hearts of faith, asked God to heal this man

PP *“In that day you will ask nothing of Me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you.” John 16:23*

In the Bible, it is often the faith of the healer that is exercised on behalf of the sufferer
But faith itself is not the power that can heal anyone

The Word Faith movement believes that **PP** *“Faith is a power force [with] the ability to effect natural substance. God cannot do anything for you apart or separate from faith, for faith is God’s source of power.”¹*

Peter takes no credit, for it was the **‘name’**, the *authority and power* of Jesus Christ that healed Jesus and Jesus only can give salvation, for the name **PP** **‘Jesus’** means *Yahweh saves*
Not good works, or religion, or piety, or your family’s prayers, or empty philosophies
When God gives you an opportunity, take it, and tell them about Jesus, Who can save them

PP Always boldly address the problem of personal sin

I said *personal*, because some general, esoteric idea of sin does not repentance

PP *Conviction always precedes conversion, repentance before rebirth*

Unlike Peter, modern Christians tiptoe around the matter of sin and guilt, not wanting to offend
Instead they speak of how loved they are by God and how much God wants them to reach their full potential and give them their best life now

PP *The bad news of sin is necessary to see before the good news of salvation can be received*

I’ve often said that I have never met anyone who claimed to never have sinned

Instead, people, even Christians will dodge the offense and force of the word, and say they have made bad choices, mistakes, or committed a wrong behavior

Almost everyone defines sin as actions or behaviors, but the Bible takes us much deeper

PP *Sin is a heart of unbelief and defiance to God, producing actions of rebellion and selfishness*

The problem is not most deeply the wrong behavior, it is the wrong heart, and an unbeliever must

come face to face with that truth

¹ Taken from various Kenneth Copeland writings, including, *The Force of Faith* (1989)

I learned this in many places of the bible, including this sermon from Peter: ***“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. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead.” 3:13-16***

God glorified Jesus Who proved Who He was by signs, wonders and miracles, but you rejected Him, handing Him over to be crucified, but God raised Him to life

Peter tells this Jewish multitude they should have known better, for Moses foretold, ***“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.” 3:22***

With incredible clarity and boldness, Peter warned them, ***“And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.” 3:22-23***

Hell has disappeared from the pulpits in American churches, yet no one in the Bible talked about the certainty and horrors of hell more than Jesus

Friends, if you will not listen to Jesus, and you reject Him, He will throw you into hell

But Peter will not end with this as he witnesses to this multitude

PP Always offer the promise of God’s grace if they will repent

“Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things” 3:19-21a

Ink in that day did not contain acid, so it could not etch into parchment, easily wiped away

Peter extends hope that even though they rebelled against God, putting Him to death, He will forgive even that if they repent

They will be filled with the refreshing of hope as Jesus will one day return and restore all things in His kingdom, and they will live forever with Him

For any who will repent of their sin, believing in Jesus, they will be forgiven

We cannot promise anyone the grace of forgiveness if they will not repent and turn from sin

For repentance is the fruit of godly sorrow and the terrible realization that my sins, my rebellion required Jesus, the ***‘Christ’*** (anointed One-3:20)) to be crucified for me

Through that powerful witness of Peter, ***“many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.” Acts 4:4***

3,000 believed at his first sermon, and 2,000 men and his second, plus women and children Christian, tell people the good news of Jesus Christ

PP *God will create opportunities to confirm and validate you and the gospel message*

So be faithful to direct people to Jesus Christ

Boldly address their personal sin, for there is no salvation without conviction and repentance

But don’t stop without offering the promise of God’s grace if they repent

Amen?

Pray