

## Power in the Name

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Acts 3

- ***“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. 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!” 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. 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 had happened to him.” -Acts 1-10 (ESV)***

- Centuries ago, the great theologian Thomas Aquinas visited Rome and the Pope at the time who was Pope Innocent II. As they walked through the vatican, Aquinas was taken back by the spectacle that the Vatican was.
- Even in the middle of the Dark ages, the beauty and wealth that had been poured into that building was astonishing.
  - And Pope Innocent, filled with pride of his Vatican, turned to Thomas Aquinas and said, “No longer do we say, ‘Silver and Gold we have none.’”

- To which Aquinas looked at the Pope, and responded, “Maybe that is why we can no longer say, ‘Rise up and walk.’”
- It's very easy for us as individuals, and as the church, to trade in the Power of God for the comfort of life.
  - Because, most of the time, like the blind beggar, we don't actually know what we need.
  - Or we can be doing all of the things that we think that we are supposed to be doing, but be missing out on what's most important
- Think about the people that would carry the blind beggar every single day from his house to the Temple and back?
  - These people definitely seemed to be going above and beyond for this guy!
  - They would carry him, who knows how far, to be able to do his begging at the Nicanor Gate, or known as the Beautiful gate...and if

you look at the **PICTURE**, you can see why they would call it that

- 75 feet tall, made of Corinthian brass...it was a sight to behold!
- And this was the most prominent and frequently used entrance into the Temple, so this would be the most foot traffic for him to be able to get as many alms as possible
- There was no better spot to be if you were a beggar!
  - They thought they were doing all that they could for the beggar, and the beggar thought he was right where he needed to be
  - But the reality of what his true need was—was shone in full effect that day when Peter and John walked by
- ***“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.” -Acts 3:3-4 (ESV)***

- I love the language that is used here, because you can tell that something deeply spiritual is happening here.
  - The beggar, did his normal call and plea for a few coins, and it says Peter directed his gaze at him
  - It's almost like you can feel the leading of the Spirit in the way that this is worded
  - There has to be some prompt from the Holy Spirit that he senses at this moment and can't move on from
  - And it wasn't just him, luke also says.... "As did John"
- You see, more often than not, when the Holy Spirit prompts you, he doesn't just prompt you. More often than not there will be another person with you that can confirm that prompting
  - Whether it be your spouse, your community group, a brother or sister in Christ...walking in the Spirit is always a team effort
- Because we misinterpret the written word so often, what makes us think we won't misinterpret the inner word as well
- So we need to be shoulder to shoulder with other believers, for when you get hit with a prompting of the Holy Spirit, you can look to your side and they say, "Yep, I feel it to."
- So Peter, gets this prompting of the Spirit, as did John and they told the beggar to look their way
- Verse 5 goes on to say: ***"And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 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!" And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong."*** -Acts 3:5-7 (ESV)
- Now, it can only be the prompting of the Holy Spirit, confirmed by a brother in Christ that could have given Peter the confidence to

literally take this man, who had been crippled from birth, by the hand and stand him up

- This is the first miracle we see, post ascension of Jesus, so it's not like there was a ton of history to back this up!
- If I were in Peter's shoes, I would have been thinkin', "Ohhhhh this better work!"
- If I'm John I'm gritting my teeth hard! Praying that it works!
- But there doesn't seem to be any hesitation in these guys! They just know!
- *They say, "Look man, I don't have what you think you need, but I do have what you really need. And what you really need, can be found in, and only in, the Name of Jesus!"*
- Verse 8 says, ***And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.*** -Acts 3:8 (ESV)
- This beggar and his friends thought that his greatest need was getting some spare change

every day outside of the temple....but he had a need so much greater!

- And the way that Luke words this would have made every Hebrew reader reminisce about Isaiah 35, when the prophet wrote:
  - ***They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees... the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*** -Isaiah 35: 3-6 (ESV)
- Luke is making sure that the readers understand that they have entered into a new era, new age, a new covenant that they have been waiting for for generations.
- *So now, this man that thought that he needed some spare change is now walking and leaping and dancing into the temple! For the very first time!*

- You see, because he was defected, by Jewish law, he was not allowed into the temple
- He could beg at the gate, but he could never go inside
- So day after day, year after year, he gets to see these healthy, well-put together Jewish families go in and out of the place of worship but could only ever wonder what it was like inside
  - *Did it feel different than out here?*
  - *Was everything inside as beautiful as the gate?*
  - *What is it like to pray in the house and presence of God?*
- He always wondered
  - But for the very first time, verse 8 says that he entered the Temple with Peter and John... walking in to experience it for himself for the very first time.

- So what he really needed wasn't money, what he really needed wasn't for his legs to work, what he really needed wasn't for his suffering to end....No, what he really needed was worship

### **- WORSHIP IS OUR GREATEST NEED**

- This man, according to the Jewish customs, had been held back his entire life from being able to freely worship God
- He was told that he could not have a direct connection with God because he was unclean
- Now, especially since the Holy Spirit had been poured out during the last chapter, the presence of God was no longer limited to the place of Worship...so these custom's and traditions were futile
  - But this man wouldn't have known that, how could he know!
- And Peter and John don't just preach a sermon to him, but allow him to be the

example to show everyone there in that temple that they are still in desperate need! And they are not going to get what they need from going through these religious ordinances

- And who they thought were to be excluded were actually first in line to be included
- Now remember, like we said in the first week of this series, the Power of God can only be used God's Timing.

- So why was this man, being healed in this way, at this time?
- Because there is no indication that Peter and John were going to the temple that day for any other reason but to pray.
- Also, the passage says that this man had been placed at the gate daily!
- Tell me. how many times would have Jesus passed by this man begging?
- How come Jesus never personally healed this man at any of the dozens of times that

Jesus would have walked through that Beautiful Gate?

- Because remember, every physical healing is always point toward a spiritual truth...and the Truth that Jesus wants to get across to all of these people and us today, is about our need for Worship
- And this is something that we have to keep in mind as we go throughout our study, because yes, Jesus said that we are to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth
- And the ends of the earth need to be emphasized, and we will have a variety of different ways this year to highlight the need for missions in our world
- However, as John Piper famously said in the opening line of his book, "Let the Nations Be Glad,".... "Missions exist, because worship does not."
  - If worship was rampant around the world there would be no need for missions around the world.

- Here's a definition of Worship that I like to work from:
- **WORSHIP IS FINDING YOUR FULFILLMENT AND ENJOYMENT IN THE PERSON OF GOD**
  - Whatever you look to, for fulfillment is what you worship
  - It wasn't healed legs that was going to make this beggar whole, yes he was walking and leaping....but more importantly he was praising God! And walking into the Temple to worship
  - And we know that he was changed, because we see in the next chapter as Peter and John are arrested...this man isn't going anywhere, he is using his new found legs to stand his ground with them in Jesus Name.
- And we see him praising God....and the word used for praising here, means to Extol: or to praise enthusiastically
  - You see his enjoyment here! True worship should be what we enjoy most because it's

what we were created to do and what we will be doing for all of eternity

- Worship is to be enjoyed!
  - I remember years ago, I was sitting in a small group of a previous church, and one of the core members, said... "I'm sick of hearing people say that they 'enjoyed' the service today. You're not here to enjoy it you're here to worship!"
  - Uhhhh I would disagree! I would go as far to say if you're not enjoying it, you're probably not worshipping!
- Worship is the most enjoyable and satisfying thing that we can ever do, because worship is where we find our fulfillment.
  - And there is nothing more enjoyable than being whole
  - Everyone on the planet is always searching to fill a void in their lives. There is not a single person that has ever been born that has never

felt like they weren't missing something at some point

- And that is because we are born into sin. And sin has caused a separation between man and God.
- And all of these people were going in and out of the temple, in and out of the beautiful gate, because they were trying to deal with that problem of sin.
- Because sin was such a big deal, and God was so perfect and holy, He could not be in the presence of sin. So He set up a temporary system in which sin could be dealt with.
- The bible says without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin
  - So in this temporary system the people would beg God's forgiveness for their sins and offer up a spotless animal to be sacrificed to atone for their sins, and as a result the people could keep some sort of established relationship with God.

- But this lame man was never able to do so.

- And what he and all of the temple goers didn't understand yet was that Jesus had fulfilled the ultimate sacrifice!
- He was so Holy, so innocent, and so spotless, that His sacrifice on the cross was powerful enough to do away with that temporary sacrificial system forever
- A relationship with God was no longer based on the sacrifices you perform, it was now based on the sacrifice of Jesus...and you can only be made whole through faith in His Name.
- So again, why did Jesus wait all these years to allow this lame beggar to be healed? Because it opened the door for Peter to be able to preach his 2nd sermon.
- Lets keep reading in verse 9: ***"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 had happened to him. While he 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: "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, 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. To this we are witnesses. 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."**  
**-Acts 3:9-16 (ESV)**

- Whenever a genuine miracle, or a genuine work of God takes place, the purpose of it is always to point upward
  - Peter and John would refuse to take any of the glory or credit for a work that only God could do.
- And it's interesting that he says, "His name, by faith in His name, has made this man strong... the faith that is through Jesus Christ has given this man perfect health."
- But who's faith are we talking about here? There is no indication that this blind beggar had any faith in Jesus himself? So was it this man's faith? Or was it Peter and John's faith that made him well?
- Well, the answer, in reality, is neither
- Because if it were either of the two, it would glorify the man more than God. And you'll

see way to many self-proclaimed Christians make things more about “their faith” than God’s power.

- The reality is, the word faith in this context in the original language means: **Faith (Pistis): “Trust or Confidence in Christ [that is] awakened through Him.”**
  - It’s His faith! Given to us, GIFTED to us
  - There is never a single aspect of any of this that is about us!
  - It’s His faith, it’s His power, it’s His Work, it’s His miracle, because it’s His love!
  - It’s the kindness of God that leads us to repentance....And Peter is letting them know that repentance is really what they need to deal with the sin that they are at the temple to deal with:
- So the first part of this message, Peter seems pretty harsh. Talking about how they were the ones that wrongfully sentenced Jesus to death,

talking to these bystanders about how it was their fault that Jesus was crucified.

- He wants them to know the seriousness of the situation, but he also does so with grace
- Verse 17: ***“And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He thus fulfilled. 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 about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago... 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.’***  
***God, having raised up His servant, sent Him***

***to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.” -Acts 3:17-26 (ESV)***

- Here's the gist: The miracle, the restoration of the beggars legs, that they witnessed is pointing upward to glorify God, it's pointing forward to the 2nd coming of Jesus and the restoration of all things, and it's pointing inward toward the need for personal restoration
- Peter is letting all of the people at the Temple know that the lame man's physical condition was just an example of their spiritual condition
- They may be able to physically go in and out of that Temple, but the reality is that spiritually, they are still just lame beggars!
  - They were right where they thought that they needed to be and were doing what they were supposed to be doing
  - But all of their ordinances, traditions, and sacrifices just had them at the gate

- Their true need for worship could not be fulfilled without faith in the Name of Jesus
  - What they really needed, to make that possible, to be made whole, to be made new, to be restored....was to repent.
- What Peter says in verses 19 and 20 is one of my favorite lines from the entire Bible:
  - ***“Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord...” -Acts 3:19-20 (ESV)***
- The promise is that when we repent and turn....the result is refreshment in the presence of the Lord.
- Now, this is so beautiful because that word refreshing in the original language, can also be translated “revival”. but properly means:  
**Refreshing (anapsyxis): “A Recovery of Breath”**

- I always loved what Louie Giglio said at Passion 2013 when He said that “Worship is giving God His breath back.”

- You see, in Genesis 2, we see at creation, **“Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” -Genesis 2:7 (ESV)**
  - You see, Adam was formed, he was created, but he was not living until God breathed the breath of life into him.
  - But since then, sin entered into the world and suffocated the breath of life out of mankind...
  - But God had a plan to restore the breath of life within us.
- He foreshadowed how He would do this, in Ezekiel 37 whenever He took the prophet to the valley of dry bones, and told Him to prophecy over all of these skeletons.

- And as Ezekiel prophesied, the bones began to attach, ligaments and skin formed on the bodies...but he said, there was no breath in them.
- So God told him to prophecy specifically to the breath so that they would live.
- Then in verse 10, it says **“So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.” -Ezekiel 37:10 (NKJV)**
  - God tells Ezekiel that this is an illustration of what the people of Israel were like. Just dry bones, with no real life within them. But He tells them that there will come a day when that Breath is restored
- And He says that on that day, **“I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live...” -Ezekiel 37:14a**
- And we see that prophecy come to fruition in John chapter 20, after the resurrection, Jesus

appears to His disciples. He says Peace to you, just as the father sent me so I am sending you, and in John 20:22 it says, ***“And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”***- ***John 20:22 (NKJV)***

- So whatever God breathes His Spirit into, truly comes alive.
- And Jesus ascended into heaven and sent His Holy Spirit so that the breath of life could be restored to us as He originally designed
  - So we could live according to His design
  - So we could think according to His design
  - So we could worship according to His design
- We as creation, will only get fulfillment when we operate the way that we were created to
  - And our Creator gave us the Holy Spirit to enable us to do so.
- And many of us have lived in ignorance for many years, not fully knowing or

acknowledging the lengths that Jesus went to in order to restore the breath of life to us

- But to take hold of this breath of life, and to fulfill our greatest need of worship....we must, as Peter says:

### **- REPENT AND TURN**

- We have to do both, not just one or the other
  - You may have heard that the word repentance means “to do a 180”
  - But that is actually an inaccurate definition
  - Now the the word Turn can mean that, but not repent
- So many of us have a hard time with talking about the idea of repentance because we have been told that it means to just stop doing all of the things that you are doing, and make yourself live a different life than you are used to living

- However, the actual definition of the Word repentance is: **Repent (metanoeō): To change one's mind; to reconsider**
  - This is why Romans 12:2 tells us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds
- So *Repentance is less about a change of actions and more about a change of mind.*
- Now, repentance can also be translated as “To look again!”
  - Why is that important? Because we are so used to looking to ourselves, for the ability to change, or find purpose or fulfillment
  - We spend so much of our time trying to figure out what WE want out of life, what we think is best for ourselves
- There are so many so-called intellects and influencers, there are monks doing marches that try to tell you that all you need to do to find peace and fulfillment is to look within yourself
  - But to do so would be to worship yourself: Paul warns about this in the book of Romans. He tells us about the ungodly and the unrighteous, who do everything they can to suppress the truth in their lives. He says that the proof of God's existence and supreme authority is all around us in creation so they are all without excuse! And He explains: “
  - **“For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools...Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” -Romans 12:21-24 (ESV)**

- Everyone worships something. And if your worship is not directed toward your Creator, you will always be left wanting, begging outside of the gate
  - You'll constantly be trying to find something for fulfillment, and so many people stay in that constant search because they refuse to repent!
  - Why? Because repentance causes us to admit that we are wrong
  - And a refusal to admit wrongdoing is the greatest hindrance to a relationship with God
    - And that relationship, that communion with your Creator is what you have really been searching for
  - You see, God does not demand our worship because He is insecure. He demands our worship because it is our greatest need.
- And you will not experience your greatest need, unless you repent
  - Now, you might say, "Pastor! I've tried that! There are so many things that I've tried to stop doing, but I keep failing time and time again! It's too hard!"
  - And that's because you're trying to turn, without repenting
- Repenting means to stop looking to yourself, stop looking at your flaws, stop looking at your failure, or your own will power to change
  - And start looking to Him!
- The writer of Hebrews said it best when he wrote: ***"Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily entraps us. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter our faith."***

***Hebrews 12:1-2***

- And as you keep your eyes on Jesus, and begin to follow His word, His will, and His ways.... before you know it you find your life heading in a completely different direction that you had set for yourself
- Because now you are following what you have set your eyes and your mind on.
- It's in Jesus and only Jesus...in the powerful NAME of Jesus, that we can truly repent, look again, and have our greatest need be unlocked.
- The Gift of Worship
  - And worship is so much more than just singing songs and lifting hands.
  - Worship, is about letting God be the ultimate fulfillment and enjoyment of your life.
- You see, there are many people in the American church today, that are still just begging at the gate.
- So close, but are really still just looking for silver and gold
  - There are too many people sitting in churches that aren't looking for the Person of God to provide their needs, but rather the people of God to provide their needs
  - They come into the church with a "what am I going to get out of it" mentality
- They come looking for the silver and gold of:
  - Affirmation, someone to listen to me... sometimes actual silver and gold
  - They come to feel better about themselves, for someone to care for me
- But you know, for much of the New Testament the words "Worship" and "Serve" are interchangeable
  - And if you do not come into church with the sole purpose of Worshipping God and serving Him by serving His people, then you'll always just be begging at the gate

- Missing out on the fulfillment that true worship will bring into your life
- Now, this is not a very popular message. This not a message that the mainstream media and societal leaders would have you hear and believe
- Heck in Peter and John would get arrested for this message in the beginning of chapter 4. Look at this: ***“And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.” -Acts 4:1-4 (ESV)***
- There is nothing more powerful than the Name of Jesus
  - It's the name of Jesus that can make the lame leap
  - It's the Name of Jesus can can lead thousands to repentance
  - It's the Name of Jesus that enables us to Worship
  - It's the Name of Jesus that leads us to fulfillment, enjoyment, life and life abundantly for all of eternity!