



Message #7
“A CRIPPLE CURED”
Acts 3:1-10

Luke began his second volume (Acts) by telling his readers that he was going to record what Jesus “continued to do and to teach” through His apostles (Acts 1:1-2). He has also told us that “many wonders and signs (were) performed by the apostles (Acts 2:43). Now, in Acts 3:1-10, Luke provides us with a particular, dramatic example.

At this early stage in the formative stages of development for the young church, Peter and John were the undoubted leaders. It is an interesting partnership. From what we know and glean from the Scriptures, Peter and John were very different personalities. Although they had been partners together in a fishing business (see Luke 5:10), they do not come across as similar characters.

John was known for his kindness and focus on loving others.

Peter is often remembered for his boldness and brashness.

But the fact that these two men were very different underscores an important point in relationships and ministry. It is not the mirror-image partnerships that work best, it is usually those that are different, where there is room for strengths and weaknesses to be balanced out, and not replicated. God brings people and churches together from vastly different backgrounds and personalities, and He gifts them in many different ways.

Just as Peter and John complemented one another’s personalities, thus being able to work as a very effective ministry team, so, too, are we to work together in unity (not the same as uniformity) encouraging one another to develop the gifts we each have for the glory of God and the building up of the church.

Have you ever had to work closely with someone that you just did not “click” with? What happened? How did you manage to move forward as a team in a positive and productive way?

SETTING THE SCENE:

Peter and John were making their way to the temple at the ninth hour (ie. 3:00pm). The Jewish calendar has three scheduled times of prayer: the morning hour, the afternoon hour and the evening hour. Three o’clock was designated as the “evening” hour of prayer.

As they approached the temple, they came to a prominent gate (called “Beautiful” 3:10) that led from the Court of Gentiles into the Inner Court of the Women. This gate was on the eastern side of the temple grounds in the area known as Solomon’s Portico (or colonnade). It was heavy and huge. Gathered around the gate were many helpless and hopeless people....beggars trying to eke out a living from the generosity (alms) of those passing by. Devout Jews sought to obey the law, which stipulated caring for the needy. So, in the eyes of the beggars, the temple gate was a good place to find people who might offer some help.

Have you ever encountered “beggars” in your travels, or even here in Brisbane? What is your normal response to their pleas for help/money?

This poor beggar could be forgiven for asking for money, after all, don't we all look to money and material treasures to "enrich" our lives in some way? In fact, many people focus on wealth and prosperity as the ultimate goals of life to which they devote all their time and energies.

However, God does not promise prosperity in this life, but He does promise His spirit and power over sin. God does not promise wealth, but He does promise contentment in Christ. We may not be rich in this life, but God promises us riches in heaven. We should not be so easily distracted with what this world has to offer when Jesus can offer us so much more than we could ever have imagined.

Have you ever struggled with the tension between the desire for material and spiritual blessings?

Well, Peter and John had no money to give...but they offered something far more valuable and lasting....
"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" (3:6)

Why didn't Peter just tell the poor fellow to get up and walk? Why did it have to be in the name of Jesus? Because Peter was not responsible for the healing. Jesus was.

To say "in the name of Jesus Christ" means:

- By virtue of Christ's character, authority and power
- It is synonymous with His person, power and presence
- It is to act consistently with His will
- It is to do what He would do if He were here
- It is to act with His authority and with His delegated power

There is no other name greater than the name of Jesus. At His name, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Phil.2).

- Supplication is to be made in His name (John 14:13-14)
- Healing and other miracles are performed in His name (Acts 3:6-8; 3:16; 4:30)
- Salvation is in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; John 14:6)
- We are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; Matt.28:19-20)

DISCUSSION:

What does the name of Jesus Christ mean to you?

How do you feel when you hear the name of Jesus being used so frequently in a blasphemous way?

The crippled man was obviously overjoyed at his healing. What was his personal response?

How did all the people respond? How do you think you would have responded?

In your experience, what causes non-Christians to be open to hear about Jesus?

REFLECTION: Recall a time when you felt broken and in need of healing. Thank God for the ways that He has transformed you and healed you since then. In what ways do you still need healing?