

# INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
June 5, 2016  
3<sup>rd</sup> after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Genesis 15:1-6, Matthew 9:9-13

Hymns: 14; 364; 27; 644

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Acts 3:1-10

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; 3 who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. 4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow Redeemed:

## INTRO: Understanding Charity within the Church

There is so much suffering in the world. It seems like we hear about new disasters almost every day. There are earthquakes, and terrible storms and wildfires, and there is famines, and pestilence and disease; and then there is the issue of man's inhumanity to man, and all the suffering that brings upon the people of the world. For the past several weeks we have heard reports of a series of floods in Texas with several lives lost and many, many people left homeless. So many people need help in the world, and here we sit in America with such an abundance of goods, isn't it our role to help those in need?

The simple answer is, "Of course it is!" And there has been more than one disaster when our little church body was on the front lines with aid for people that no one else was reaching, even before much of the international community could get started. That was good. The Lord tells us plainly that if we see our brother in need and have the capability to help and do not help that we have no love, we have no faith. We read in the epistle of James:

**James 2:14-17** What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

And Paul also was very active in collecting relief aid for the Christians in Jerusalem. He put his own life on the line delivering that aid to them. However, that did not become the primary mission of the early church. They helped one another as much as they could and others also when as they had opportunity. But they recognized a far greater need, and a much greater deliverance that they were called to bring to others who were suffering in this world. What the Apostles Peter and John understood was --

**THEME: The Healing Power of Jesus' Name.**

What was evident when they arrived at the temple was

## **I. The Crippling Power of Sin.**

We sometimes fail to recognize that it is sin that brings suffering into the world. It isn't necessarily one particular sin rampant in a particular society, or a specific sin that took over an individual heart that brought all the calamity into the world that we see. While there are certain correlations that can be made between certain sins and certain sickness, even that can cause death, but we need to be very careful not to pronounce certain diseases to be judgments of God when God Himself hasn't revealed that to us in His Word. We are not in that business. What the Lord does make plain is that from the fall into sin way back in the Garden of Eden sin brought corruption and death, and a whole lot of suffering with it as it alienated mankind from its Creator God. Paul states in Romans eight that the whole creation groans as if in birth pangs because of sin corrupting power.

That is what Peter and John saw as they approached the temple that day. There was a man who had been lame from birth, he was so handicapped that he could not even make his own way to the temple to beg. Others had to carry him there and place him by the gate named Beautiful, where he would spend the day begging for alms. He was totally dependent upon the charity of those who came to the temple to worship. As we think about this man let's not stop with his physical disability. What we see illustrated here is the crippling power of sin. That crippling power of sin was not limited to this man's body. The ravages of sin tore at his soul.

How can I know this when our text doesn't speak that specifically? I can speak to this because that is the plight of every man woman and child born into this earth. In this lame man we see the corrupting power of sin that ravages his body as well as his soul, but when Peter and John looked at this man they saw his spiritual plight as being even more devastating than his physical condition, and with a far greater crippling effect.

That is what we need to recognize first within ourselves, and then in others as well. Sin is wicked, not only wickedness, but horrible in what it does to one's soul. This poor man, as sad as his physical plight was, was even more victimized by sin's corrupting power.

I imagine that over the years many hundreds, perhaps even thousands of people had given alms to this severely handicapped man, but what did it really change? And that is the questions that we need to consider as well as we use our own resources to give aid to those in need. Are we also giving the suffering soul what it needs? Our text tells us of Peter and John --

## **II. Providing the Needed Deliverance.**

As Peter and John made their way into the temple the lame man asked them for alms. They stopped and looked on the man, and called upon him to look at them. So he did so with expectation! These individuals were going to help him! But then they told him that they didn't have any money. He must have felt a momentary let down. How then could they help? But if he did feel that let down it truly must have quickly evaporated.

**Acts 3:6-8** Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

They didn't have the money that the lame man was hoping to receive, but they had something far better, far more precious than silver or gold. They had the power of Jesus to bring to this man. Yes, the apostles were empowered by the Spirit to perform miracles of healing which we cannot do. We should not be deceived by those who in our era claim to have such special powers, or seek to discredit others because they don't do miracles of healing or speak in strange tongues. This was a special gift given the apostles as a demonstration of the authority of Jesus had given them from above. What this particular miracle revealed was that Jesus our crucified and risen Savior has overcome the devastating effects of sin and its corruption. The result was an immediate blessing for this lame man. For the first time in his life he could stand on his own two feet. He didn't have to be taught to walk. There was no physical therapy or occupational therapy. The miraculous power of Jesus to deliver from sin's devastation is

complete, and it is seen in the lame man, not only standing and walking, but leaping and praising God for the wondrous things the Lord had done for him.

The lesson for us is right there. Jesus, only Jesus delivers from sins' devastation. Jesus defeated sin, death and the devil. Jesus rose triumphant from the grave. Jesus has prepared a place for us in heaven where all the sorrow and pain, all the trials and tribulations of this life will be gone forevermore. This blessing has come to us in the gospel. We have had our sins washed away. We have been called to repentance and faith. Our souls have been healed. We live in hope of deliverance from the corruption of this present evil world. It is ours today because of the power of Jesus' name.

With all the suffering in this world is this really what one should be talking about? Absolutely. There are plenty of others in this world who are able to help the body but they are not able to help the soul. There are too many churches and religious organizations in this world that choose to help the body and choose not to help the soul. They have been told that they would hurt people by converting them to Christianity. As a result they refrain from sharing the gospel out of fear that someone's culture might be damaged, and we must respect culture of native people's over all else. This past week I heard a radio program decrying the damage that Christian missionaries had done to the culture of Native American in Minnesota, and how that had to be undone, and the old ways, including the old Spiritism religions needed to be restored lest the people of these tribes of Native Americans lose their identity.

It is also charged that proclaiming the gospel to people of other cultures can disrupt family relationships. And we wouldn't ever want to come cause someone difficulty with their family. Others therefore choose to help the body for this life and refuse the people the deliverance they need from sin and death that can only come to them in the gospel. They choose to help the body in this life and leave the soul for eternal destruction along with the resurrected body.

What we have to share is far more precious than silver or gold. We don't have enough silver or gold to relieve suffering for very many people, but the power of Jesus that we possess in our hearts, that

we hold in our hands with the divinely inspired Word of God, that has no limits. It provides the needed deliverance for lost souls and bodies. As you read the mission reports in the Lutheran Spokesman you see a wonder, a joy, a miracle of grace as great as what happened in the temple courts on that day so long ago in Jerusalem. That is the joy of deliverance, of life and salvation that you can share with the sin sick souls that surround you in your life, as well as those who live in distant lands whom the Lord has granted us the opportunity to touch with power of His holy name.

What was witnessed by the crowds was --

### **III. The Wonder of Salvation in Jesus' Name.**

We read the closing verses of our text:

**Acts 3:9-10** “And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

The people knew. They knew that this was the same man who had spent his years begging at the temple gate. The people knew that this man as now able to walk, that a wondrous miracle had been performed and that he was blessed. The people heard! They heard him praising and blessing God for the grace that had come to him that day. The power of the gospel, the power of Jesus' name cannot be denied! They were filled with wonder and amazement! And so they should have been! They had to know that Jesus of Nazareth, He who had been crucified died, and was buried was indeed a living power who did great things in His grace and love.

And so it is yet today, Jesus our risen and ever living Lord is a great power in the world, and a great power in individual hearts and lives. He sets souls free from the crippling and devastating effect of sin. He empowers us to rise and walk in faith, and in communion with or heavenly Father. He opens our lips to sing His praises, “the glories of our God and King, the triumphs of His grace!”(The Lutheran Hymnal 360:1)

The world would like to deny that which cannot be denied. Don't let the world or your sinful flesh discourage you or silence you.

You have been the beneficiary of this grace, this healing. And now you are the one to be leaping and praising God spiritually for the great things God has done for you. And as we join together to sing His praise we do so with the sure and certain hope that our words of testimony, our witness to the power of Jesus' name and His cross will take hold of sin enslaved souls and they will be set free to know the joy of forgiveness and hope of life. It is right there for all in need – **The Healing Power of Jesus' Name!**

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.