

1) INTRO

- We continue on in our walk through the book of Acts today
- We’ve spent the past three weeks already looking at these words from God as written by Luke
 - And, already we’ve seen in this book that Jesus promised the HS to his people
 - We’ve seen that the promise of the HS coming upon his people means we’ll be witnesses...shining so that the world would be filled with people who’re transformed by the Gospel
 - That the person and work of Jesus, who died on the cross to wash away our sins and bring us to God, would be known around the world
 - We’ve seen that the promised HS came at Pentecost and filled God’s people – those who trust in the work of Jesus in saving us
 - We’ve seen that the HS was promised to us by our sovereign God in the OT and that Peter proclaimed this truth in his Gospel message in Acts 2
 - We’ve seen that those who were filled with the HS were committed/devoted to growing in their understanding of God, devoted to giving of themselves for the cause of Christ, and they were devoted to sweet communion with God as people who were united with one heart for God
- And, so far in the book of Acts, we’ve seen much of what God’s done in the lives of those in the church
- And, today, we take a turn to see what happens when the church steps into the world – to those who don’t yet know Christ
 - We begin to to take a look and see how God’s HS-filled people are to live in the world – where people desperately need to hear of the the life-transforming news of the Gospel
 - And, this is of vital importance for us
 - We need God’s help to show us how to live in the world...how to shine for him in the world
 - B/c this is where we’re at day in and day out
 - This is where we’re at most hours of the week
 - We’re brushing shoulders with people in the world as we work, go to school, shop at Walmart, go to the bank, hike Stamp Falls, put gas in our car
 - And, we need God to help show us how to live for him as we step into the world
 - We all know people, who’re in the world, who’re needy and broken and hurting and lost and desperate and dying without the hope of eternal life
 - As followers of Christ, who’s goal’s to live for Jesus...to point to him, to glorify him, we should be asking our sovereign God how to live for him in the world
 - And, our passage addresses that today
 - And, our passage addresses this “how” to live in the world for God by pointing our attention to the “what” of what we have to offer the world [REPEAT]
 - As we think of those dear to us in the world who’re needy and broken and hurting and lost and desperate, we find our ourselves asking what it is that we can do for them
 - What can we do for them?
 - What can we do to help?
 - What can we offer them in their need and brokenness and hurt?
- We’ll see in our passage today that **as we’re God’s people, indwelt by the HS, the only thing we have worth giving to the world is JC** [REPEAT]

- When the church steps into the world we'll ask the HS to help us give Jesus to others, b/c the only thing worth giving to those outside of our family of believers is the life-changing message of the gospel of JC
 - And, we see this play out in Acts 3
- So, here in our passage today, we see a miracle and a sermon
 - And, as we walk through this, I pray that the HS would help both encourage us and challenge us in how we're doing in offering Jesus to the world

2) THE SETTING FOR THE MIRACLE (vv1-3)

- First, we look at the setting for our passage today
- Last week we saw how our fellow believers were in fellowship and unity together
 - We get the picture of them living together in community...in the local church
 - And, we were given the picture of how to be of one heart within the local church together here at Arrowsmith
- Today's passage gives the picture of them outside the walls of their local church...outside of their local fellowship/body/family
- We see that Peter and John were headed to the temple to pray
 - They were making their way to the temple...traveling to go to the temple to pray together
 - The Jews had three times of daily prayer at 9:00am, 12 noon, and 3:00pm
 - Our setting today shows Peter and John making their way to the 3:00pm time of prayer at the temple
- While they were making their way to the temple, we see a lame man enter the scene
 - He was a man who was born lame – he didn't have the ability to stand or walk
 - This lame man was being carried by other people to lay at the gate of the temple
 - We see in our text that this was a daily occurrence for this man
 - And, he was being brought to the Beautiful Gate – a specific gate – to ask for alms...to ask for a charitable donation of money
 - This specific gate was a magnificent spot
 - The Beautiful Gate was a large and ornate gate into the temple
 - It was a gate that 75 ft tall, 60 ft wide, and overlaid w/ Corinthian bronze
 - The Jewish historian, Josephus, rightly commented that it was the perfect place to solicit funds
 - And, this is especially true as Judaism considered almsgiving an admirable and excellent act
 - So this was the best place for people to ask for financial help b/c many people came here to the temple each day
 - And many people came here wanting to impress God with their good works and offerings
- So, it's here on the way to prayer in the temple that Peter and John meet this lame man
 - It's here in this setting that our miracle takes place

3) THE MIRACLE PERFORMED (vv4-7)

- We see here that rather than bouncing their eyes away from this lame beggar, Peter and John direct their gaze at him

- Rather than ignoring this man or brushing him off, Peter and John instead respond to the man's request to receive alms
- They look directly at this man and speak to him
- But, they don't respond the way this man expects
- They respond to the lame beggar by explaining that they don't have silver or gold or money to give him
 - Instead, they tell him that they'll give him what they DO have
 - And, it's here that Peter takes him by the hand and raises him and immediately he's healed
 - Instantly (as the GRK says), his feet and ankles are strong
 - Rather than simply giving this man money for another meal, Peter gives him more than he expected or even asked for
 - And, he does so in the power of Jesus' name
 - He calls upon the power and presence of Christ
- This incident and the rest of what we'll see here in our passage is permeated by its pointing to the power of JC
 - Peter and John make it known that what they have to offer the lame beggar's much more than a few bucks...they have the power of JC as granted by the Spirit
 - God begins to show us here that the greatest thing we can offer anyone is Jesus!
 - He's what we have to give to the world
 - He's the only thing we can give the world that's lasting and permanent and of eternal significance
- We saw Acts 2:43 explain to us last week that many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles
 - And, here we encounter one of these signs and wonders
 - This man who's been lame his entire life's been healed by the power of Jesus' name
 - And he's a dramatically changed man

4) THE EFFECT OF THE MIRACLE (vv8-10)

- The effect of the miracle in this man's life shows that he's a changed man
 - He's changed in a way that money can't change a person
 - He's now walking and leaping and praising God
 - R Kent Hughes says he's now "the high-jumping cripple"
- He's changed in such a dramatic way b/c of the power of JC
- He's jumping with joy and praising sovereign, almighty God who's healed him
 - And, everyone there recognizes him as the man who sat at the Beautiful Gate day after day asking for alms
 - And, they're too filled with wonder and amazement at this mighty and miraculous work of God in healing the lame beggar into a high-jumping cripple
 - Already, this man's giving praise and glory and honor to God who's completely changed him
 - This public healing's immediately a testimony to the power of the resurrected Christ

5) PEOPLE GATHERED (vv11-12)

- As this takes place in public, Peter seizes this opportunity to point to Christ
- The Spirit-filled people of God – the church – will desire to point others to itself for the purpose of pointing ultimately to our Savior
- Peter directs their attention to God in vv12-16

- He says that they shouldn't be staring at him or at John, but that their attention's to be on the God of the Scriptures
- So, b/c he's got their attention, Peter uses this opportunity to preach the Gospel of JC to those who're there
- And, this is a sweet reminder for us as a church, isn't it, brothers and sisters?
 - When we have opportunities to share the Gospel, what do we do?
 - Do we share or do we let the opportunity pass by?
 - And, really, probably the question we need to ask ourselves is do we like the attention we get sometimes? Or, would we rather deflect to God any attention we're given?
 - Peter and John couldn't just let this be...everyone was staring at them...they could've taken all the attention for themselves or they could've just moved on
 - But, they didn't
 - They didn't want any attention
 - They made it clear that they have nothing in and of themselves to offer
 - Other than Jesus
 - The only thing they have to offer's Jesus
 - He's the only thing we have to offer
 - And, this is explained in the rest of our text

6) THE PURPOSE FOR THE MIRACLE (vv13-26)

- The sermon's what explains the miracle
 - The rest of our passage is Peter's sermon
- We see here that the miracle's both literal and parabolic
- He explains here the purpose for the miracle
 - It's that ultimately the purpose of the healing was to provide the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel
- So, we see the unpacking of the Gospel in the rest of our passage (in vv13-26)
- And, the message given by Peter here's to the Jews who were in the temple – but, they're lost Jews who don't yet trust in JC as the Messiah...and the long-awaited One who was spoken of all throughout the Scriptures
- So, the thrust of Peter's message here's a call for Jews to repent of their rejection of Christ as the Messiah
- So, we see the careful unpacking of the Gospel in these verses by Peter
 - The work of JC's laid out plainly – both for the Jews in the temple and also so that we'd hear and understand and look to Christ as well
 - We're drawn to the truth of the Gospel in that sovereign God – the one with the power to heal the lame beggar – he's the one who promised to send a Savior into the world
 - We're shown that Jesus' redemptive mission's the fulfillment of God's covenant promises in the OT
 - We see that Jesus is glorified b/c of his work in restoring God's people back to himself
 - That we're sinful people living life separated from God when we're walking in our sin
 - We see that Jesus is the Holy and Righteous One – that he's God himself as so many OT passages consistently point out
 - We see here that Jesus went to the cross to pay the penalty for our sins so that we don't have to now
 - And, we see that they killed the Author of Life (v15), by placing him to die on the cross

- But, that b/c he's God Almighty, he didn't stay dead...instead he rose from the dead showing his defeat and victory over death and that he really IS the Author of Life – the only one who can give life
- We see in v16 that it's the name of Jesus who heals us...and most importantly grants repentance and life
- And, we see that the truth of this work of JC has been foretold by the OT prophets...that they spoke of the truth that Christ would come and suffer and die in our place in order to grant us life
- We're also shown that prophets like Moses and Samuel were put in place to ultimately point to Jesus who would deliver us and lead us into life...into the presence of God forever
- And, ultimately, we see the exhortation in v19 to repent of our sins and turn back to God so that our sins will be blotted out
- The message comes to this climax of ultimately urging and exhorting and pleading with us to repent and turn to God
 - And, we're given three outcomes of repenting of our sins:
 - 1) We're given forgiveness of our sins
 - 2) We're guaranteed "times of refreshing" where we're revived and energized in our spirits b/c the HS's dwelling within us
 - 3) We're given the promise that Christ will return and restore all things to himself as he establishes his forever reign and rule in the new heavens and the new earth

7) CONCLUSION

- This is an encouraging passage for us...it should be
- Firstly, so that we'd embrace the person and work of Christ and repent of our sins
 - Friends, if you're here and you've not yet repented of your sins, please do so
 - Please see that each one of us needs to cry out desperately to God that he withhold his wrath from us b/c we're people who have hearts that're so quick to ignore God and live as though we don't need him
 - We're, each one of us, sinful people
 - We're so quick to lie or cheat or lust or be angry or be lazy or be prideful
 - We're desperately in need of Jesus to save us from ourselves and from our sin
 - And, he does that – he forgives us and saves us – when we confess to him that we're sinful and that we need his forgiveness
 - Praise the Lord Almighty that he saves us in Jesus and gives us the refreshment of the HS so that we're now changed by the HS who dwells in us...enabling us and giving us the power to follow God and no longer be conquered and defeated by sin
- Secondly, I pray this passage is encouraging for us, b/c we're called by God to go and tell people this Gospel...God's calls us to this in Romans 10
 - As the Spirit-filled people of God – the church – we give the world Jesus
 - We give more than just care for the body
 - We'll desire to do all that we can to bring healing to the soul...not only healing to the body
 - We see this displayed by Peter and John as they looked directly at the blind beggar
 - This is a great connection to the heart and attention we're to have to the spiritual condition of others
 - How's does this connect, you might be asking?

- As God's Spirit-filled people – his church – we'll constantly be looking at the spiritual condition of others
- Do you ever sit at Starbucks or Tim Hortons and watch people and wonder what their story is?
 - Do you ever sit and look out the window at the cars driving by and hurt over the reality that most of the people – most of the eternal souls driving by – are going to Hell b/c they don't know Jesus as their Savior and Lord?
 - Do we look?
 - How often do we look at the spiritual condition of others?
- May we look often and intently
- May we be looking at their spiritual condition with a great and deep desire to point them to JC, who's the only one who can help and fix both our sinful condition and the eternal destination of our souls
- Brothers and sisters, the greatest thing we can give the world's Jesus
- May we do that...the HS will empower us to do it
 - May we point to Jesus
 - May we do that as individuals and as a church
 - May we move and direct our conversations to point others to Christ
 - May the HS help us to think and act and speak in a way that's constantly pointing to our good God
 - Everything we are and everything we have's given as a gift from God so that we can point to him
 - So, let's direct others to him
- Our very lives are meant to point others to Christ and to how he's changed us and transformed us and given us salvation
- The miracle/the healing in our passage today's a sign that's meant to point to Jesus
 - Our very lives are miracles
 - We were dead in our sin and we were sovereignly given life by JC
 - We were dead people who we're unable to give us life
 - May the miracle of our changed lives point others to Jesus
 - Just as a road sign points us in the right direction
 - May we point ourselves and each other and the lost world in the right direction – to Jesus, the Author of Life/the Author of Eternal Life who broke through the chains of death and the grave to give us life forever and ever
- The greatest thing we can offer anyone is Jesus!

2016-10-03

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