

Get up in Jesus' Name!



SERMON NOTES JULY 21, 2024

9th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Acts 3:1-10

ACTS 3:1-10 (NRSV)

¹One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

²And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple.

³When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. ⁴Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, 'Look at us.' ⁵And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶But Peter said, 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.' ⁷And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

⁸Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹All the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

By the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to heal and save in and through his believers!

I. JUST ANOTHER DAY?

- A. Luke gives us a unique glimpse of how the early believers lived together and their practices that nurtured their relationship to the resurrected Christ.
- B. They were sharing what they had with one another, being nurtured by the Apostles' teaching, spending time in fellowship, "breaking bread together", and spending time together in prayer and worship!
- C. But the early community of faith in Jerusalem was not cloistered away from the world, they were living out this new faith relationship with God and one another in public. And immediately they are met with confrontation and conflict!
- D. Bishop Will Willimon writes, "Luke goes to great pains to show that the church's gathering to break bread, teach, and pray joyfully was in no way a detour around the misery of the world. For no sooner had Peter and John gone up to the temple to pray...than they are confronted by a man lame since birth...the path toward significant prayer is a way that goes straight through, not around, human misery!"
- E. A path that would also lead to confrontation with the Jewish officials when their actions and teaching impact the religious status quo.
- F. Luke shows us that as soon as the believers are called together, they are also called to the world to proclaim Christ crucified and resurrected, and to bear the presence and power of Jesus to others!

II. "GIVE THEM JESUS"

- A. Luke tells the circumstances by which the lame man is lying at the "Beautiful Gate" (on the eastern side of the Temple). Others brought this man there so that he could do the only thing he was capable of to secure his living, and that was to ask for alms...begging. We later find out (4:22) from the controversy that arises over his healing that he is over forty years old.

- B. Upon asking Peter and John for a handout, Peter responds, "Look at us.... I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk!"
- C. Luke masterfully relates this incredibly personal moment as the lame man makes eye contact with Peter (perhaps something he rarely did in asking help from another) expecting alms...and receiving a surprise.... healing!!
- D. Peter took him by the hand and raised him up...his feet were made strong...and he entered the temple (something he had never been allowed to do as a "cripple" whose infirmity was perceived as the result of sin!) ...walking, leaping, and praising God!
- E. This healing captures the attention of everyone in the temple and most are filled with wonder and amazement and Peter is given the opportunity to explain that the healing took place because of the presence and power of the resurrected Jesus, not he or John's piety or power.
- F. Peter (and this community of faith) has the power of the name of Jesus to offer healing, hope, and salvation...not "simply offering suffering people kind words of empathy (Willimon)."

III. "FAITH IN HIS NAME"

- A. Peter's preaching of Jesus "annoys" the temple officials and they have he and John arrested (although another 5000 people hear and believe!) and then bring them before the assembly the next day.
- B. This only gives Peter further opportunity to proclaim Jesus Christ as the resurrected Messiah and Peter tells them, "...we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard (4:20)
- C. And upon their release, they return to the other believers and Peter prays, "Lord...grant your servants to speak your word with boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus...when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness (4:29-31)."

Is our community of faith so living in relationship to God, and in fellowship with one another that the name of Jesus is being proclaimed and healing and salvation are being experienced?

How are we living "beyond the walls" and proclaiming boldly the Good News of Jesus Christ?

As you place yourself into this account, are you the man who is lame asking for help...Peter and John offering Christ...the amazed, believing crowd...or the offended officials?