

Acts, Sermon #6

Acts 3

The Book of Acts covers 30 years of church history

So far, we have seen the formation of the church, where the church began, the first sermon of the church and 3,000 were saved.

Then the Bible gives us a description of early church life. Now chapter 3 opens with a miracle, the first half of the chapter, and then another sermon from Peter, the second half of the chapter.

I've entitled today's message: "**The Wonder of it All**"

Acts 3:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Acts 3:1-11

Let us pray

You may be seated.

“The Wonder of it All”

Beginning in vs. 1, we have the record of a miracle performed for a lame man.

Miracles were regularly being done by the apostles, 2:43

But, why is this particular miracle singled out and placed in scripture?

We are in a book that has an over arching theme; the extension of the Kingdom of God. What part does this miracle play in the extension of the Kingdom of God?

Everything about this miracle was remarkable.

First, it came at a noteworthy time, vs. 1. Jewish time starts at 6:00 AM and if it is the 9th hour, what time is it? 3:00 PM. This was the time of the evening sacrifice. It was the time of public prayer followed by the evening sacrifice.

The temple area would be crowded, swollen with worshipers.

Just a few months earlier, the Lord Jesus had died at this hour, the time of the evening sacrifice. It was at an important time!

2nd notable thing is the location of where the miracle took place. It was on the Temple ground in Jerusalem, vs. 1. The most sacred place to the Jew. Does anyone know why? The Western Wailing Wall – the gate called Beautiful, vs. 2. The most volatile 35 acres on the face of the earth.

The first temple was built by King Solomon. The Babylonians, led by King Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed that temple in 586 B.C. Zerubbabel rebuilt

the temple in 516 B.C. in the Book of Ezra. But the 2nd temple that stood during the times of Christ and His apostles was made over, redone, by Herod the Great, and then destroyed by the Romans in A.D.70.

There is no temple today only the temple grounds. A 3rd temple will be rebuilt, The Anti-Christ, Matt. 24:15 and II Thes. 2:3-4 – the one world ruler.

Herod's temple was not a single building but a whole complex, like a campus. In that complex, there were many different buildings, porticos (roof supported by columns, colonnade), porches, cubicles and storage areas and so on. The whole thing was a series of terraces and courtyards.

Golden Gate – Court for the Gentiles, women, treasury; steps – Court of Israelite men, Court of Priests – Temple itself

The courtyard that occupied the largest outside area was called the Courtyard of the Gentiles. You could go there if you were a Gentile, going up a number of steps, large steps, and into the Court of the Women. This is where the money was given.

Then, you would go up 15 more semi-circular steps where the Levites would stand and sing (choir), to what was called the Court of the Israelites. If you were an Israelite man, you could pass through that gate and there was a further restraining wall with gates. You could go to the Court of the Priest if you were a priest or offering a sacrifice. In the Court of the Priest was the actual temple building itself.

The temple was in a rectangular shape from East to West. It was as tall as it was long. The doorway was 70 feet tall, all over-laid with gold and silver facing the rising sun. That is the front of the temple.

The gate Beautiful was one of the major gates between two of the courts.

The gate was 75 feet tall with two 30 foot wide doors that shut in order to close this gate. The other gates are overlaid with gold and silver. This one was called the Beautiful gate because it was covered with Corinthian bronze which was more highly valued than gold or silver.

When the sun came up and hit the gate, it was brilliant; a gate where thousands passed every day. It was a prominent place for beggars. Beggars know where to beg. He had been begging in this location for a long time. He was well known.

A notable time and a prominent place

3rd, you have a very remarkable person, a man who was a cripple from birth. He was born lame, had never taken a step and the problem evidently was in his ankles.

Acts 4:22 tells us he was above 40 years of age.

A lame man over forty years old (4:22). If you are a male and in your forties, would you please stand. Now, could you imagine living this long and not being able to stand? The beggar had been carried daily to the gate and must have been a well-known sight among Jerusalem residents.

It was a notable time, a prominent place, a remarkable person.

As the story is recorded, Peter and John were going up to the temple a little after 3 o'clock. It would be the most comfortable time of the day for the beggar. It was shaded in the afternoon.

The beggar looked at Peter and John. He cried out like beggars would when you

look back at them. Any tourist guide will tell you not to look a beggar in the eyes.

This man cries out for alms, for something to be given to him. Alms are kind deeds arising out of compassion, mercy, pity for the unfortunate. The man did not ask for healing, only for alms.

Peter fixed his attention upon this man and said, "Look at me" and the beggar did. He expected to receive something and Peter uttered the famous words in vs. 6. "Silver and gold have I none."

What do you think the beggar thought when he heard that? (A 9 year old on his birthday when he opens a card and there is no money in it.)

Vs. 6b

Then Peter took this man by the right hand and helped him up. The power was Christ's, but the hand was Peter's.

Folks, look at your hands. Your hands can do the works of God. You may not heal anyone but you may give a gospel tract, hammer, chalk.....

The beggar arose, stands by himself, and takes his first steps, walking, leaping, and praising God. His lips uttered forth praise, hallelujahs.

The miracle supplied not only strength to joints and muscles, but also complete coordination.

Now, what was the effect of all this?

Notice vs. 9-10, and the people were filled with wonder, “Thambos”, “to be stricken motionless,” to be riveted to the spot. How many times in our lives have we seen something so extraordinary that we could not move? Just unbelievable.

Notice the next word is amazement, “ect”, “sta”, “tis”. What English word—ecstasy, in vs. 10, reference to an exalted delight, to sheer pleasure; the people were motionless and in sheer delight/joy.

That wasn't all. At the end of vs. 11, “greatly wondering”, EK Thambos, that is even more Thambos. Thambos intensified.

Sometimes I think this old world steals our Thambos, our wonder, our awe.

“The wonder of it all,” the old hymn says, “Just to think that God loves me.”
The Bible says the whole thing caused wonder, amazement, ecstasy, marveling.

The Holy Spirit pours on the words in vs. 10-11 in order to communicate the effect of this miracle. End of story, right? Nope.

The result is a creation of a large crowd of people, then preaching of a sermon and people are saved.

Then in vs. 12-13a, Peter gets to preaching.

It is time for preaching. The last time we saw people marveling in this book was back in Acts 2:6-7. After that we have a sermon. People were saved, baptized, and then church life was described.

Why do you think God has recorded this miracle?

What are we going to have now? A sermon. In the rest of this chapter 3, we have Peter's 2nd great sermon! Guess what we have after the preaching, people are saved.

Folks, this is the same pattern; the miracle, the wonder, the preaching and what do you expect next, conversion/salvation.

Acts 4:4, the men, 5,000, and then at the end of Acts 4:31-37, we have a recording of daily church life, just like we did in Acts 2.

What does the church need today?

1. The Usual Church Life – The Daily Church Life

Week after week, we come to the Lord's house and take in the Bible's doctrine. We need to pray. We need to fellowship one with another. We need to break bread and observe the ordinances of Communion and Baptism. That is our normal church life.

But dear folks, it would be wonderful to have a miracle such as the lame man in our midst.

Occasionally, if we could have the outbreak of divine activity that over whelms us, that once again persuades us of the work of God in our midst and the blessing of God on our congregation

Is normal church life enough?

Apparently not. There are some promoting signs and wonders as the usual experience of the church. This takes place in much of the Pentecostal and charismatic movement.

I want to point out 5 things about the miracles in the book of Acts that will refute that.

1. Were signs and wonders a part of daily church life? Were they apart, yes or no? YES! Acts 2:43 said yes. Who did these miracles? The Apostles.
2. Remember that according to II Cor. 12:12, that signs and wonders were the authentic signature of being an apostle.

II Cor. 12:12, *Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.* This is how you know an apostle!

3. The apostles did not control the timing or frequency of miracles. The apostles did not have the indiscriminate power to do miracles. Some think they did them whenever and wherever they desired. The Spirit controlled the timing of the event.

Paul had a thorn in the flesh. He could not take that away. II Tim. 4:20, Trophimus was sick at Miletus and Paul left him there. Timothy had stomach problems.

4. The miracles they did were not primarily for the benefit of the recipient! It was to authenticate the revelation (message) that was given to them by God.

Heb. 2:3-4, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

5. The procedure given to the church for dealing with the sick. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the Elders. James 5 does not parallel what

the apostles are doing in Acts. The purpose for the healing of the lame man is different than the purpose of church people.

When people are not healed today, why? No faith, wrong diagnosis, unconfessed sin

What kind of healing was Acts 3? Permanent and reversal of 40 years of legs not being used and he was able to perfectly walk on legs with perfect balance and control.

Is this what is happening in healing today? Dogmatic—No!

Peter pointed out in vs. 12, that this was not a miracle of man. It was the true God who had just manifested his presence and power in their midst.

It was the God of their forefathers...the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And the miracle was performed not primarily to relieve a temporary physical handicap, nor primarily to help the lame beggar...but to bring proper recognition to Jesus, vs. 13, as the Son of God and to cause all of them, the beggar included, to have an eternal benefit, to be saved from sin.

God has glorified Jesus by this miracle so you might see and believe.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

Let us stand for closing invitation - Every eye closed.

- The miracle today is you and me. It changes lives; the transformation of a sinner.
- There are miracles all over this building and if you are one, would you say, Amen?
- Would you praise the Lord?
- Have you believed on Jesus Christ?
- The power is Christ's but the voice is mine.