Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

God's Purpose for Miracles
Scripture: Acts 3:1–11
Code: 44-14

We are, on Sunday nights, taking a look at the Book of Acts, the history of the early church, if you will, the acts of Christ through the Holy Spirit as He finishes His work through the apostles, proclaiming the gospel and establishing His church. We find ourselves in chapter 3, so if you will, turn in your Bible to chapter 3, and I want us to take a look at verses 1 to 11. I'm always challenged to go through an entire passage like this, as you well know, but for the sake of getting the whole picture in these wonderful passages, we're doing our best to compress them.

We have, in chapter 3 verses 1 to 11, a miracle here, one of many miracles, by the way, that were going on at this time in the early development of the church. If you go back a little bit into verse 43 of chapter 2, when the church was born, everyone kept feeling a sense of awe, "and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles." The miracles that were common in the ministry of our Lord and the delegated power to do miracles that He granted to His apostles were still going on. He had ascended by this time into heaven; the apostles were still there, and they were doing miracles to validate themselves as the messengers of God.

One of those miracles is recorded here in the third chapter. Let me read it to you.

"Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, 'Look at us!' And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, 'I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene - walk!' And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God; and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

"While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement."

Really a wonderful account of this miracle. But leading up to this miracle, just a little bit of history so we kind of put you where you need to be in the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts is history, and it's always important to find where you are in the flow; the most amazing, historical, supernatural events have taken place leading up to this miracle. Backing into, let's say, since Luke is the writer of Acts, backing into his first volume, the gospel of Luke, there's the record of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus has been crucified as God's chosen sacrifice to pay the full price for the sins of His people. God's satisfaction with the sacrifice of Christ, with His atonement, was signaled by God raising Christ from the dead and through Him conquering death for all who believe in Him and confess Jesus as Lord.

From the day of the resurrection on, the Lord Jesus met with His disciples and His followers and instructed them in matters concerning the kingdom of God and explained to them the prophecies of the Old Testament that had been fulfilled in Him. Really, for the first time, they came to a full understanding of the intent of the Old Testament, and in particular, its messianic aspects.

Our Lord did this for 40 days after His resurrection, met with them and instructed them. He then ascended back to heaven from the Mount of Olives. And then, on the Day of Pentecost, He sent the Holy Spirit as He promised He would do to indwell His people, to fill His people, to empower His people, and to place His people together in one unified spiritual entity called the body of Christ. So, we have already been through the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension, the kingdom instruction, the explanation of the Old Testament, and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

By the Holy Spirit's coming, the church was born, and all joined into one living spiritual organism, the body of Christ. And the purpose of the body of Christ is to finish the work that Christ began. He did it Himself, and He delegated it through His apostles when He was on earth, and now He does it by the power of the Holy Spirit through His church, finishing the work of evangelism, finishing the proclamation of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This unique event, the Day of Pentecost, on one day, which happened to be Pentecost, which is the feast of firstfruits, launched the firstfruits of Christ's redeeming work, the birth of the church. And the firstfruits, according to chapter 2, were 3,000 people who believed to add to the 120 believers who had already gathered.

So, the church was born on the Day of Pentecost; 3,000, the very first day. We looked in our last study at the activities and attitudes and impact of the church. Go down to verse 41 in chapter 2. 3,000 were added to the church. They were baptized. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer. They were feeling a sense of awe, wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles, and all those who had believed were together. A new union, the likes of which had never occurred in redemptive history before. They held all things in

common, and if necessary were selling what they possessed to give to those who might have need, day by day, continuing with one mind in the temple, breaking bread from house to house, sharing meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, finding favor with all the people, and the Lord continued to add to their number daily those that were being saved.

This is where we find ourselves when we come to chapter 3. Supernatural signs had occurred, certainly, on the Day of Pentecost. There was wind, a supernatural wind; there was fire, a supernatural fire; and then there were people who spoke languages they didn't know, and they were saying the wonderful works of God. And the people who did know those languages heard in their own language and understood.

These miracles were very, very important because they validated the apostles as the true teachers. Look, the ancient world and the world of Judaism was packed with teachers. They were all over the place. Rabbis, scribes, Pharisees, many others who were teachers. How do you know the true teacher? How do you know who speaks for God? Well, the true teacher is manifest by miracle power.

You remember what Nicodemus said to Jesus back in John 3 verse 2? "We know You are a teacher come from God." How do we know that? Because no one can do the things You do unless God is with Him. And if God is with You, then we can trust what You say. That simple recognition, that reasonable conclusion that Nicodemus made stands as a defense of the legitimacy of the apostles.

In chapter 4 verse 29, "Take note of the threats of the enemies, and grant that Your bondservants may speak Your word with all confidence." These are the apostles praying for boldness. "And while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." In other words, the apostles knew that their job was to preach the Word, to proclaim the Word of God. But they knew in order to validate that, there had to be some divine signal, signs, wonders were that validation.

In chapter 5 verse 12 again, "At the hands of the apostles, many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico." The same place the miracle happened back in chapter 3 that I read. That was a very popular place as we'll see in a little bit. None of the rest dared to associate with them, however the people held them in high esteem, and all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women were constantly added to their number. To such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. And all the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed. What an amazing validation of the true teachers sent from God.

Chapter 6. They're selecting deacons, and it notes in verse 6 that they brought these men that they had selected, including Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, and they brought these they brought before the apostles. "And after praying, they laid their hands on them. The Word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." That's how convincing the miracles were to demonstrate these were teachers of God. And Stephen, even, gets some of the spillover like the 70 did back in the gospels, and he was endowed with "grace and power, and was performing great wonders and signs among the people." This was power given to the apostles, and it spilled over from the apostles to this man, Stephen.

In chapter 8, again, verse 14. "The apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'" What that means is there were some miraculous attendant signs, and I think there was a duplication of what happened at Pentecost.

No, the apostles were granted this amazing ability in order to validate their message. One other text on this, again, the 15th chapter of the Book of Acts. "All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles." There are only two names of people in the Book of Acts who did miracles other than the apostles, and they were both tightly associated with the apostles. There was Stephen, who was there in chapter 6 with the apostles in the early church, and that power was delegated to him, as I said, as it was to the 70 in the New Testament. And this mention of Barnabas. We don't know exactly what miracles Barnabas may have done. We don't know that the power actually came through him, but the signs and wonders, it says, God did through them among the Gentiles.

Apostles did miracles, and the only ones beyond the apostles were those tightly connected to them. When the apostles were not present, no miracles occurred. There's no occasion of a miracle occurring without an apostle present.

That's very important, very important, because there are so many people running around today claiming miracles, and there are no apostles present. They were the foundation of the church, and there were only 12 minus 1, plus 1, plus Paul.

What about miracles? They are rare in redemptive history. How rare are they? There are no healings referred to in any New Testament church. Did you hear that? There is no record in the entire New Testament of anybody in a church being healed. No instruction given to the church about healing.

And as you go through the Book of Acts, you start seeing believers being sick. And as you read the letters of the apostles, they talk about people being sick, sick unto death.

Healing was not a gift to believers to make them better. It was a sign to nonbelievers to convince them to believe the message of the gospel. After the Book of Acts, there are no healings. In fact, they fade away through the Book of Acts, as I said, and believers are left ill.

Earlier in our studies of the Book of Acts, I showed you that speaking in tongues, or languages, on the Day of Pentecost was a sign of judgment to unbelieving Jews. Do you remember that message? Very, very important. If you have any question about quote-unquote tongues, that you need to hear that message. Speaking in languages on the Day of Pentecost was a sign of judgment to unbelieving Jews, fulfilled a prophecy in Isaiah. “When I speak to you in a language that you can’t understand and you will not believe, I will speak to you in a language you cannot understand as a judgment.”

It may well be that healings like tongues was also a sign from God to unbelieving Jews. Maybe in a little different way. Back in Exodus chapter 15, God made a promise to His people when they came out of Egypt, and they were being constituted as a nation, as a people, being led to the promised land. Verse 22 of Exodus 15. “Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah,” meaning bitterness. “So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, ‘What shall we drink?’ Then he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made for them a statute and regulation, and there He tested them.”

And listen to what He says in verse 26: “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the Lord, am your healer.”

What is this? This is the healing promise. A healing promise from God to Israel. If you obey Me, if you obey My commandments, I will be your healer. Remember Deuteronomy 28, when God said, if you obey Me, there will be blessing, and if you disobey Me, there will be cursing? This could be a promise from God that previews the kingdom.

Now, we know about the kingdom from the prophets. And in the kingdom, if somebody dies at the age of 100, they die like an infant. People will live longer. Life will be very different. A lion will lie down with a lamb. Children can play in a snake pit. It’s going to be very different. And one of the characteristics of the kingdom is physical health and wellbeing. The curse of disease and death will be mitigated in the kingdom. So perhaps, not only is the healing ministry of Jesus and the healing ministry of the apostles an evidence of divine compassion, but it is also an indication of divine faithfulness to a long-

ago promise. God will be one day the healer of Israel when they do obey His commandments, and when they do acknowledge their Messiah, His Son.

If you go back into chapter 3, very important. Peter's sermon, and we'll get to this. Verse 13. Listen to what Peter says. "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers," meaning the Jews, "has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life." I mean, that's a severe indictment. Listen, Israel had done a lot of terrible things in its history; none this bad. This takes the cake. This is the ultimate iniquity. "You disowned the Holy and Righteous One. You put to death the Prince of life." Does that cancel all Israel's future? Does that make us into instant amillennialists? Is that it?

Go to the end of chapter 3. Verse 23. "And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." That prophet being none other than the Messiah, Christ. "And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."

You know what's remarkable about that? They had killed the Prince of life, disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and He says you are still the sons of the Covenant. Why? Because God's Covenant is irrevocable. Could it be that in the healing ministry of Jesus, and even after in the healing ministry of the apostles, God is saying to the Jews: though you killed the Prince of life, even though you disowned the Holy and the Righteous One, God's promise is still valid, and here are previews of what God will do for you if you turn to Him in the kingdom. God's healing promise is still valid.

So while tongues, in a sense, languages, is a sign of judgment to the Jews, healing becomes, for them, a sign of hope that in spite of the horror of their iniquity, the disaster of their rejection, they are still the sons of the Covenant because it's an irrevocable, unilateral covenant that God makes with Himself.

But it has a component that activates as fulfillment, and that is obedience. So when they see someone healed, this is not only a validation of the message of the apostles as being from God, because no one can do this unless God is with him, it is also an evidence that God, who promises to be a healer of Israel when Israel obeys, is still holding out that promise. And when Israel does believe, and the kingdom comes when the Messiah returns, healing will mark the millennial kingdom. So here, the Holy Spirit provides one of those many signs and wonders mentioned in verse 43 of chapter 2.

Now, I'll give you a little lesson in interpretation. Stories are always carried, as all passages are, by the verbs. Okay? If you did nothing but underline the verbs here and memorize the verbs, you could tell the story. And in ancient times, everything was passed from word of mouth, word of mouth. And it was wonderful that in every language, because verbs are the action, that if you just remember the verbs, you can tell the story.

So here are the verbs in the story: carried, asking, expecting, seizing, standing, walking, leaping, praising, clinging. There's the story. It's all carried by the verbs. Whenever I interpret a passage, the first thing I do is look for the verbs. And if I can find one main verb, and then everything that modifies the main verb, which would be participles and infinitives, and then I track the entire story, or the entire polemical passage by following the verbs. If you're going to interpret the Scripture, you're always on a hunt for main verbs, and how everything modifies the main verbs which carry the action. So here is a man who was carried, who was asking, who was expecting. He was seized, he was standing, and then he was walking, then he was leaping, then he was praising, and then he was clinging.

Now, let's look at the story and see a simple structure: the setting, the sign, and the sequel, just for the sake of S. Okay?

The setting. Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour. Peter and John, they were really good friends. They'd been friends for a long time. They'd been friends probably since they were very young. They were from two different families, but they worked together in a fishing business on the lake in Galilee. So they had been friends for a long time. It was Peter and John, and it was an interesting partnership, I think. We tend to think of John, if you look at him in medieval art, he looks effeminate. They always painted him like some sort of fallow looking, yellow-ish person without a muscle in his body, with a kind of dopey expression on his face, and a kind of a weakling. No, his nickname was "Son of Thunder." Okay? So, he was a good partner for Peter, who didn't have the name "Son of Thunder," but in fact was one.

Peter and John were buddies. They were partners in the fishing business. You go back to Luke 5 and find that out. They together had prepared the last meal. They hung out together. They were the first ones, by the way, running where? To the tomb, the resurrection. We find them as I read you earlier in chapter 4 verse 13, they were the confident ones. Now, as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, I'm glad to know John had some confidence because in the first part of the Book of Acts where you have Peter and John, John never says anything, which if John was a son of thunder, then how much more a son of thunder was Peter when John couldn't even get a word in?

They were together. They had been together a long time because the inner circle was Peter, James, and John. James and John were brothers, sons of thunder, Boanerges. So James was no shrinking violet, either. But Peter and John were friends, and they were together. They were together in

ministry. They were together under persecution. Chapter 4 verse 19. Peter and John answered and said to them, Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge.” So Peter and John were a duo.

In every case, however, when there’s a message to be given, Peter is the preacher. He is the chosen instrument to preach the gospel to the Jews, and he does that through the first part of the Book of Acts. He is the one who brings the message of the gospel, of Christ, of repentance.

Now, these two friends had a daily, normal habit. They were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. They were serious Jews. This, in fact, was their normal routine, not anything unusual. In fact, all the apostles hung around the temple all the time. Luke ends volume 1, his gospel, they were continually in the temple, continually in the temple. They were there all the time. That was a daily place. Remember, there is a church, spiritually, but there’s not a church physically. There’s no place, there’s no building, there’s no place where they can meet.

So, in fact, in chapter 2 verse 46: “Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple.” And if they weren’t in the temple, they were going from house to house to house to having communion to celebrate the death of Christ and eat their meals together.

They were going up, is continuous action. It’s the imperfect tense. This was a normal routine. They were going at the ninth hour. The ninth hour is 3:00 in the afternoon. The Jewish day is scheduled 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. So, nine hours from 6:00 AM is 3:00 in the afternoon. 3:00 in the afternoon is the hour of prayer. 3:00 in the afternoon is also the hour of evening sacrifice. So this is their custom; they’ve been doing this throughout their life whenever they were in Jerusalem. This was their habit. These were the Jewish prayer hours. They would pray the third hour, that’s at 9:00 AM; they would pray the sixth hour, that’s at 12:00 PM; and they would pray the ninth hour, which is 3:00. And at the ninth hour, the sacrifices in the temple began to be offered every day. Evening sacrifices. There were also morning sacrifices in that first hour of prayer, at 9:00.

So was their custom to routinely to go to the temple. They only gradually came to the conclusion that they needed to leave the temple. It’s all they’d known. They truly worshipped the true and living God who was really to be represented in that temple. They were at home in the temple. And for the first time, they understood the temple, and the God who was represented in the temple legitimately. It took them time to realize that they didn’t need to be in the temple and to find other places. And early on, where did they meet? They began to meet where? In homes.

But there are 3,000 of them the first day. And there are more being added every day, day by day, and when Peter preaches at the back half of chapter 3, the response is staggering. 5,000 more people. Now, there are somewhere around 10,000 people in a few weeks in this church. Where are they going to meet? Well, there’s only one place you could gather like that, and that was in the temple.

They're in the courtyard, the very largest courtyard. They come at the time of the evening sacrifice. Probably other believers are there as well. Maybe they're trying to find their way to the collection of believers, as they did on a daily basis. The court of the women would be the place. They pass the beautiful gate, which is above the Kidron Valley on the east side of the wall that surrounds the temple.

And as they come in from that side through the Beautiful gate, they encounter a familiar procession. People pouring in for the evening sacrifice. A perfect place if you're a beggar to hang out. It's where the crowds are. In Luke 16, we have a picture of a beggar named Lazarus. You remember that? And he hung out at the gate of a rich man. Beggars don't hang out at the gate of a poor man. Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus, the blind man of Mark 10, hung out on the highway to Jerusalem because beggars need to be where there's a flow of people.

Now, the rich man's gate was not a very good place to be because the rich man in that story paid no attention to the beggar. But, if you're on the road to Jerusalem, at Passover, and you're conscious that I need to be right with God and you see a beggar, you might want to put some money in. I mean, you might be a little more inclined to be benevolent, and therefore to demonstrate to God that you're worthy of His grace, His kindness. But the best place to be, oh for sure, the best place, like the blind man in John 9, is right at the temple gate when the heat is on for spiritual performance. Everybody coming in sees this beggar holding out his hands, crying for an alms.

You know, this could be a really successful operation, because you've got guilt-ridden people who are trying to buy their way into the kingdom of God, streaming by you at the hour of the evening sacrifice. They are a lot more likely to be generous.

So there he is in verse 2. He had been lame from his mother's womb. Now, that's some kind of birth defect. He was being carried along in the procession by friends or family, because this was the routine at this hour. They didn't make him sit there all day long. He could take care of himself pretty well if he was just there at the prayer hour. So it's time for that. "They used to set him down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple." That's a very wise strategy. We know that that's where many beggars were, and there were many, many beggars in the land because there was no medicine, there was no medical care that was at all effective.

The gate Beautiful, all the temple gates were magnificent to one degree or another. But Josephus tells us, the Jewish historian, that this one was larger than the rest. 75 feet high, 60 feet wide. It took 20 men to open and close it. It was made of Corinthian brass with adornments and thick, rich plates of Gold. Josephus says it's more adorned than any other gate. People would want to go in that gate because of its beauty, because they would think it represented the favor of God.

So there the man sits, and he's asking for cash. When he saw peter and John about to go into the temple, he did what he did with everybody. He began asking to receive alms. He wants cash from them like he gets from everybody.

So that's the setting. Peter and John coming up at the normal hour, and they encounter this beggar. That's the setting. Let's look at the sign. The miracle unfolds in verses 4 through 8. Verses 4 through 8. He begins asking to receive alms. And he would've been very skilled at this. There's some interesting traditions about this guy. Some traditions say that he was 40 years old, that he'd been doing this for decades, so he had the skill down pretty well. He knew how to appeal.

In verse 4, "Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him." What does that mean? Well, you're pouring into the temple, thousands of people are pouring into the temple, maybe thousands of believers are pouring into the temple. Remember now, they're still going to pray. They're still going to offer the evening sacrifice. The Book of Hebrews hasn't yet been written. They're not yet transitioned out. They're pouring in there and there are beggars all over the place. But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him, focused right in on him and said, "Look at us!" "And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them."

What did he expect to receive from them? Cash. Money. Coins. He wanted the meager sum of money that some devout or guilt-ridden person would be willing to give him. "But Peter said," and I don't know that this verse, verse 6, would make a good life verse for anyone preaching the prosperity gospel. You really want to avoid this one. Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold." This is not about that. "But what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene – walk!" He looked for a meager sum of money, and he was miraculously healed.

Now, there are four elements to this miracle that I would just identify for you. First, it was unexpected. This isn't like blind Bartimaeus down there in Jericho saying, "Son of David, be merciful to me." This isn't a man crying for a miracle. This is a man who wants money. So, God sovereignly selects him. Peter and John, with all of the people milling around, literally by the power of the Holy Spirit and the instigation of that divine unction, focus in on this one beggar that they have passed many, many times along with many other beggars.

The miracle then is sovereign. It is unexpected. God's grace to this man transcends all his expectations. He has no expectations. He is literally yanked, as it were, into the presence of these apostles who say, "I do not possess silver and Gold." Do I need to say that the gospel is not about material gain? Peter and John make that crystal clear: we don't have that to offer.

But Peter did have something, and it was a delegated power to heal. And he had been granted by our Lord as an apostle, the ability to heal and cast out demons. It was an apostolic gift to confirm the truth that he taught. And he said, with that gift, I gladly give you what I do have.

This miracle, then, is totally unexpected. Not in response to the man's faith, not in response to him seeking, completely a sovereign work of God. Secondly, the miracle is unexpected, and it is in the name of Jesus Christ. It is for the purpose of connecting this man to Jesus Christ. He says, "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene – walk!" That is to say a number of things. By the virtue of the authority and power of Jesus Christ. It is Peter saying, "Because of who Jesus Christ is, and by virtue of His authority and His power, delegated to me, I say to you: walk!"

Down in verse 12, Peter will explain this further. He says to the people, "Why are you so amazed at this? This miracle. Why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer," and put to death the Prince of life. You don't think this is us. You don't think this is our power. If you do, you are mistaken.

But there's even more than that. It is a miracle done in the name of Jesus Christ. That is to say, by His power, it is a miracle done in the name of Jesus Christ, secondly, by His will. Do you remember that Jesus will say to His disciples at the upper room: "Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." In My name, means by the power of, and by the will of. Peter and John are saying, if Jesus were here, this is what He would do. We are here, delegated by Him, and granted His power. And by His will, we do for you what He would do.

He's calling the attention of this man to Jesus Christ. It wasn't about money, silver, gold, anything temporal. Miracles were done to point people to Jesus Christ, whom they preached, and whom they represented. Peter took the man, and he lifted him up. And it tells us in verse 7, "seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up." "Seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up, and immediately, his feet and his ankles were strengthened."

If we followed the tradition that this man had never walked, and he was 40 years old, in an instant, his feet and ankles received strength. This is a creative miracle. There's no rehab here. All Jesus' miracles are this way. There are instant acts of creation, new tissue, new fiber, new cartilage, new bone, new muscle, new data for the brain so that you know how to walk.

The miracle then is, thirdly, instantaneous. It is instantaneous. Unexpected, pointing to Christ, instantaneous because it is a creation. Do you think, by way if illustration, do you think that Adam took as long to learn to walk as a baby does? Adam was created in a split second and walked. This man was created new in a split second, fully functioning. Unexpected, in the name of Christ, instantaneous.

We could add “complete.” How do we know it was complete? Verse 8, because he leaped, which means all the muscles were strong, taut. He leaped in the air. Stood upright. He literally come right up out of his sitting position, or lying down. He began to walk. He entered the temple with them, walking and leaping. Of course he was leaping. Of course. No slow, painful rising. No one telling him that, “It was a miracle, but it’s going to take a while to set in.” No. He was athletic in a split second.

Here’s a checklist for a miracle. Sovereign work of God to demonstrate that those who displayed that power came from God, and if they came from God, then the message they preached was God’s message. If the miracle was sovereign, it was supernatural, it was sudden, it was sufficient, and it had one purpose: it was staging to draw a crowd to believe a message. That’s the sequel.

Verse 8. He entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God; and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.” And there he is, in verse 11, “clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement.” And then in verse 12, Peter stands up to preach.

You know, when we teach people how to preach, we talk a lot about introduction. Austin does a lot of this. It’s fairly important to get their attention, right Austin? Introduction is important. How’d you like that introduction? God did His introduction; Peter just needed to show up and preach. God drew the crowd.

So what is the sequel to the miracle, first of all? The man was filled with joy. He was filled with joy. He followed them into the temple, and they must’ve just been walking in their normal fashion while he is bouncing like he’s on a pogo-stick, praising God. Everybody sees him walking and praising God. They all know who he is. He’s the man who sat there for decades at the beautiful gate of the temple begging alms, and they’re absolutely dumbfounded at what has happened to him. So, the first thing is his joy. The man is filled with joy.

You know, again, this should’ve been some kind of an indicator to the Jews, those who considered themselves to be astute, because this had been promised to them by God, that God would one day be their healer. And this would happen; listen to Isaiah 35. “He will save you. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. And the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. And water will break forth in the wilderness.” There’s that kingdom promise again. This is a preview of the kingdom. They are still the people of the Covenant. God is not finished with Israel yet. We don’t have to all become instant, amillennialists because of Acts 3. You get to the end of the chapter; they’re still the people of the promise. They’re still the people of the promise.

Here is a man whose healing, and leaping, and praising God is a direct illustration of the promise of Isaiah 35. God deals in joy. God wants you to have joy. First John says, “These things are written unto you, that your joy may be,” what? Full. “Rejoice always, and again I say, rejoice.” God deals in joy. He wants us to have joy.

So the first thing that happens to this man who’s healed is joy. The joy of a healed man should’ve reminded them of the promise of God if they would turn to Him. Secondly, God is praised. The man is joyful, and God is praised. The end of verse 8. He is praising God. Verse 9. “All the people saw him walking and praising God.”

Instantaneous gratitude to God. He knows where His healing is coming from. He knew the source of the power. You can imagine that if he was 40 years in this condition, he had tried all the suggestions that people so eagerly volunteer. He knew that this was a creative miracle, and nobody else could argue with it. This is true worship. And may I say this? This is true worship going on in the middle of a temple full of fake worship, false worship, corrupt worship. You remember Jesus, during passion week, pronounced doom on that temple because of its corruption and said it’ll all be smashed to the ground, not one stone left on another. It’s that same place. It’s that same place. And even the presence of believers meeting there every day couldn’t sanctify that system.

So in the midst of corrupt worship, here is some true worship, the real stuff. He knows the true God has touched him. Heaven has come down. This is real worship. Real worship isn’t following the liturgy. Even here, real worship isn’t following the routine. Real worship is overwhelming praise, joy, gratitude.

So the man is joyful, God is praised, and thirdly, the people are amazed. They’re just astonished. They’re taking note of him because they saw him walking and praising God. They know he’s the one who used to sit at the Beautiful gate of the temple to beg alms. And they are filled not with skepticism. They’re not saying, “Hmmm, did he fool us all these years?” No. They’re filled with wonder and astonishment or amazement at what had happened to him. They knew the legitimacy of his infirmity. It might’ve been a very visible infirmity. They are in shock, complete shock, over what has happened.

Chapter 4 verse 16. “What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.” But we have to stop the spread of it. They couldn’t deny it. They all knew what had happened.

What were miracles for, then? They were to demonstrate that God was at work through the apostles. It was incontrovertible, undeniable. Even the leaders who would have wanted to deny it couldn’t deny it any more than they could deny any of the miracles Jesus did. It was undeniable. And if the power of God was coming through them, then the Word of God was coming through them.

Miracles are rare. In the Old Testament, extremely rare, extremely rare. Some miracles in Egypt connected to judgment around Moses, some miracles around Elijah and Elisha. Not many, but some. The rest of the Old Testament, you don't find miracles. You don't find them. But then, the Messiah comes, and to validate Him, there's an explosion of the miraculous at the time of the Messiah and the establishment of the apostles, to accredit them.

You say, well, what about today? Isn't it a bizarre reality that the people who claim miracle power are the ones with the bad theology? Isn't that bizarre? That it's the heretics who claim miracle power and faithful, God-blessed, sound teachers of Scripture do not make such claims? If God was going to give miracle power today, I'll tell you would have it: the men you trust and love because of their faithfulness to the Word of God. They would have that power. God wouldn't validate people teaching error. God doesn't validate bad theology. God doesn't validate corrupt, false teachers.

And besides that, it was for the apostles. Second Corinthians 12:12. "The signs of an apostle are signs, wonders, and mighty deeds." It specifically says that. Hebrews chapter 2 reiterates that. How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation after it was at the first spoken through our Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard the Lord? That first generation of apostles, and God testifying with them, by signs, and wonders, and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His will. It was for the apostles.

You say, well, how do we know today if a teacher is a true teacher? How can we tell if he's a true teacher? You don't need miracles. You don't need anything more than this. But before the Scripture, where would you go to validate them? Before you could compare them with Scripture, where would you go to determine the truthfulness of what they said? Now all you have to do is measure every teacher against the Word of God. That is the plumb line. Whoever is faithful to the Word of God speaks for God. Whoever is unfaithful to the Word of God does not speak for God.

That is why, by the way, in the charismatic movement, so many teachers claim direct revelation, because they don't want to be compared to the Scripture. It's a ploy. But in the early years, it's just critical that God validate the true teachers, to establish the gospel. It was affected. It was affected. The crowd comes together, verse 11, and when they come together, there are Peter and John. And, there's this standing, leaping guy, hanging onto both of them. "Stay here, sir. Please stay right here, because you are a visual validation that God works and speaks through us." Perfect setup.

They gather, by the way, to the so-called portico of Solomon. Maybe they're thinking, "This could be the Messiah because the lame are leaping." They're full of amazement. What is the porch of Solomon? Solomon's temple was destroyed by the Chaldeans or the Babylonians. Josephus says there was a part of Solomon's temple that remained: a porch that remained. Solomon's portico is referred to three times. I showed you two of them in the Book of Acts. But it was a long exterior

structure, a porch held up by columns with a roof on the eastern wall of the court of the Gentiles. Well, if you know the east side of the temple mount, it goes straight down. 400 cubits, they used to say, which would be what? 600 feet? This massive wall. Josephus says it was spared by the Babylonians and it became known then as the porch of Solomon because it was all that was left of the Solomonic temple.

Our Lord liked to go there. He did. You see that in verse 23 of John 10. Same place. That's the third mention of the porch of Solomon next to the one that I read you in chapter 5 of Acts. Because our Lord perhaps had taught there often, and because it was such a large gathering, supported by a roof, it would be a good gathering place for the apostles, for the church.

So that day, the apostles, doing the work of the Lord. And I personally have to believe that they were used by the good shepherd to call this man out. I think we'll see him in heaven. Just personal.

But he wasn't the only one. Look at chapter 4. After the sermon was over, and we'll look at the sermon next week, as they were speaking to the people: "the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead." And it was all very convincing, very convincing because of this miracle man hanging onto them. They laid hands on them, and it wasn't to ordain them. It was to arrest them, put them in jail until the next day. It was already evening. "But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand."

Could there have been more? Women as well? It's incredible. Absolutely incredible what happened because of that miracle, validating the message Peter preached. The message, powerful, the expected message. We'll look at that next time.

Look, I'm not underestimating miracles. Does God heal? He can if He wants. He answers prayer when He chooses to. We've all seen that. But is there a gift of healing? No. That was apostolic. What is important is the message. And the truthfulness of the message can be validated by measuring it against the Scripture. A miracle to confirm the word, and now Scripture to confirm the word of any messenger, any preacher.

Father, we thank You for a wonderful day together. Thank You for Your truth, its clarity, its consistency. We thank You that we understand not because we are especially intelligent or educated, but because we have anointing from You that teaches us all things. The Holy Spirit who lives in us, who is our teacher. We are able to see who were once blind, able to know who were once ignorant, able to grasp the light who were once darkness. We thank You that You have made us today, a couple of thousand years later, a part of this glorious work of building Your church that began on Pentecost. Thank You, Lord, for continuing to build Your church, and using us as we faithfully

proclaim Your word as Scripture declares it. Make us faithful to that and raise up many who are faithful to Your Word. That’s our prayer in the name of Christ. Amen.

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