

Acts of the Apostles- Session 3

Recap

The early church in Acts 3-4 reveals a radical paradigm shift in how we approach ministry and healing. When Peter encounters the lame beggar at the Beautiful Gate, he does something profoundly countercultural—he personalizes him. Instead of avoiding eye contact like most passersby, Peter says 'look at us,' establishing human connection before divine intervention. This teaches us that compassion requires connection, and ministry begins with seeing people as fully human, not as projects or objects. The beggar expected money, but Peter expected healing—not because he prayed for it, but because he walked in Spirit-led authority and acted on what God had already shown him. This challenges our typical approach of asking God to heal rather than declaring healing in Jesus' name with confident expectation. The healing of one lame man became the catalyst for 5,000 more conversions, reminding us that God's works are often first fruits leading to greater harvest. When we personalize the marginalized—speaking 'daughter' to the fatherless, looking outcasts in the eye, touching the untouchable—we participate in the same Spirit-empowered ministry that turned the world upside down. The question isn't whether we have the right theology about Pentecost; it's whether we're filled with the Spirit and walking in the authority and compassion that characterized these early believers.

Study Guide

Key Points

- The early church had no established procedures, buildings, or written New Testament—only each other and the Holy Spirit, yet they grew exponentially through God's sovereign work
- Peter personalized the lame beggar by making eye contact and speaking to him, addressing the fundamental human need to be seen and heard
- Jesus and the apostles rarely prayed for healing; instead, they declared healing with authority and acted on their expectations that God would heal
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit was never meant to be a doctrinal debate but a relational reality that empowers witness and ministry
- Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit" when he preached, demonstrating the ongoing need to be continually filled with the Spirit
- The healing of one lame man led to 5,000 more conversions because Peter didn't stop with the miracle but used it as an opportunity to preach the gospel
- God doesn't save groups of people; He saves individuals—ministry must personalize faith rather than nationalize or corporatize it
- The early believers demonstrated the Spirit's work through radical generosity, selling homes and sharing everything in common
- Compassion requires connection—you cannot minister effectively without looking people in the eye and acknowledging their humanity

- Modern Christians need to ask God to show them who He wants to heal rather than asking Him to heal everyone they encounter

Key Scripture

Primary Study Text – Acts 3 and 4 (NKJV)