

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Apostolic Authority in Action

Acts 3:1-10

Keywords: Acts, Miracles, Gospel, Faith Healing, Disabilities, Apostles

PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: We come to a new section of Acts and we start it off with a extraordinary miracle performed by Peter with an air of casualness that belies its power. But why was this man wonderfully healed? What is the purpose? Is there something more than simply doing good to this man? This is what we will see in this sermon.

I. Introduction.

- A. Read Acts 3:1-10.
- B. Background: We saw the ascension of Jesus, the coming of the Spirit, and the birth of the Church in the first two chapters.
 1. In typical Luke fashion he ends the section in Chapter 2 with a summary statement which we dealt with last sermon.
- C. We now come to a new section of Acts, one where Luke begins to describe various aspects of the Church in Jerusalem.
 1. This section is from Acts 3 – 8:3. And in this section there are seven episodes Luke chooses to describe to us. Again, you want to learn to ask why.
 2. The first episode involves Peter in various situation in chapters 3-4. In our chapter we see it broken down as:
 - a. The healing of the lame man by Peter (1-10).
 - b. The response of the people (11)
 - c. A proclamation of the Gospel by Peter (12-26).
 3. Luke had just referred to the apostles' teaching, to the fear that many of the Jews experienced in light of the apostles doing signs and wonders, and to the Christians meeting in the temple (2:43-44, 46).
 - a. You see him now give an example of what he just mentioned at the end of chapter 2. It is a happy story. An amazing story. But it also sets us up for the rest of this section.

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- b. What you will see in chapter 4 is that this event is what the leaders use to begin to turn the favor away from the new church.
- D. In this story we see a miraculous healing but this is not the point. What you want to ask in books like Acts is, “Why is this here?” It is actually showing the authority of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. This requires us to grasp what is an apostle. And once you know that then you know why Luke has this little story here.
 - 2. And in the process of displaying their authority as Christ’s ambassadors.
 - a. They are a continuation of Jesus’ ministry.
 - (1) They function as witnesses of who Jesus is. This is key for us.
 - (2) Note Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32.
 - (3) We are not witnesses like an apostle. Rather, we declare the testimony of the apostles. When you are sharing the gospel it is not about what God did for you. It is what the Apostles declare they saw Jesus say and do.
 - (4) This is key in baptism testimonies.
 - b. Their words are as authoritative as Christ’s.
 - (1) Important to understand John 16:12-13. This is not a promise to us but to the apostles.
 - (2) One of the great weaknesses of the pulpit today is that we do not treat the Apostolic writing as the words of God. We play loose and light with them.
 - (3) When we look at a prohibition or a command by Peter or Paul and we dislike it, we do not grasp that we are saying to God Himself, that we don’t appreciate His thoughts or expectations.
 - c. They were commissioned by Jesus Christ.
 - (1) In preparing to send the disciples out to preach in Matthew 11 we read these words of Christ, “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me” (Matthew 10:40)

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- (2) Luke records that if you rejected them you were rejecting Jesus and the Father (Luke 10:16).
 - (3) In Acts 1:8 we see that once they have the Holy Spirit come upon them in power they will become His official witnesses among mankind.
 - (4) So they are men appointed and sent out by the Lord of the Church.
- d. So from the very beginning of Acts we see the Apostles come into the forefront with great authority and great power. They were the spokesmen. It was their apostolic teaching to which the Church devoted themselves to learning.
- (1) They were the official witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was often done in the early days with miraculous acts of power like our passages.
 - (2) They made the decisions in the early church. We see in Acts 4 the people bringing gifts of money and lay them at their feet for distribution.
 - (3) And in the beginning we see that the religious and political leaders would attack them because it was obvious that they were the leaders of this new thing called the Church.
 - (4) They were the ones who would investigate claims that people were coming to believe in Christ in other areas.
3. But in all of this they performed signs and miracles to attest to their authenticity and authority.
- a. What is happening is that they are following the example of Jesus.
 - (1) The Pharisee Nicodemus says to Jesus in John 3, *“We know that you have come from God as a teacher, for not one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”*
 - (2) In John 6 He performs miracles and it says that the great crowd was following Him because of that fact.
 - (3) In John 7 the religious leaders seek to arrest Jesus because He was declaring Himself to be the “Christ.” But the crowds asked a simple question, *“When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?”*

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- (4) This continues all the way up to when Jesus is arrested, beaten and crucified. Why? Because these will never change a heart of unbelief.
 - (a) Signs and miracles affirm but they do not prove to a person what they do not wish to reject.
 - (b) Jesus said it as bluntly as anyone could in John 10:24-32.
- (5) The signs He did showed Who He was. But they are not the way God works to change the minds of people. Truth/words are His method.
- b. We then see it here in Acts in the same way.
 - (1) Jesus commissions them as Apostles and in chapter 2 we find them doing many miraculous things.
 - (2) Here is chapter 3 they do it in a specific story. But not for their own sake or purpose, but in the “name” or “authority” of Jesus Christ.
 - (3) But what you will find is that these very works that they do will then be used to attack them. Why? Because of what they do after performing these signs, they preach truth.
 - (4) And the next thing you will read is in 4:1-3.
- E. So understand this story is here to establish the authority of the Apostles as those sent by Jesus the Messiah. And it prepares us to then hear the message preached in light of it.

II. Apostolic Authority in Action.

- A. First we will let the story unfold as it is simple and linear:
 - 1. Note first that the temple and the spiritual life around the temple was not rejected by the Apostles. It was still very much part of the life of the church.
 - a. “Ninth hour” = 3 pm. A regular time devoted to “the” prayers.
 - b. I want only to point out that they did not withdraw from the spiritual life of Israel. Why? Because Israel was and is God’s chosen nation.

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- c. What the nation was supposed to be looking for was the messiah, the Christ. Promised in the Old Testament and seen in Jesus. But they rejected Him.
 - d. But those who believed the message preached in Acts 2 now were, what some call, “completed Jews.” For them, the prayers and spiritual life attached to the Temple now took on an even greater meaning and value to them.
2. Vs 2.
- a. The crippled man was probably brought there by relatives. This would be a time for the maximum number of people for him to beg.
 - b. The people of that time would view him as a weakling. They were often objects of ridicule. Remember also John 9:1-2 where the disciples reveal some Jewish presuppositions.
 - c. The gate location is not known and it is not important. Understand that this is where you would sit for begging as it forces people to come by you.
 - d. And understand also that every Jew who came to the temple would recognize this man. There is not some unknown quality about him. They know who he is. They know his story.
3. Vss 3-5.
- a. What stands out here is how Peter stared at the man and commanded him to look at them.
 - b. The man was used to being ignored and there is no indication that he actually knew them, rather he saw people and started begging. But how they reacted to him was unique, he likely assumed that he was going to get a big gift.
4. Vss 6-10
- a. First disappointment.
 - b. Second, the miracle. Note how it is simple and unadorned.
 - (1) It is immediate.
 - (2) It is total.

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- (3) It is in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene. So why “in this name?”
 - (a) Not some magical formula which is how it is used today in healing services.
 - (b) The name of a person represented that person. When Peter healed this man in the name of Jesus, he was saying that it was Jesus who was ultimately responsible for the healing, not Peter. Peter healed him in the power of and with the authority of Jesus of Nazareth (cf. v. 16).
- c. Think about the connection this has back to Jesus.
 - (1) All the people remembered the miracles of Jesus. They were not done that long ago. Also they are all in fear due to the many signs and miracles that are happening at that time.
 - (2) Almost everyone in Jerusalem would have known this beggar since he had sat for so long at an entrance to the temple. Jesus may have passed this man many times as He walked in and out of the temple. There would have been no doubt about the genuineness of his healing.
 - (3) Peter performed this miracle as Jesus had healed lame people before His crucifixion. By doing it in Jesus' name it would have been evident to all that the power of Jesus was now at work through His apostles.
 - (4) In other words, the healing was not for healing. It was to show the messiahship of Jesus. This is why he then preaches to them the gospel.
- B. The Apostolic Message.
 1. In light of this event Peter again proclaims a message starting in vs 12. This is so important to remember.
 2. Today with the countless frauds who claim miracles and healings but then hide when the truly lame and blind come to them, we see the evil of those who love fame and money.
 3. The apostles had no money. They were not looking for fame or a name for themselves. No brand to market. No merchandise to sell. They shift the focus off of themselves and onto Jesus Christ.

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4. And this is that apostolic message. This is the very thing the every person needs most desperately. It is how you might be made right with your Maker and God.
5. Everything else is secondary.
 - a. Not that anything else is not important, merely secondary.
 - b. This man needed money so he could eat. That is obvious. But that was not the most important thing. But that is what he expected and hoped for. And that is what everyone around there would be thinking, give the guy some money.
 - c. If you and I were really thinking outside the box we might decide that what he needed was to be healed, something he would not even dream of having happen. But that was not the most important thing.
 - (1) Which is exactly what happened.
 - (2) And which was immediately downplayed by the Apostles.
 - d. What was needed is what Peter says in vss 12-16.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Think about what the man wanted and what the man got— he wanted alms but got healing.
- B. Think about what this world offers and what the God offers.
 1. At best this world can give this man some food or money. Nice and even helpful, but it solves nothing in the end.
 2. God offers life. Here we see it in the reversal of the effects of living in a broken, sin-filled world. But beyond this we see it in the forgiveness of sin and the giving of life through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- C. Now let's look quickly at this man as a living illustration of what each person here needs.
 1. The man is broken and beyond remedy. He is living out what is left of a terrible life with no expectation of anything better.
 - a. That is every person walking and breathing without Jesus Christ.
 - b. Everyone walking through life just hoping to get something more. To extend the good times and avoid the bad if possible.

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- c. As sinners who are rejecting God we live a life under the dominion of sin. It rules our hearts and lives. We fail and rebel and sin because our nature is enslaved to that power of sin.
 - d. At best we try to reform our lives a bit better than we were before. But we cannot fix the systemic brokenness that lies within our hearts.
 - e. We hope for some relief. We even maybe get some relief but it never sticks. And even if we clean up the act on the outside, what remains hidden from everyone else but God, is still there.
2. But God. Rich in mercy gives us His Son to stand in our place.
- a. The great substitute who takes upon Himself our sin.
 - b. Who takes on Himself our curse and our punishment of death.
 - c. And covers us in His perfections and righteousness.
 - d. By grace, not works and efforts and self-help, but by grace alone we are saved from our sin and from God's judgment.
 - e. Whose grace? God's.
- D. Beloved, if you are looking for your best life now, you have it. There is nothing that will get better after this life.
- E. But in Jesus Christ we find that there is the promise of all things made new and a new life that cannot be taken or lost because it is found in our Lord.

Benediction

May the Lord remind you all of the richness of His grace and the manifold blessings that belong to you in Christ Jesus our Lord. May you walk in His promises and by the power of the Holy Spirit as you engage this fallen age for God's glory. Amen