



Beautiful Gate

Kicking It Off

When was a time you felt truly "refreshed," whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually?

Read

Acts 3:1-10

Summary

Acts 3 gives the story of a man who is unable to walk. Every day his friends carry him to the temple entrance so he can beg for money from the religious people walking in. One day Peter and John come by, and the guy asks them for some coins. Peter says, "I don't have any money. But what I do have, I'll give you. In Jesus's name, get up and walk." And the guy does. He jumps up, walks into the temple, and starts praising God.

Now you'd think the point of this story is about healing or miracles. But it's actually about something bigger. See, the man was asking for money to survive another day. Peter gave him something money could never buy: the ability to walk into God's presence and worship.

And when the crowd gathered, amazed, Peter immediately said, "Why are you looking at us like we did this? It's not our power or our faith that healed him. It's Jesus."

This challenges a lot of our assumptions. We often think the church's job is to solve problems with resources, to be like a charity or social service. And generosity matters, for sure. But that's not our main gift. Our main gift is Jesus himself.

Peter then tells the crowd something uncomfortable: you're the ones who rejected Jesus and asked for a murderer instead. But here's the thing, Peter had also denied Jesus three times. He's not speaking from superiority. He's speaking as someone who's been forgiven. And he offers them the same opportunity: repent and turn back, and God will completely erase your sins and give you real refreshment.

We don't have silver and gold. But we have something better, the name of Jesus. And that's what people actually need.

Discussion Questions

1. Was there anything from the sermon or the passage that stuck out to you?
2. Peter told the lame man, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you." When you encounter someone in need, do you tend to focus on what you lack or on what you actually have to offer?
3. The man at the Beautiful Gate expected money but received the ability to worship God. What expectations do you bring to God that might be limiting what he actually wants to give you?
4. Peter immediately redirected the crowd's amazement away from himself and toward Jesus. When God works through you, how easy or difficult is it for you to deflect credit and point others to Christ?
5. Peter promised that repentance brings "times of refreshing" from the Lord's presence. In what areas of your life are you seeking refreshment from things that cannot truly satisfy?

Significant Quotes from Sermon

"Our goal is to be devoted unto the Lord, devoted unto the apostles' teaching, devoted unto the breaking of bread, unto the fellowship of the believers, devoted unto the prayers in which we give unto the Lord to live in community, to give God the glory. It is not about making sure everyone has material needs. We have something better. And if anything, it's not that we have something better; it's the only thing we have, and his name is Jesus."

"I think too many times I see people chasing after miracles when really the miracle is just the appetizer. It doesn't make the appetizer wrong. But an appetizer is supposed to make you hungry for something of actual substance, the main course. And this is what God is doing with miracles."

"It is not Peter's power, nor is it Peter's faith that causes this man to walk. It is the power of God that does a miracle in this man to raise him and give him the ability to walk. There is a reason why God is healing this man from being lame so that he can rise up and walk. And it wasn't so that he would have use of his legs. It was so that he would be able to walk through the gates and worship God."

"There's this idea of repentance that Peter brings up: repentance is confession of your sin, but it's a turning from your wicked ways. You are not required to turn your ways; you are allowed. And I think it's a very beautiful way of reframing repentance. You aren't required to repent; you are given an opportunity to repent."

Sermon Notes*Acts 3:1-26*

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. 3 Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. 4 And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Outline

1. The Gift No One Expected (vv. 1-10)

- a. The encounter: Peter and John stop, make eye contact, and say "Look at us," recognizing the man's dignity before addressing his need
- b. Peter's declaration: "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (v. 6)
- c. The healing is immediate: feet and ankles made strong, the man enters the temple walking, leaping, and praising God
- d. The purpose of the miracle: not primarily physical restoration, but removing the barrier to worship; God overcomes whatever keeps us from entering his presence
- e. The response: praise to God, not to Peter and John; the miracle led to worship, not to following the apostles
- f. The gift is not money, not healing, not resources; the gift is Christ himself

2. The Truth No One Wanted (vv. 11-18)

- a. Peter redirects attention: "Why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?" (v. 12)
- b. The accusation: "You delivered over and denied Jesus... you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer... you killed the Author of life" (vv. 13-15)
- c. The paradox: they killed the source of life itself, yet God raised him from the dead
- d. Peter's credibility: he speaks as one who also denied Christ three times and was restored; he is not condemning from a place of superiority
- e. The miracle's source: "His name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong" (v. 16); it is not Peter's power or faith, but the power of Jesus's name
- f. Our righteousness comes through the blood of Jesus, not our own effort; we have authority because of Christ, not because we are exceptional

3. The Future No One Imagined (vv. 19-26)

- a. The command (imperative, not suggestion): "Repent and turn back" (v. 19)
- b. Three results of repentance:
 - i. Sins blotted out: completely erased, not just covered; God chooses to forget
 - ii. Times of refreshing: relief and revival from God's presence; true Restoration of all things: the longing for home, for Christ's return to make everything right
- c. The warning: Moses prophesied a prophet like himself whom all must hear; "every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed" (v. 23); there is urgency to respond
- d. The promise to Abraham: "In your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (v. 25); God's blessing comes through turning from wickedness
- e. Repentance is not a requirement but an opportunity; God constantly invites but does not force

Notes

There is a scene in Acts chapter 3 that challenges nearly everything we assume about what the church is supposed to do in the world. Two of Jesus's closest followers, Peter and John, are walking to the temple for afternoon prayer when they encounter a man who has been lame since birth. He sits at the entrance to the temple, at a gate so magnificent it was called the Beautiful Gate, begging for money from the religious people passing through. The contrast is striking: a gate of precious bronze, more valuable than silver or gold, and at its base, a man who represents the very picture of human helplessness.

What happens next forms the foundation for understanding the church's true mission.

The man looks at Peter and John, expecting to receive a few coins. He has done this thousands of times before. Friends or family carry him to this spot every day so he can provide for himself through the generosity of those entering the temple to worship. He knows what to expect. But Peter does something unexpected. He stops. He looks directly at the man. He says, "Look at us."

This moment deserves attention. Peter does not walk past. He does not avert his eyes. He does not treat this man as part of the scenery, as invisible as the stones beneath their feet. There is dignity in this encounter, a recognition of personhood that precedes everything else. Peter meets the man at his level, eye to eye.

Then Peter says something that sounds almost cruel at first: "Silver and gold I do not have." The man's heart must have sunk. But Peter continues: "But what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

And the man does.

His feet and ankles, which had never supported his weight for a single moment in over forty years, suddenly grow strong. He does not just stand, he leaps. He does not just walk, he goes bounding into the temple, praising God. The people who had seen him begging for years are filled with wonder and amazement. They cannot deny what they are witnessing.

But here is where the story becomes more than a healing narrative. Here is where it becomes a lesson about what the church actually possesses and what it is called to offer the world.

When the crowds gather, astonished, Peter immediately redirects their attention. "Why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?" Peter refuses to take credit. He refuses to let anyone think that he possesses some special ability or that his exceptional faithfulness earned this miracle. The power did not come from Peter. The power came through Peter, from Jesus.

This distinction matters enormously. Peter was not setting up shop as a miracle worker. He was not launching a healing ministry where people could line up and receive whatever they needed. He was acting as a channel for the authority of the risen Christ. The name of Jesus, not the name of Peter, held the power.

This is where the application becomes uncomfortable for the modern church. We live in a world that expects institutions to solve problems. We expect churches to function as engines of social welfare, to distribute resources, to meet material needs. And there is certainly a place for generosity and care for the poor. The early church in Acts 2 shared their possessions with one another. That is part of the picture.

But Peter and John did not invite this lame man to join their commune. They did not offer him a place in their sharing economy. They did not give him money to survive another day. They gave him Jesus. And in giving him Jesus, they gave him something money could never buy: the ability to walk into the temple and worship God.

The miracle was not primarily about restoring the use of his legs. It was about removing the barrier between this man and the presence of God. The healing enabled worship. The physical restoration pointed to a spiritual reality.

This is the church's unique gift. We do not have silver and gold in the way the world measures wealth. We do not have political power or institutional resources that can compete with governments and corporations. But we have the name of Jesus. And that name carries authority that no amount of money can purchase.

The prosperity gospel gets this exactly backward. It suggests that if we worship God faithfully enough, he will give us silver and gold. But Peter, one of the most faithful followers of Jesus who ever lived, had no silver and gold to give. The Holy Spirit certainly had the power to manifest wealth in Peter's hands. But that was not what this man needed. That was not what any of us truly need.

We need Jesus.

After the healing, Peter preaches to the gathered crowd. He does not soften his message. He tells them directly that they are the ones who handed Jesus over, who denied him before Pilate, who asked for a murderer to be released instead of the Holy and Righteous One. They killed the Author of life.

But Peter is not speaking from a position of superiority. This is the same Peter who denied Jesus three times on the night of his arrest. Peter knows what it means to reject Christ. He also knows what it means to be restored. Jesus met Peter after the resurrection and asked him three times, "Do you love me?" Three denials, three restorations. Peter speaks to the crowd as someone who has already received forgiveness for the very sin he is describing.

And so Peter offers hope. He acknowledges that they acted in ignorance. He explains that their actions actually fulfilled what God had foretold through the prophets, that the Christ would suffer. And then he issues a command, not a suggestion: Repent and turn back.

The reasons Peter gives for repentance are striking. First, your sins will be blotted out. Not covered, not overlooked, but erased completely, as if they never existed. Second, times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord. This word for refreshing appears only here in the New Testament. It pictures cool relief from oppressive heat, the revival of someone who is exhausted. Third, repentance prepares the way for Christ's return and the restoration of all things.

This is what the church offers. Not programs. Not resources. Not self-help strategies or political solutions. The church offers forgiveness, refreshing, and hope.

But there is also a warning. Peter quotes Moses: "The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people." There is urgency here. Repentance cannot be postponed indefinitely. God is constantly inviting people into his embrace, but he will not force anyone into his family.

The conversion rate was not one hundred percent. Some who witnessed this miracle walked away unchanged. Some probably wanted to follow Peter instead of Jesus, to find a guru who could solve their problems. They missed the point entirely.

The church gathers not because we are powerful or righteous. We gather because of Jesus. We believe that God loves us so much that he sent his Son to die for us. And our responsibility, in response, is to constantly repent, to constantly turn from our wicked ways. As we do this, God blots out our sins. He refreshes us. And we develop a longing to be with him forever.

In this healing and restoration, we are given the miraculous strength to praise God even when circumstances suggest we should not be able to. And this will cause people to wonder. Some will call us crazy. But others will say, "Tell me more. I want what you have."

And we will be able to say: I cannot give you the power to walk. I cannot give you the power to see. I cannot do these things. But I know a Jesus who can. And I believe he can turn your heart of stone into a heart of flesh.

Blog

This week we are looking at a passage that divides naturally into two major sections, starting with a miraculous healing at the Beautiful Gate and moving into Peter's second major sermon. This event occurs in the aftermath of Pentecost, representing a time when the "Called Out Church" began to demonstrate the power of the Lord in the streets of Jerusalem.

As we begin, we should visualize the setting. It is 3pm, which was the ninth hour and a traditional time for Jewish prayer and the evening sacrifice. Peter and John are "going up" to the temple, a term used because the temple mount was elevated. Their presence there is significant because it shows us that the early believers continued to participate in Jewish worship practices. They were not trying to start a brand new religion that was disconnected from their past, but they were instead looking for the fulfillment of Israel's hopes within the temple walls.

At the entrance to the temple complex stood the Beautiful Gate, which many scholars believe was the Nicanor Gate. This was a massive, magnificent structure made of Corinthian bronze. It was so valuable that it exceeded the gates overlaid with silver and gold, and it required twenty men to swing its doors open and shut. Right at the base of this gleaming bronze gate sat a man who was the picture of human helplessness. He had been lame from his mother's womb, meaning he had never taken a single step in his life. Every day, he was carried to this spot to beg for money because the temple drew crowds who felt a religious duty to give alms.

When Peter and John approach, the man looks at them, expecting to receive a small coin. Peter, however, does not simply walk past. He and John fix their gaze on the man, a term that implies an intense and significant look. Peter commands the man to look at them, creating a direct personal encounter. The man expects silver, but Peter offers something that cannot be bought. He says, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you". Peter then issues a command in the name of Jesus. In their culture, a name represented the person's character, authority, and power. By acting in Jesus's name, Peter was acting as his authorized representative. He was not using a magic formula, but he was instead invoking the active involvement and presence of the living Lord.

Peter reaches out, takes the man by the right hand, and raises him up. The results are immediate. Luke, the physician, provides medical specificity here, noting that the man's feet and ankles were made strong right then and there. The man does not just stand up (he leaps). He enters the temple walking and leaping and praising God. This is more than just a happy reaction. It is a prophetic sign. The prophet Isaiah once

promised that in the messianic age, the lame would leap like a deer. By recording this leap, Luke is signaling to us that the restoration of all things has begun.

The crowd's reaction is one of "wonder and amazement" because they recognize this man. They have seen him sitting at the gate for years. As they rush together at Solomon's Portico, which was a covered walkway on the east side of the temple, Peter seizes the moment to preach. He begins by redirecting their attention away from the apostles. He asks them why they are staring as if his own power or godliness had healed the man. He wants them to know that the apostles are merely channels for the authority of Jesus.

Peter then grounds the miracle in the history of Israel by calling on the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". He uses the title "Servant" for Jesus, or *pais*, which connects him to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. From here, Peter delivers a sharp accusation. He tells the crowd that they handed Jesus over and disowned him in the presence of Pilate. He points out the bitter irony of their choice: they rejected the "Holy and Righteous One" and instead asked for a murderer, Barabbas, to be released. Then, Peter presents the ultimate paradox. He tells them they killed the "Author of life," but God raised him from the dead. The word for Author, *archegos*, means the originator or pioneer of life. It is a devastating point: the people executed the very source of life itself.

However, Peter does not leave them in despair. He softens his tone by acknowledging that they and their leaders acted in ignorance. While ignorance does not remove their guilt, it does open the door for repentance. He explains that their actions actually fulfilled what God had foretold through the prophets (that the Messiah must suffer). This shows us the mystery of God's sovereignty, where he uses even human sin to accomplish his plan for salvation.

Peter then issues a double command to "repent and turn". Repentance is a change of mind, while turning is an active conversion back to God. He promises three beautiful results for those who respond. First, their sins will be "wiped away," a term that means to erase a debt record or wipe a slate completely clean. Second, he promises that "times of refreshing" will come from the presence of the Lord. This word, *anapsuxis*, appears only here in the New Testament, and it pictures cool relief from oppressive heat or the revival of someone who is exhausted. Third, he looks forward to the "universal restoration," or *apokatastasis*, when Jesus returns to make all things right again.

Peter finishes his sermon by showing that this is what the Scriptures have always pointed toward. He identifies Jesus as the "prophet like Moses" mentioned in Deuteronomy, and he warns that those who do not listen to him will be completely cut off. He tells the crowd that they are the "heirs of the prophets and of the covenant". They are the first ones who were meant to receive the blessing promised to Abraham. We

must notice, however, how Peter defines that blessing. He says God sent Jesus to bless them by "turning each of you from your wicked ways". True blessing, in this context, is moral transformation and a return to the Lord.

When we step back and look at the theological themes of this chapter, several points stand out. First, we see the absolute power of Jesus's name. Peter and John had no inherent power, and they had no "silver and gold" (no financial resources or political influence). They simply acted as ambassadors of the risen Christ. This reminds us that the church's greatest asset is not its budget but the authority of our Lord.

Second, we see the theme of prophetic fulfillment. Peter weaves together threads from Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, and Abraham to show that the gospel is not a new invention. It is the climax of God's redemptive plan. The physical healing of the lame man is a "sign" that points to the messianic salvation Jesus brings. It is a physical picture of a spiritual reality.

Third, we encounter the "scandal of the cross". Peter holds the crowd responsible for their rejection of Jesus, but he also shows that God's sovereignty was at work the whole time. The cross was the worst thing humans ever did, yet it became the best thing God ever accomplished.

Finally, we see the offer of restoration. The physical restoration of a man who was lame from birth is a preview of the spiritual restoration available to everyone who repents and turns. The "times of refreshing" are not just for the future; they are an invitation for us today to experience the relief and revival that come from being in the Lord's presence.