

[Acts 3:1-11 NLT] [1] Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. [2] As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. [3] When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money. [4] Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" [5] The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. [6] But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!" [7] Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. [8] He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. [9] All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God. [10] When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded! [11] They all rushed out in amazement to Solomon's Colonnade, where the man was holding tightly to Peter and John.

Acts 3:1-11, "What To Give"

- I. The Habit – Acts 3:1-3**
- II. The Healing – Acts 3:4-8a**
- III. The Happiness – Acts 3:8b-11**

- In the book of Acts, we see the early church taking off through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - o Just prior to His ascension, Jesus said in chapter 1 [Acts 1:4 NLT] [4] Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before.
 - o Then in Acts chapter 2 you have the arrival of the Holy Spirit.
 - They are there in the upper room, an amazing work takes place and the church is birthed.
 - o As we come to chapter 3, we really begin to see the action of the Holy Spirit.
 - It tells us back in chapter 2 verse 43, [Acts 2:43 NLT] [43] A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.
 - And we get to see one of those today.

- Luke—who wrote the book of Acts—describes a man who was lame from birth and yet he is healed by Peter and John.
- Really, of course, he’s healed by the Lord.
 - **And what’s so wonderful—as we’re going to see here—is God never wastes opportunities.**
- And so, this miracle was not an end to itself.
 - Peter uses that to speak about the goodness of God and what He wants to do in our lives.
 - And even more people are added to the church.
- For those taking notes, I’ve entitled our message **What To Give.**
 - And in this passage, we see a man go from pain to praise, as God sovereignly heals this man.
 - **But what struck me most is what he was given by Peter.**
 - We’re going to look at this text into three points:
 - **The Habit (vs 1-3)**
 - **The Healing (vs 4-8a)**
 - **The Happiness (vs 8b-11)**

The Habit

But we begin with *the habit*

And in the first three verses we actually have two habits.

[Acts 3:1-3 NLT] [1] Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. [2] As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. [3] When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.

- **So here we have the intersection of two different habits: Peter and John who went regularly to the Temple—on this occasion—to pray. And then you have this lame man who was carried daily to the Temple, in order to beg.**
 - So when you think about it, these two habits—one is *majestic*; on is *misfortunate*.
 - One is *hopeful*; and the other seems *hopeless*.
 - **And yet we’re going to see that God has a glorious plan—as He always does—even in difficulty and pain.**
- Again, the first part of verse 1—**Peter and John went to the Temple**

- Here you have Peter and John, and they of course are buddies.
 - In fact, when we read in the gospel of Luke 5, they had a fishing business together.
 - And then, the two of them along with James, were part of the inner circle with Jesus.
 - Now you'd think that that meant they'd always get along, but they didn't.
 - In fact, Peter and John were really opposites.
 - Peter of course, is that real go-getter. He's a doer.
 - And John is somewhat of a dreamer.
 - Peter is practical.
 - John you might say is poetical.
 - Peter then, is the motivator.
 - John—a little bit the mystic.
- And so because of that, they often had differences.
 - And there are many of them described in the gospel accounts.
 - One of my favorites—After Jesus has already risen from the dead, and he's been appearing to his disciples for a forty-day period.
 - And right near the end—it's in John 21—he's reinstating Peter back in the ministry.
 - And of course, you recall he asks Peter three times—*Peter do you love me?*
 - And he was getting frustrated.
 - Of course, Peter *denied* the Lord three times.
 - But there, as Jesus' commissioning Peter, he tells him *When you die, you will be crucified.*
 - And of course, Peter *was* crucified.
 - And, in fact, not feeling worthy to be put to death the same way his Lord was, he requested to be crucified upside down—which he was.
 - But in that passage, as Jesus is talking to Peter, Peter says to Jesus *Well, what about John?*
 - And Jesus says *Don't worry about him.*

- And that was because they had somewhat of a rivalry between the two of them.
- But now, you have them both going together to church.
 - Now prior to the Holy Spirit being given, they had a friendship.
 - But once they were filled with the Holy Spirit, as we saw, they had a deep fellowship. (*Koinonia*)
 - Now later on in the book of Acts, these two men are commissioned to take the gospel to the Samaritans.
 - And then in Galatians 2:9, these men are called *pillars of the church*.
- So here they are together and they're going to the Temple.
 - They're no longer competing for greatness, as they did in some other occasions.
 - But now, they're going with single-mindedness.
 - And notice it says they *went*
 - Peter and John went together.
 - That's an imperfect verb and it speaks of a continual action.
 - So they were continually going.
 - They were in the habit of going to the temple area to pray with other believers.
 - So here's a good point of application: *Are you cultivating a habit of prayer in your life?*
 - "Pray until you pray. The habit of breaking off our prayers before we have truly prayed is as common as it is unfortunate. Often the last ten minutes may mean more to us than the first half hour, because we must spend a long time getting into the proper mood to pray effectively. We may need to struggle with our thoughts to draw them in from where they have been scattered through the multitude of distractions that result from the task of living in a disordered world. If when we come to prayer our hearts feel dull and unspiritual, we should not try to argue ourselves out of it. Rather, we should admit it frankly and pray our way through. Some Christians smile at the thought of "praying through," but something of the same idea is found in the writings of practically every great praying saint from

Daniel to the present day. We cannot afford to stop praying till we have actually prayed. Pray until you pray.” D.L. Moody

- Now, it tells us here—Peter and John go to the temple **to take part in the three o'clock prayer service.**
 - By the way, you might be asking yourself—*Why are they going to the Jewish Temple to pray?*
 - This is the Jewish Temple.
 - That's the seat of Judaism.
 - But they're now Christians—*What's going on?*
 - Well understand—The book of Acts is a transitional book.
 - It's the thirty-year history of the church moving from the Old Testament to the New Testament.
 - So there would be a lot of adjustments, a lot of transitions.
 - It would literally be several years—we get to chapter 15 and the church has to have a council saying *Do Christians now have to have sacrifices and stuff?*
 - So there were a lot of things they had to learn.
 - And keep in mind—Some of them would be fine to continue, as long as it directed towards the Lord.
 - And of course, such is the case with prayer.
 - There's nothing wrong with going to the Temple area, gathering with other Christians, and even interacting with other people who aren't Christians (who are Jews) to pray because they could be a witness to them.
- But here they are observing the Jewish hour of prayer. It says —they were wanting **to take part in the three o'clock prayer service.**
 - Some translations say the *ninth hour*
 - The Jews would pray three times a day—the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour.
 - A Jewish day begins at 6am and ends at sundown—usually 6pm.
 - So in our vernacular, they prayed at 9am, they prayed at noon, and at 3pm.
 - So it's late afternoon and they're gathering to pray.
 - One of the signs of a healthy church, and effective church, is prayer.

- In Acts 2:42, one of their regular habits was to gather for prayer.
 - And so even though these men are filled the Holy Spirit, as all believers are—we still need to pray.
 - We need to seek God’s direction, and guidance, and God’s will.
 - So we can never overstate the importance of prayer.
 - Prayer unlocks the blessing of God.
 - No prayer; No power. But much prayer; Much power.
 - C.H. Spurgeon, *“Without prayer, what are the churches agencies but nothing of a stretching out of a dead man’s arm or the lifting of the lid of a blind man’s eye. It’s only when the Holy Spirit comes that there’s force and power, and that happens through prayer.”*
 - “You can do more than pray after you’ve prayed. But you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.” – A. J. Gordon
 - So we need to be people of prayer.
 - Would to God we’d have what they had.
 - They had a holy habit of prayer.

Now moving on, we see another habit.

It’s of this unfortunate man, in verse 2

[Acts 3:2 NLT] [2] As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple.

- We find beggars in quite a few places, mentioned in the New Testament.
 - And these would be popular places.
 - Some would situate themselves along the places of rich men.
 - If you knew where a rich man lived, you’d hang out there.
 - Such was the case in Luke chapter 16 by a man by the name of Lazarus.
 - He was there by a rich man’s gate hoping for alms.

- One of the most popular though, was along the highways leading in and out of any large city and especially Jerusalem—when you’d have many coming for the feasts.
 - And such is the case of blind Bartimaeus that we read about in Mark chapter 10.
- And then, others would situate themselves by the gates of the city—which is exactly what we have here.
 - And of course, there’d be a lot of traffic going into the Temple area.
 - This is a gate going into the temple compound.
 - And people would come to the temple to offer up sacrifice, to offer up gifts to the Lord, and they’d be more likely to be sympathetic—more generous.
- And then beyond that, this man evoked sympathy. It tells us in verse 2 that he had been **lame from birth**.
 - If we read later on in Acts 4:22—the story kinda continues—we read that he was forty years old.
 - So think about this: This man, for forty years, this man has been reduced to having someone carrying him around.
 - He has not lived a day in his life then, when he has not been—in one sense—a burden to somebody else.
 - He never walked.
 - He never worked.
 - His whole life is reduced to begging.
 - And he sits by the Temple gates, in hopes that his plight might evoke pity.
 - **His very essence then, depends upon the coins that would fall into his outstretched hands.**
- Now, we read here **Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate**
 - And you could look this up on your own.
 - It’s also called the Nicanor Gate.
 - But it was renamed or called by most people the Beautiful Gate.
 - Why? Because it was just that—a beautiful gate.
 - The historian Josephus describes it for us:

- It's 150ft high, it was 60ft wide, it was constructed and had carvings of a vine—signifying that Israel was God's vine.
- Beyond that, it was made of Corinthian bronze.
 - So it was very heavy.
- And then, it was overlaid with silver, and in most places gold.
- So, it's massive, it's heavy. In fact, Josephus describes that it would take twenty men to open and close it.
- So think about this: You have an incredible contrast on top of that.
 - Here you have a beggar—he's dressed in rags.
 - And then you have this giant gate overlaid with silver and gold.
 - So he's out there every day asking—begging—for alms.
 - He's within hands reach of a gold mine, yet he only gathers pennies.

[Acts 3:3 NLT] [3] When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.

- The man does what he always did—he begs for some money.
 - These men are going for prayer, he's begging, asking for money—a small handout.
 - But what he receives in the passage is beyond riches.
 - We move now from *The Habit* to *The Healing*.

The Healing

- Now there are four things that we see about his healing:
 - **The first is that it was unexpected.**
 - Now think about this: This guy is not thinking he's going to be healed, when he sees Peter and John.
 - It's not even in his mind.
 - He's just hoping for a handout.
- So this healing comes to him completely unexpected.
 - And I just want you to know—that's the way the Lord always works.
 - That's how grace operates.
 - **Grace operates in the area of the unexpected.**
 - God always does the unexpected—in fact, he always does more.

- In Eph 3:20 [Ephesians 3:20 NKJV] [20] Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,
 - This guy is just asking for money.
 - Not only does he get physically healed, but spiritually healed—as we will see.

[Acts 3:4 NLT] [4] Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!"

- So as Peter and John are coming by, the guy makes eye contact with them, and he puts up his hand to receive something from them, and Peter says “**Look at us bro!**”
 - The word means to stare or transfix.
 - In our vernacular, what Peter is saying is “*give me your full attention. I’ve got something to say to you.*”
 - And God was going to do something extraordinary.
 - Now think about this: Peter and John have probably passed dozens if not hundreds of beggars in their lifetime, and certainly over the ministry of being with Jesus—and they haven’t healed any of them.
 - Beyond that, they’ve probably passed *this man* on several occasions.
 - Going back and forth to the temple to pray—it was their habit.
 - So, they’ve passed him many times.
 - And we have people that are in need of Jesus that we pass many, many times as well.
 - But what’s more amazing to think about: It’s only been two months since Jesus died on the cross, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.
 - So Jesus came across this guy before.
 - This guy knows who Jesus is.
 - Jesus has passed this man many times before—but *he* didn’t heal him.
 - Isn’t that interesting?
 - That tells us something about healing and the way God operates: God is Sovereign.
 - He heals **when** he chooses to heal and **whom** he chooses to heal.
 - And again, Peter and John have certainly passed this guy before, but now God is going to do unexpected work.
 - So Peter says *Look at me! Give me your full attention.*

So, verse 5 **[Acts 3:5 NLT] [5] The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money.**

- So this man is ready to receive—thinking *I'm going to get a few coins out of this. Bring it.*
 - o And in an instant, his expectation is deflated.
 - Because look at the first words from Peter, in the following verse.

[Acts 3:6 NLT] [6] But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"

- **But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you.**
 - o *Oh great! Thanks a lot. You tell me to give you my full attention. Here's my hand. Put something in it— and nothing.*
- But Peter doesn't stop there. He says *No, no, no. We don't have money. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"*
 - o Peter recognized and understood that the man's greatest need wasn't money, or food, or housing.
 - The man's greatest need wasn't the temporal.
 - o The man's greatest need was spiritual.
 - His greatest need was Jesus.
 - o After the flooding happen on the 4th of July in Kerrville, there was tremendous needs all around.
 - People lost their lives, people lost homes and vehicles, people lost pets—everything.
 - The need was great and still is.
 - And as I sought the Lord how we can serve and minister for such a time as this, the Lord spoke to my heart reminding me that people's greatest need is Him.
 - And one thing I told my leaders is that whatever we do to serve and help, we do with reaching people with the gospel.
 - o We can feed people, give them water, build them a new house, buy them a new RV, rebuild their business—but all of that means nothing if Jesus Christ is not shared and proclaimed.
 - o Those are all good things, but we should always pursue good things with the mindset of reaching the lost and sharing the gospel.

- There's plenty of humanitarian organizations who will provide and give food, there's plenty of organizations who will provide and give clothing, but who will give and share the gospel?
 - Would to God, it would be us.
- So Peter tells him **Get up and walk!**
 - This guy is probably thinking *Really?!*
 - This man is at least forty years so save to say he's been at this gate at least a couple of decades.
 - And this man is probably thinking, *Listen, if I could get up and walk I would.*
- It's possible this man even thought that Peter and John were mocking him.
 - Yet, no doubt, this man has heard of Jesus.
 - He's probably seen Jesus.
 - Maybe Jesus has even taught in that area where he's been.
 - Most certainly he had because something begins to germinate in this man's heart.
 - There's faith that begins to quicken in this man's heart and in his belief.
 - And again, this shows us how God works unexpectedly, when it comes God's work in our lives.
 - **Have you not found that to be true in your own life—as you look back in your own life?**
 - **God was working unexpectedly.**
 - You were just living your life in the world, thinking only of yourself—because that's what we do.
 - But we're doing our own thing, then all of a sudden we have a conversation with somebody—and maybe we'd heard of Jesus before, and all of a sudden, this conversation is going a different way.
 - And all of sudden you're thinking about something you had never thought about before.
 - Or you've been constantly seeing that silent witness by a coworker you know is a Christian.
 - All of sudden a thought comes in your mind that never came their before.

- Or you hear a podcast, and you were transfixed by what was being talked about on this one occasion, and you're listening to what the preacher is saying.
 - But all of a sudden, the sovereign grace of God begins to work in your heart like never before.
- That's how it worked with all of us—every single one of us.
 - And such was the case with this man.
 - So the first thing we see here is this man's healing.
 - God's interaction with his life is totally unexpected.
- **But the second thing we need to see here is how it's done.** Peter says **In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene**
 - Anytime you see *in the name of Jesus*, it's important.
 - It has great import.
 - The name of *any* individual in the Jewish culture had great import. Always.
 - It spoke of everything they stood for—their name, their character, who they are.
 - That's why when you're reading in the Bible and you come across genealogies—it's because the name is important.
 - Why does Jesus change the names of some people?
 - Because it represents who they are.
 - And God's name is important to Him.
 - Because God's name represents who He is.
 - And there are many names in the Bible representing God.
 - So for the sake of time, we can't go through all of them.
 - If you've never does a study on the names of God in the Bible, I'd encourage you to do that on your own time.
 - There are many names used to speak of God in the Bible.
 - And so, in the Jewish culture they understood that.
 - By the way, that's why we close our prayers *in the name of Jesus*. Right?
 - Why do we do that?

- Well, when we end a prayer and we pray it, and we pray it in the name of Jesus, we're saying *Lord, all the things I've asked for and prayed, I believe this is consistent with your nature—who you are and your will.*
 - And so Peter is saying: *By virtue of who Jesus of Nazareth is—by His authority, by His power, and by His will—rise up and walk.*
- Now because we're talking about healing here, it begs the question: *Is it God's will to always heal someone?*
 - And the answer is—No. No, it's not.
 - The classic example is the Apostle Paul.
 - He wrote half of the New Testament, he was the greatest missionary the world has ever known, and yet God didn't heal him.
 - And he asked God—In many of his letters he writes of his infirmity.
 - And then in 2 Corinthians 12, he talks about it in detail.
 - Just paraphrasing he says: *I have this infirmity. I've been asking God to take this out of my life. Three times, on three occasions, I've gotten down with the Lord in prayer "God take this away, please. I can't go on." And God says "No. No. No, I'm not going to do it."*
 - And finally, Paul comes to the point in his life where he says *"Ok, will boast then in my infirmity. Because when I am weak, I realize I'm strong. I have to trust in the Lord."*
 - And that's why God allowed it.
 - And God allows that sometimes in our lives.
 - So he doesn't always take it away.
 - He didn't take it away from his friend Epaphroditus—who we read was very ill, near death—he wasn't healed.
 - Or how about Timothy—his protégé, his closest companion that he disciplined year after year after year after year—and his says to Timothy, *You need to add some wine to the water you drink so that it'll help you with your stomach problem.*
 - It's possible Paul would've prayed for Timothy and even laid hands on him, and yet God chose not to heal him.
 - But sometimes God chooses not to do that.
 - Now there are some people that still teach that today.

- I'm talking about faith and prosperity teachers.
- And they will say *The reason why a person wasn't healed is because they didn't have enough faith, or because there's sin in their life.*
 - **What a debilitating doctrine. Right?**
 - It tells us in John chapter 9 that the disciples saw a blind man, on one occasion, begging.
 - And the disciples asked Jesus in John 9:2 [John 9:2 NLT] [2] "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"
 - That same mindset was even around back then.
 - [John 9:3 NLT] [3] "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him."
 - **God wanted to use this for his glory.**
 - **And in this passage though, God does want to heal this man for his glory—to do a great work.**
 - **To not only heal him physically, but heal him spiritually.**
 - **And not only that—use it to launch the gospel in the temple area; allowing many more to be saved.**
 - And so notice verse 7.

[Acts 3:7 NLT] [7] Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened.

- **Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up.**
 - The word *took* here means *to seize*.
 - **And what I want us to notice is that Peter didn't just give the man the gospel and stop there, but he took action and helped the man up.**
 - **When you share the gospel with a coworker or friend from school, even a stranger—offer to pick them up and bring them to church.**
 - **Gift them a Bible, offer to read with them to help them understand it and grow from it.**
 - **Peter knelt to help the man up.**
 - **It's good we share the gospel, but sometimes the people we share with need to be taken by the hand and helped up.**
- **What we have here is faith meeting faith.**
 - **What do you mean?**

- Well, we know this man had faith.
 - It tells us that later on in verse 16—that faith was working in this man’s heart.
 - So this man had faith, but Peter **also** had faith.
 - You just don’t go around lifting up crippled people. Right?
 - I don’t do that.
 - I’ve never done that.
 - If someone were here in a wheelchair here today, I would never go up ask say *Hey, rise up and walk!*
 - I wouldn’t do that.
 - Why? Because God didn’t give me a gift of faith to do that.
 - And even if he gave me a gift of faith, that would be a challenge to follow through on that one. Right?
 - Which is the case for Peter.
 - You say—**What do you mean the gift of faith?**
 - Well in 1 Cor 12, it tells us that one of the gifts of the Spirit is the gift of faith.
 - And those are given to Christians.
 - It’s a gift of faith to a believer.
 - There are times—and maybe you’ve experienced that—where God has called you to do something and He says *Trust me. I want you to do this.*
 - And I can think of times in my life where I chose not to do that. And I was kinda bummed. I didn’t get to be part of what God wanted.
 - And there have been times where I’ve been obedient to do that. And you know, the cool thing is when God does something, you can’t even take credit for it because He was the one who told you to do it and gave you the faith to do it.
 - ****Share story of what God did with Nicole and the Hunt Store.**
- And that was the case with Peter.

- God was communicating to Peter's heart: *Peter, I want you to heal this man.*
 - And Peter had to follow through with obedience to do that.
 - Because that's crazy!
 - **But faith was coming together on both ends.**
- And here we go— **And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened.**
 - **Which tells us another thing about a true healing: It's instantaneous.**
 - Immediately, this man's physical problem was remedied— instantaneously.
 - One doctor commented on this passage:
 - *"After years of suffering, the powerful flexor tendons would've been distorted in the joint. A constructor would have developed and produced a malfunction of the joint, and walking and leaping would've been impossible without divine intervention."*
 - **But that's exactly what's happening here—divine intervention.**
 - And it's instantaneous.
 - A creative miracle is taking place here.
 - God instantaneously gives this man new bone, new muscles, new fibers, new tissue—all of it.

And then, I would add one other thing about this man's healing: It's absolutely complete.

What do I mean by that?

In verse 8 it tell us— **[Acts 3:8 NLT] [8] He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them.**

- **He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk!**
 - He didn't gradually crawl at first. Right?
 - Peter didn't tell him to rise up and walk and then tell the man *Ok, let's get you over to physical therapy. We have physical therapy for a few weeks. And then after that, crutches and then you'll be up and walking.*
 - He didn't gradually walk.
 - He actually leaps.

- Now think about this: Even if he was given a new foot, he would have to learn to walk.
 - He's been lame from birth so he doesn't know what it feels like to walk.
 - Think about the atrophy that would have been in his leg muscles, having never walked.
- So this man has been completely healed, which is awesome.
 - What the Lord does for this man *physically* is exactly what God does for us *spiritually*.
 - Christ takes our life that's out of joint—a life that's broken, that's atrophy and He makes it all new. A brand new beginning.
 - That's awesome.
 - So this man is completely healed.
 - And I love the fact that this man—on the same day he learns to walk physically, begins to take his first steps with the Lord spiritually.
 - And when we begin our spiritual walk with the Lord, praise God, he gives us the Holy Spirit to help us, and brothers and sisters to come alongside us in our walk.

So we see this habit, this healing, and finally, we move into the happiness—which we can understand.

The Happiness

Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them.

- So he's walking, he's leaping, and praising God.
 - I bet this guy's got a lot of joy.
 - Of course.
 - And who wouldn't?
 - His whole life, he has never walked, and God heals him.
 - So he goes from lameness to leaping—leaping for joy.
- But again, though he's healed physically—You say *How do you know he was healed spiritually? How do you know he gave his life to the Lord?*
 - I'm going to give you a few things here.

- There are three aspects that we see in His life that are true of born-again believers:

- **#1 – This man desires fellowship.**

- The first thing he does after he's healed is he goes right into the temple with Peter and John.
 - I mean, he could've been healed and just ran opposite the Temple into the world.
 - A lot of people would do that.
 - A lot of people did that when Jesus healed them.
 - Jesus healed hundreds, if not thousands of people.
 - Not everybody that Jesus healed was saved, nor did they follow him.
 - In fact, some of them came and stood against him.
- But know that this man wants to join Peter and John.
 - He wants to go into the Temple and worship.
 - **And one of the signs of someone truly being saved is that they have a desire for fellowship.**
 - This guy can't wait to fellowship with others who have a new found faith.
 - This is now a brother in Christ.
 - And true believers love to fellowship together.

- **#2 – We read here that he praised God. Again, the second half of verse 8 Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. And verse 9 tell us [Acts 3:9 NLT] [9] All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God.**

- Now, he was healed in the name of Jesus.
 - **So he's also attributing Jesus Christ to being God.**
 - That's the deity of Christ and he's praising Him.
 - He's not flippantly saying *Praise God*.
 - **NO—He's doing this on his own.**
 - **He's not coerced to do that.**
- He wants to come into the Temple with Peter and John for the sole purpose of worshipping God.

- It's important we get this: *The natural man doesn't want to do that.*
- *The natural man recoils at the thought of praising God.*
 - An unbeliever doesn't want to do it, but this man does.
 - His physical condition had been changed, but he had spiritually changed to a new man.
 - He wants to fellowship.
 - He wants to worship God.

Now, moving on in verse 10 we read— **[Acts 3:10 NLT] [10] When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded!**

- So everyone is astonished at the miracle because they all knew.
 - There was no refuting that this was a genuine miracle in this man's life.
 - No one refuted its legitimacy.
 - In fact, later on we see that Peter uses this as an opportunity—in the Temple compound—to preach Christ, and many are saved.
 - And the religious leaders are up in arms about it.
 - They're gathering together going *How do we get rid of these guys.*
 - In Acts 4:16 though, it says [Acts 4:16 NLT] [16] "What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it.
 - Isn't that awesome?
 - **Isn't it great when you can't deny what God is doing?**
 - Because this man is continuing to fellowship with the church, everybody knows he was formerly lame—it's an amazing thing.
 - It was testimony.
- **There's a third thing about this man: *We believe this man is saved because He continued.***
 - The text gives us no evidence to believe that the man ever left the church.
 - But rather, he continued to fellowship with them.
 - *How do you know if someone is saved?*
 - They continue.

- It's been said that when it comes to born-again Christians—some of them are like bottle rockets. They're quick to raise their hand on giving their life to Jesus and then you never see them again.
- *What was that?*
- Maybe just an emotional experience.
 - But if you're truly born again, you're going to hang in there with Jesus.
 - *Can you backslide?* Yes, that happens.
 - **But by and large there's the conviction of the Holy Spirit and there's a continuance.**
- This text gives no evidence that he stopped fellowshipping.
 - He fellowships with them.
 - He's praying with them.
 - He's praising with them—worshipping God.
 - And he's continuing to grow in his walk.

Now, let's look at the last verse, verse 11

[Acts 3:11 NLT] [11] They all rushed out in amazement to Solomon's Colonnade (Solomon's Colonnade was just inside the Beautiful Gate), where the man was holding tightly to Peter and John.

- So again, there's no doubt.
 - Everybody was amazed.
 - They can't believe this guy was changed.
- **The greatest miracle in someone's life is not a physical healing. (Though how wonderful that is. This man was excited, right?)**
 - **But the greatest change is a spiritual healing.**
 - **Physical healing is never God's primary focus.**
 - **God's primary focus is spiritual life—new life.**
 - Think about this: If someone gets physically healed, but they don't have a relationship with the Lord—you've got a healthy person going to hell.
 - That's not good.
 - **God wants to save people.**
 - **God's primary focus is the healing of a man's soul.**
 - Jesus put it so plainly in Mark 8:36—[Mark 8:36 NLT] [36] And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world

(He's got his health, he's got an awesome job, he's got money in the bank—great.) but lose your own soul?

- Is it worth it? No.

- The greatest thing that happens is when we give our life to Jesus Christ.

- Now here's what I like again: The people **rushed out in amazement**

- **Now have you not found that to be true of your life?**

- Are not your friends shocked and amazed that you're saved?

- Think back when you first got saved—*Were they not shocked?*
 - Sure, they were.
 - I hope they were.

- If they were never shocked then maybe there wasn't a transition that took place.

- I had friends that were shocked when they heard I wasn't going out and partying on the weekends anymore—I was instead going to church.

- And they were even more shocked when they found out I was called to ministry and became a pastor.

- So my friends were shocked as I'm sure yours were.

- But I had to make a disconnect with them.

- So it should be a shock to your friends, but it should be a shock to your family too.

- And sometimes it shocks and divides family.

- One spouse gets saved and the other doesn't, and over time it blows up because of it.

- And I've seen that happen in lives and it's tough.

- **But man—there was a change and they were amazed.**

- They were amazed at his physical change, but he had been spiritually changed.

- **And the question is: *Have you been spiritually changed? Has God saved you? Have you given your life to the Lord?***

- Look at the transition that takes place:

- **This man was born lame. He could not walk on his own.**

- And you know what, we are paralyzed by sin.

- We all sin and we come short of the glory of God, and we're paralyzed it.

- And we all know that.

- Before we're saved, we think in our minds: *Why do I do this? I don't want to do this.*
- We might be married and we go *Why do you do that? I don't know. I don't want to do it. I want to do the right thing.*
 - But we have no outlet; no ability to stop doing what we do.
 - We're paralyzed by sin.

- **The other thing we see about this man is that he was out of fellowship with God.**

- He was right at the gate, but he could go no further.
 - It wasn't until he was healed and he was able to walk and was able to go and fellowship with God and with God's people.
 - And it's the same with us.
 - Our sin ultimately keeps us out of fellowship with God.
 - You say *That's not fair. God's keeping me out of fellowship.*
 - No, no, God wants to fellowship with you.
 - But it's your sin that sets you far from God.
 - And God loves you.
 - He's a father.
 - And yet, He cannot have fellowship with us until we come to that point and say *Forgive me. I am sinner.*

- **This man was very poor.**

- He didn't have anything.
- He couldn't work so he was reduced to begging.
 - And you know what—Outside of Jesus Christ, we're reduced to spiritual bankruptcy.
 - We're not spiritually fueled.
 - We don't know that, so we try to find satisfaction in other things.
 - It might be drugs. It might be alcohol.
 - **But when we come to the Lord, it's life changing.**

- **God healed this man unexpectedly.**

- He didn't deserve it.
- I don't deserve it.
- None of us deserve it.
 - But that's how salvation works.

- It's a free gift.
 - God's grace is a gift.
 - God's gift to us is His grace.
 - Salvation—you can't earn it, can't work for it, and all you have to do is say *OK*.
 - And God is extending His hand out to you.
 - It's way better than you think you could ever want—and it's for eternity.
 - All you have to do is take hold of it.

Closing:

- So what's the answer to the question we started with *What to give?*
 - The answer is simple: Give them Jesus.
 - You say: *I don't have anything to give. Not true, because when you give them Jesus, you give them everything—everything they could ever need or want.*