

Upside Down | the character of the Jesus culture

The Power of Empty Hands

Acts 3:1-10

July 16, 2017

Review: Which of the four devotions/practices - teaching, fellowship, bread, prayer - was most significant to you?

Introduction: If you follow Jesus, you're a part of a movement. You're in with others. The movement of Jesus is about the people. Jesus invites us individually but deploys us corporately. House by house, Luke tells us, the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:46-47). It wasn't about the buildings; it was about the people. The biblical word for 'house' (oikos) meant family. Jesus added to their numbers when his followers lived like his family with one another and with their neighbors. The movement wasn't defined by their ideas or rules but by the way they lived together, by the way that Jesus lived in their shared life. The book of Acts invites us to stop coming to church and start being the church. Summer in Seattle offers a wonderful opportunity: Our neighbors are coming out of their houses. Will we welcome them into his? If we do, maybe they'll stay what the Greeks said, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also..." (Acts 17:6).

From chapter 2 we learned that "the Lord added to the number of those who were being saved." The believers were a growing family. In chapter 3 we review a miraculous encounter between Peter and John and a beggar at the temple.

Pray: Father, we ask that you would help us to continue to grow as a healing family as we look at this text. Amen.

Read: Acts 3:1-10

Discussion:

1. Peter and John were going to the temple to pray at the normal time in the afternoon. All the Jewish leaders must have passed by the beggar. What made Peter and John stop?

Under what circumstances do you stop, if ever, when someone on the street asks you for money?

2. Peter looks straight at the beggar and says, "Look at us!" Why the strong words?

What do you think Peter and John expected from the beggar in return?

Is there a risk for Peter and John in this encounter when they had no money to give?

3. Peter and John give the beggar the ability to walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. How did this encounter help to spread the message of forgiveness and healing of Jesus?

What do you have that you could give beggars and others in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth?

4. The outcome of this encounter was the beggar walking and leaping and praising God and wonder and amazement by the onlookers. What do you think Peter and John were feeling?

Have you ever been in the position of the beggar or the onlookers in the midst of a miracle?

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Application: Be alert to a miracle of healing or forgiveness this week. Remember how God desires to heal our own deepest needs as we move together as family, because he loves us.

Pray: Father, help us to understand the truth of this encounter with the beggar at the temple and the power and vulnerability of empty hands. Amen