

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Stories from Acts
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A Miracle and a Message

Acts 3:1-10

1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

How's everybody doing? (Congregation: Whoo! Great.) Awesome! Awesome! Here's a question I want to ask you out the gate. Do you have one of those friends where they are always trying new stuff? They are taking some new supplements, or they are going on some new diet. There is some new exercise that they're working out. Anybody have one of those friends? I have one of those friends. I see people pointing fingers. I've got one of those friends and he calls me, and he says, “Hey I have taken this and it changed my life. It changed my life! You have got to try it.” And I am a sucker for that testimony. Because I am like, “I want my life changed. If you have something that changed your life...” But the deal with my friend is that this happens a lot. He is always like, “Hey, a little teaspoon of apple cider vinegar.” Or like one time I had restless leg syndrome and he comes over with some oils. He said put it on the bottom of your feet. I am like, “Is this inviting evil spirits into the room? I don't want that.” (congregation laughs) So, he calls and he is like “man, this stuff changed my life. You have got to get you some.” And so, I am like, “Okay, what is it?” And he says, “Have you ever heard of Metamucil?” (Congregation laughs) People get excited about it. I am like, “I think so...my grandmother or something...what?” That is his thing and I love how excited he gets when there is something that “works” for him. He is eager to share it with everybody.

And when you think about that testimony, “Man this stuff changed my life! This changed my life.” I don't know if you have thought about this before, but that's how we (meaning Christians)

got here. That testimony was really, “Hey I met a man, and he changed my life.” That testimony went from one person to the next to the next to the next. I was like, “Hey this man. This story of this man. These people who are telling me of this man, He changed my life. He changed the trajectory of my life. He changed my desires. He changed who I hung out with; the way I dressed and the way I talked. He changed my life.

There was a guy who was the minister of the Satanic Church in South Africa, and he shared a story on Facebook that went viral. In fact, I want you to watch this. Watch this man’s story.

(Video plays on screen of the minister of the Satanic church sharing his testimony - written below).

Why did I leave and why did I resign from the South African Satanic church? Why did I turn my back on Satanism? I did this interview and after the interview this lady came to me and in this interview, I said, “I don’t believe in Jesus. And I don’t believe that Jesus Christ exists.” Because I didn’t. And she came to me after the interview, after I said that, and she hugged me. She held me in a way that I have never been loved. In our cult, there are certain rituals that you do to ascend to the top of the pyramid. You can only do a certain amount at a time. After that interview, I had a meeting with council members at the church and they said, “Great, now we have done all these interviews and people know and it is growing. Satanism is growing.” And believe me people, it is. It is growing. And I had to do a ritual by myself to see what is the next step. What is the next thing? How do I get more? More power, more influence? And I did this ritual. I opened myself up and Jesus appeared (man gets choked up). I was extremely cocky, and I said, “Whatever. If you are Jesus you need to prove it.” And he flooded me with the most beautiful love and energy. And I recognized it immediately because that woman, at the radio station, showed it to me. That is how I recognized the love of Christ.

Amen. Amen.

So, he is a minister of the Satanic Church in South Africa telling you why he is leaving the Satanic Church, as a leader in the Satanic Church. And why would that video go viral? Why would people watch that and forward it on and say, “Hey, you have to watch this! You have to see this! Hey look at this!” Because his message is very simple, Jesus changed my life. Jesus changed my life.

How many of you are here this morning and you would say that is true for you? Just by show of hands. You would say, “Hey, Jesus changed my life. Like Jesus changed my life!” You see those hands go up and you begin to understand how we get here. How one person goes to the next, to the next, to the next, to the next. It is a really simple message.

We are not talking about deep theology here. It is the reality that this man lived a perfect life; He died; He rose from the grave and there is power in that message. That when we trust in his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins, his Holy Spirit rushes into our life and changes us. He changes us!

I think we have to ask the question, why? Jesus, why did you change me? Why do you want me to live in this world in a way that is different from those you have yet to change? What should my life look like and how do I take that message and move it forward?

We are in Acts 3 today. In Acts 3, Peter and John go to the temple to worship and they see a man outside the temple begging for money and there is a miraculous healing that occurs. This is a man who could not walk and then he can walk. So today, in the message, I have the challenge of addressing miracles - miraculous healings, as well as; the call for us, the application for us to use life change as a platform to proclaim the Gospel. That life changing message that the Holy Spirit also changes hearts and that we would carry that message forward.

It is ironic that I am up here for a number of reasons. This week I was the sickest I have been as an adult coming back from Africa. So, I had a friend that was going to teach. Then Monica said, "You should tell them that you have been miraculously healed." And I said, I don't know. I don't know if it has just served its time, but all I know is that I am up here. I was in bed for three days prior to being up here. That is what I know. And if Jesus changed your life, we should tell someone about it. We should tell people that he changed our lives.

So let me recap Acts. Chapter 1 - Jesus says, "Hey the Holy Spirit is going to come to the earth." Then in Acts Chapter 2 - He does. There are these men, and they are preaching and there are people there that speak different languages, but they all understand them. This is a miracle! The Holy Spirit is taking this message of Jesus Christ and he is not letting anything prevent it from going forward, including a language barrier. And Peter boldly declares the Gospel right there, for the first time. It says that 3,000 people are added to the church. So that is the number of people that gather here (at Harris Creek). It would be like if Harris Creek was the only church on the planet earth. That is what is happening in Acts right now. Nate gave a great message on Pentecost. Then Dale last week had us pull up and look into the window of the first church and see what is happening there. He says what marks this place is their devotion, their generosity, and their commitment to evangelism - them being evangelistic. He kind of showed us this picture of the church just caring for one another; gathering and being devoted to the apostle's teaching and the breaking of the bread.

Then this week, we are going to move into Peter and John going to the temple. I want to say this to set-up this text. It is interesting because in the Jewish tradition you would do a sacrifice in the morning, a sacrifice in the evening, and at 3 p.m. every day you would go into the temple to worship. But they are Christians now - Peter and John - but they are continuing in this Jewish tradition. It is not like they just put all of that tradition behind them, and do it different now. They are just continuing to worship God faithfully. They are doing what they know to do faithfully. That is where we pick up in this text. I will just read it all to you first before we teach it. As I do, remember Dale's outline - devoted, generous, and evangelistic. You are going to see that carried out in this text. Let me show you.

Acts 3:1, "One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter

looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

They are going to the temple to worship like they did everyday as an act of devotion. They see a man asking for something and they give him even more than what he is asking for as an act of generosity. And then what is going to happen next, the crowds gather, and Peter says, “Hey guys, since I have your attention let me share the Gospel with you as an act of evangelism.” You see that outline laid over this text as well.

So, let’s just break it down. As we do, we are going to look at opportunities for life change; our role in life change; and why miracles occur. It says, **“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.”** The gate called Beautiful was a bronze gate. It was the most ornate of the three gates. It was also a shortcut into the temple courts. This is the gate that you would enter into with your tithes and your alms. Tithes was a practice where you would give some of your income to the work of God. We still practice this today - that you would be generous with a portion of God’s money that He entrusts to you and that you would give that to His work. But it was also a practice that they would give what was called alms. Alms was money specifically for the poor, for those who could not work for themselves or provide for themselves. This was the gate that they would enter into with that money and so this man is just being opportunistic, right? This would be like if somebody was sitting under the giving boxes back there - and we were on a cash basis here at Harris Creek - and they were just laying right under those giving boxes saying, “Hey as you give to the Lord, might you also give some to me so that I can eat?” This is where that man is sitting.

So, these guys, as I told you, they are not going into the mall kind of looking for someone to heal. They are not seeking out a miracle. They are just going in their ordinary, obedient ways and God has someone in their path and they are faithful with that person. So, my first point from the text is:

1. Opportunities open out of ordinary obedience.

Opportunities open out of ordinary obedience. I was going to say, opportunities open out of our ordinary obedience, but that would be seven “o’s” which would be a new world record and I didn’t want to mess with that (congregation laughs). So, quite the alliteration, but opportunities open out of ordinary obedience.

It is a supernatural miracle that occurs out of ordinary faithful worship and discipline. It is like what Jesus says to the church in Philadelphia in Revelation 3. He says, **you have kept my word and not denied my name and so I have opened doors for you.** It is like what Paul prays **and pray that we would be faithful and that doors would open for our message out of our faithfulness.** These guys are just going along the way. They are not asking God for a sign; they just see someone who is in need. And by the power of the Spirit of God, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, they meet the need, for the fame and the renown and the glory of Jesus Christ.

You may be like, “Oh it is just one of the healings in scriptures.” No, this healing, this is a major pivot in the text. This is how you got here. This is a healing where the Gospel explodes. We are going to see that about 12,000 people come to faith in Jesus Christ through this healing - just in this moment. I mean the church grows exponentially because of what the Holy Spirit does in and through this man.

Jesus tells us not to ask for a sign. He says that a wicked generation asks for a sign in Matthew 12 and Matthew 16. And so, we are just operating in faithfulness. We are looking for where we can be faithful.

My daughter and I just got back from Zambia. We were there on a mission trip where I had eleven 9-year-old guys (roughly 9-year-old) and she had eleven 9-year-old girls. We were leading camp and sharing the Gospel with them. If they then placed faith in Jesus, then we were teaching them to share the Gospel with their family and classmates. On the trip she (my daughter) said something that people often have said to me on these kinds of trips. She says, “Dad, I just wish I understood the culture better.” So, in a different culture, she had to wear what was called a chitenge - which is a skirt - to be respectful. In the culture there was a particular dress code. There were words that we could not say; for example, it was inappropriate to say, “Hey, I like your pants.” Pants means underwear there and so we created some awkward conversations when we said that. She was like, “Hey, I like your pants.” And this guy started blushing and we didn’t know why. Another example is saying silly. We were with kids and so it was like, “Oh, you are acting silly.” That means something different there. That is quite the insult, so we had to learn the culture.

She said, “Dad, I wish I understood the culture better.” And she said, “I wish that I could speak the language.” Everywhere we went we would have to have these interpreters with us. Sometimes, the interpreter would leave us for a minute to run to the restroom, or to get lunch and you feel rather helpless during those times. It is like, we don’t speak the language of these 9-year-olds and it is hard to gather everyone. “Hey guys, gather around.” (JP is waving his arms in a gathering motion.) They are doing this too. You are like, “No, no, in a circle.” And they are like “Ah yeah circle” (continually waving arms in circular motion.) Then they run off and you are like, “Come back!” And they are like, “Are you saying run away?” So, there is just this language barrier. And she is like, “Dad, I wish it wasn’t so hard. I love this country so much. God loves these people so much. I wish it wasn’t so hard to get here.” And I hear this all the time on these trips. And I am like, “Well guess what? We are going to a place where we understand the culture, we speak the language, and we are there every day.” In our normal faithfulness.

So, we get on the flight home, we are on the 16th hour leg. It is me on the aisle, Presley in the middle, and then this 17-year-old young man from Dallas on the other side of her. And he begins to hit on her and I am contemplating hitting him (congregation laughs). No! I am thinking he doesn't have a chance. He doesn't have a chance of not hearing the Gospel. There is just no way. We are here 16 hours, you are stuck. You have to get past both of us, you know. So, I am like "Presley, how do you want to do it? Do you want the bridge illustration? You want me to grab the EvangiCube, it is in my bag up there? Like where do we want to go with this?"

This was not like an opportunity that we had to go find. So, if you are here and you are like, "I just don't have those opportunities." Take a deep breath and know that God is going to lay them before you. Ask Him for eyes to see them and to be faithful in the midst of them. Give yourself a break. He is not mad at you. I am confident He is not mad at you, and He is not disappointed in you. You did not catch him off guard with a lack of courage. He is not thrown for a loop by that. He is just saying, as you leave here, I want you to open your eyes and look for those opportunities as you are just being faithful.

So, Peter and John, they are going up there to the temple to worship. They are hit up by this lame beggar. Verse 3, **When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.**

What a scene! A couple of observations from the text. The apostles are not rich. There are entire denominations that teach that these men who followed Jesus the closest were very wealthy. He says, "Hey we don't have money. We don't have money, but we can give you something more than what you are asking for." This is a miraculous healing. There are nerve endings sending signals to muscles and tendons that have atrophied over time, that are forming and strengthening. And this man is standing up for the very first time in his life and he is testing his new legs and he begins to leap, fist pump the air, and worship. So, we have to deal with this.

There are, what I respectfully/humbly would say are, two heresies that surround the topic of healing. One of them is that God desires everyone to be healed and so if you are not healed you are doing something wrong. I don't believe that! The other one, equally dangerous, maybe more dangerous; God no longer works in that way and doesn't heal people like that today. I don't believe that is true! What I do believe is true is that God does heal people and the healings that I see in the Scripture, the miracles that I see in the Scripture are for the purpose of making way for a greater healing, which is the one of our hearts. So, He may heal legs to heal someone's heart. What God desires is not just to prolong our life on earth, but to offer us eternal life with Him. Not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to eternal life in Jesus.

This man is expecting one thing, but they give him more than he even knows to ask for. Let me show you something. This guy is outside of the temple, right? He is begging outside the temple. There are commentaries that would say that this man has probably never been inside the temple courts. In 2 Samuel 5:8 it says that **the blind and the lame are not allowed inside the temple.**

There is some disagreement around this, but there is a good chance that this man has never been inside the temple. So, his entire life, the closest he has ever come to inside the temple is standing at this gate and begging for money. This is his lot. He is healed. And where does he go immediately? Where does he go? He goes inside. He goes inside.

He is outside his whole life. He has an interaction with the Holy Spirit, and he is inside. This is us, the church. We meet people outside the church, we meet them where they are, we assess their needs, we meet their needs, and we bring them inside the church. “Hey, come in with me and praise the God who allowed your needs to be met. I am just the vessel. Don’t look at me/her/him, it is the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, that is who has met your need. He changed my life.” My second point,

2. *The Gospel gives generously.*

The gospel gives generously. He is asking for change, and he gets life change. He is asking for money, and he gets more than he knows what to ask for. Now, in the moment, as you interact with somebody you may need to meet their physical need first before they can hear you or have you meet their spiritual need. But you need to know that if you raise your hand and you say that Jesus changed my life then you have something to offer them that might be, or most likely will be, greater than they know what to ask you for. They might ask you for money, a sandwich, some gas, a bus ticket, and you have something that is even greater than they know what to ask you for. If someone is thirsty then by all means give them a drink, but if their soul is a desert and we do not even attempt to quench that thirst, then we have done them a disservice. I want to be abundantly clear; we should meet the physical needs of people. We should assess their needs and we should meet their need, but we must also attach it to their spiritual need. Understand that they are going to live on and their soul will be somewhere forever and ever, so we meet their spiritual need as well.

What is strange about this story, for me personally, is that I lived it. In a weird way, I am in Israel, and I am walking from the Mount of Olives toward the temple, toward the gate called Beautiful and there on the side of the road is a lame person (a person who cannot walk) begging for money. I am with another pastor friend at the time, and we know the story, and I just said, “Are you going to tell him to get up and walk?”. He responded appropriately, “I will if God wants me to.” When he said that; “I will if God wants me to”, somebody had just walked by this man without making eye contact and dropped a dollar in his proximity. So, they just walked by and dropped a dollar. My friend said, “You know, I am confident he doesn’t want me to do just that.” This struck a conversation between us about our need to slow down.

It is a convicting word for me. Because I look at my own life, and I can be so given to pragmatism at times. Like, “Okay, what is going on with this broken...go this...do this...say this...turn there...turn here. You will be fine. Here is a prescription, you are fine.” We have to slow down. I need to slow down. To look at a situation and say, “Okay Lord, what is it that you want to do here?” It is so easy for me to go grab a dollar and just give the minimum and move on. Even though I don’t know what is going on, I ask “how would you most have me, or best have me, love this person?” It is going to take time. So, we slow down. We assess the need. We meet the need. We understand that the greatest healing that can happen for someone is the Holy Spirit healing their heart and the method that God seems to desire to do that through is by us

sharing that message. He may use a miracle to authenticate the message, or He may not, but the greatest miracle that we can witness is someone saying, “Oh, wow. I was the leader of the Satanic Church, and I didn’t believe there was Jesus, but now I am going to follow Him.” That is a miracle. It is the greatest miracle when someone does that.

It says in verse 9, **When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them...** There are all these people just flooding in like, “Woah! Woah! That is the guy. He is standing! He is walking! That guy has never stood! And Peter says, **“Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.** And he begins to preach the Gospel.

He says, “Okay, now that I have your attention...yeah, yeah, yeah that is the guy...yes, the lame beggar. He is walking, leaping, praising God and let me tell you why. Don’t look at me or John like it was us. It was Jesus. You remember Jesus, right? You killed Him. Yup, yeah that Jesus. Yep, yep. No, He is not dead. Turns out He came back to life.” And he starts preaching the Gospel.

3. Miracles make way for the message.

Miracles make way for the message. It says with wonder and amazement people watched on. Another word that might summarize wonder and amazement is worship. They worshiped. They see this guy and they began to worship. And if you are following along it says that as Peter preaches the Gospel, he is going to have two opportunities born directly from this healing. It says over 5,000 men believed (so more than 10,000 people when you add in women and children). Which means probably close to 12 or 15 thousand people, have now been added to the church because of this miracle. This man goes from being lame his whole life to leaping. And God didn’t heal this man to simply heal this man; He healed this man to heal the hearts of many.

We are four chapters into Acts. We move into Acts 4 and Peter is arrested. There are three sermons that have been preached by Peter and they have all relatively been the same sermon. So let me show you, I am going to back up to Acts 2 - Pentecost. Peter is preaching, this is what he says. This is to the crowd at Pentecost; **This man Jesus was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.**

Now they go to the temple, they see a lame beggar, they tell him to get up and walk, and he does, praising God. And now there are all these onlookers watching on and he says this, second sermon. **You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It**

is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

The Sanhedrin catch word that all of these Jews are converting to Christianity and following Jesus. So, they come and take Peter and John, and now he is given a new audience. This is Peter to the Sanhedrin, third sermon. **If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel; It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.**

Three sermons; one message. Jesus died and came back to life. He changes lives. Jesus died and came back to life. You trust in Him, and He will change your life. He changes lives.

There is this thing that happens in the church, like I imagine some of you, you think, "Yeah, but what if I was raised in the church? Like what if my testimony is I was born to two faithful parents who loved me and took me to church. I trusted in the Gospel when I was young, and I followed Him." I want to say to you that is my favorite testimony. It is such a beautiful testimony. It is the testimony that I pray that my children have. It is not my testimony, but it is the testimony that I want for my kids. That they would just see something in God that they desire, and they would want to follow Him faithfully. That is amazing!

Be careful, because we can become bored with the extraordinary. We can become resentful in those bigger stories of life change. What I would commend to you is to thank God for the ways that He has preserved your faith. Celebrate faithfully with joy and zeal when He changes someone's life. You don't want to grow into the older brother. You don't want your heart to grow hardened or just to become skeptical/cynical of the more miraculous works of God that I believe He still does to this day. If you have witnessed a miracle, God was seeking to save you or someone else. So, make sure you are cognizant. I am fairly confident that if you have witnessed a miracle or you do witness a miracle, God is wanting to change the heart of you or someone around you. So, be asking the question, "Why? Why God? What is it that you are wanting to do?"

In summary opportunities open out of our obedience; the Gospel gives generously; and miracles make way for the message.

I have been in bed all week. Fever all week. Just some crazy, Satanic flu from Zambia got me and took me out. So, Thursday I go and I sit on my front porch. It was the first time I'd been out of bed, and I said, "Lord, I'd love to teach Sunday. I would love to teach Sunday. It seems like I am turning a corner. Should I God?" I am just wrestling. Should I teach? I say this, not trying to test God or looking for a sign or anything. I am just talking to God. "If I am going to teach, I am going to need you to help me with a closing illustration because I do not have one even though, I had been reading the text while I was sick". When I say this my street is quiet, I just hear the birds chirping. Then all of a sudden, I just hear this blood curdling yell for help. "HELP!! HELP!! HELP!!" and I am like, "What in the world?" I didn't mean like that. Like, careful what you pray for right?

I look across the cul-de-sac and there is this older gentleman laying underneath a car. I am thinking he got run over. I think about what I am going to walk up on. I am scared of what I am about to see, but my adrenaline is pumping. He is still yelling for help and so I run over there. I get there and he is lying in this pool of blood. I am just overwhelmed by this situation. As I approach, he says, "Who is there?" I respond, "I am here. You are going to be okay. I am your neighbor. Is anybody home?" He says, "No". So, I run into his house, "Is anybody here?". I grab a towel because his head is just completely ripped open, so I put the towel on his head. We get him up and we get in my truck. Nobody else is there and so I take him to the emergency room. When we get out, he is semi-coherent. He doesn't know what year it is, so I take a minute and I explain what happened. The doctors ask, "Do you have his medical records?" I say, "I don't have his medical records." I go on his phone, and I call his wife so now she is coming to the emergency room. We are in the emergency room, and I find out he has a long list of health problems going on, so it just seems like this really hopeless situation. I am sitting there praying, "Lord you have to move here. Would you save this man's life? Would you help him?" Doctors are coming in and out and asking lots of questions that neither of us know the answers to. When it finally calms down a little bit, we are left in there feeling rather hopeless.

I decide to say to my neighbor, "Sir, I have to ask you two questions. Everybody else is asking you questions, I am sorry that I am going to add two to them. Between 1 and 10 - 10 being certain and 1 being not so sure - if you died today how certain are you that you would go to heaven?" He says, "I am certain. I am 100% certain. I am a 10." Then I say, "The second question is if you stood before God and he said why should I let you in, what would you say?" He replies, "Because Jesus changed my life. Because Jesus changed my life." Now this really hopeless situation, in one second, became such a hopeful situation. Hope just flooded in that room and this man, with all of these health issues, was just like, "Hey man, this is as bad as it is ever going to be. It is up and to the right from here." Then I say, "I don't know where all this goes and I don't know what turns lie ahead, but I know you have got something really great to look forward to. This will be a fun little reunion we have up there one day. Remember you were yelling, and I was across the street all hyperventilating and whatnot. And yeah..."

Anybody need healing? Like you are at this place right now? I am not trying to be weird, but you just got something going on and you are like, "Man I would love for God to heal me. I have got something physical going on." Anybody at that place? I see you back there, you right here. Anybody else? Just raise your hand high if you don't mind. It is okay. We love you and there are a lot of us who have been there. Everyone has been sick. I am not trying to be weird or anything right now and know we are Baptist, but would you stand up? If you just raised your hand, would you stand up? Thank you. I am going to need some people to take the lead around them, but would you just put a hand on them? Again, I am not trying to be strange or anything but just lay a hand on a back, on a shoulder. Just to say, "Hey, we are here. You are not alone. The body of Christ is around you." Feel free to put your hand on somebody else if you want. There is no magic here. This isn't about me. I don't know what God wants to do; I have no idea. I am just trying to be faithful to His word.

So, I am just going to pray.

Father, there is so much pain in the world. There are so many overwhelming situations. It is not as you originally intended. I know there is brokenness and there is bitterness. I have no idea

these friends' ailments, their sickness, I don't know if it is bones that need to be repaired or brains that need to be repaired or our nervous system or what, but I know that we stand in faith. We just ask for your Holy Spirit to rush in and heal them. Would you heal them? God, please would you restore their health to them? Would you make them whole? If there is a suffering that you desire us to steward, I don't say this as an add-on or a statement of a lack of faith, but if there is a suffering that you desire us to steward would you help us to steward it well? In a way that is faithful and glorifying to you. If there is anyone right now just wrestling with the guilt of not standing or needing healing, I just pray that you would heal that guilt. That you would prevent the enemy from speaking that over them and just heal them even as they sit there. That we would experience that and that it would not be something that I would get the credit for or that someone near them praying for them would get the credit for. That it would just be something that Jesus Christ of Nazareth gets all the credit. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All the credit, all the glory is yours. Would you edify our faith and edify our church in this way? Would you heal us where we are broken and restore us where we need it? Hear us God, we trust you. We trust you and we thank you for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ.

Amen