



First Baptist Church Selmer

SALT & LIGHT • "GIVE WHAT YOU'VE GOT!" • ACTS 3:1-10 • 10/17/2021

MAIN POINT

God places needs around us while also giving us the divine resources to meet them. God is glorified when we are willing to be used by Him to meet those needs.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is your attitude toward the words “luck” and “chance meeting”?

When has a “chance” encounter changed your life?

As a follower of Christ, I hesitate to call the encounters I have with people mere “chance” meetings. These unplanned intersections can be “divine appointments”—opportunities that can change the direction of a life. In Acts 3, Peter and John took advantage of just such an unplanned meeting to do something incredible for God.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 3:1-4.

How does this passage demonstrate that individuals matter to God?

Peter and John chose a busy intersection in Jerusalem. Three o'clock in the afternoon was one of the times designated daily for prayer; it was also the time for one of the two daily sacrifices. Therefore, it was a busy time at the temple with large crowds coming to pray and offer

sacrifices. Peter and John likely chose this crowded time and place as a forum to share the gospel.

Before they started, Peter and John saw a disabled man begging from those who passed. This was similar to scenes we might see in urban America today. However, more times than not, we walk on trying to avoid eye contact.

What do Peter and John's actions toward the lame man say about their priorities?

How can we get better at noticing the opportunities God gives us to love others?

Thanks to the willingness of Peter and John to turn a divine interruption into an unstoppable opportunity, this man's life was about to change. Forever.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 3:5-8.

What did Peter offer the lame man?

How was what Peter gave to the man much better than silver or gold?

How did Peter and John take a chance, physical meeting with someone and turn it into a divine appointment?

Peter and John didn't rationalize the way many people do when accosted by panhandlers: "I don't have any money." "Someone else will help." "He'll always be here begging." "His relatives should provide for him." "He should get a job." Instead, Peter and John saw someone in need and viewed his need as an opportunity God had placed in their path.

When have you seen Jesus make a dramatic difference in someone's life?

Take note that Peter and John gave what they had. God always supplies what we need to do His work; otherwise, He wouldn't have brought us to that intersection. Even when we feel ill-equipped, we can take a step of faith. Additionally, Peter and John relied fully on Jesus. The apostles themselves didn't have the power to heal; Jesus did. When they said, "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk," they were acknowledging and evoking the authority of the Holy Spirit to heal.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 3:9-10.

What was the lame man's first response when he was healed? How did he give glory to God?

The crowd responded with awe and astonishment. And why not? The man had been lame since birth. When a man has been unable to stand or walk for “over 40 years” (4:22), he just doesn’t suddenly get better. So when the crowd saw this man standing, walking, and even leaping and praising God, it rightly got their attention!

If you read the rest of Acts 3, you’ll see Peter grabbed this opportunity to talk about Jesus to all those who had come to the temple to worship. One opportunity to talk to one man about Jesus led to another opportunity. As a result, the number of the men alone who believed swelled to about 5,000 (see 4:4). It’s the ripple effect: one opportunity leads to another. You never know the power of one seemingly small encounter with a random person. Even when we feel inadequate, God has a way of multiplying encounters with others—we just have to be obedient.

How is this story one of obedience?

How have you been affected personally by others’ obedience to Christ?

Share of a time when you were obedient to the Holy Spirit’s prompting and He blessed a “chance encounter” with another person.

How can we make room now so we can say “yes” to future opportunities to serve?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Note that Peter and John were not on a missions trip; they were traveling to a place they regularly attended. How, then, are you relying on the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you in your day-to-day routine and encounters with others?

How will you respond to the call to obey when the Holy Spirit prompts you to help or share with someone?

How can you and/or your group use commonly populated places to create intersections with those in your community?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God that He cares about the whole person—physical and spiritual. Pray for any specific healing needs your group may have. Pray that God would impress upon you and your group members’ hearts to get involved in the needs of others. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a spirit of bravery and obedience to respond to His promptings, wherever you are!

COMMENTARY

| ACTS 3:1-10

3:1. One day Peter and John were going up to the temple. The account does not indicate how soon after Pentecost this event took place. The imperfect tense indicates this was a daily, on-going action. The Jews observed three special hours for prayer: 9 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m. Many people came to the temple courts to pray at those times. Evidently, the early Jerusalem disciples continued to observe these prayer times. Their purpose, in addition to prayer, may have been to witness to the large crowds present in the temple during those hours. In the early part of Acts, Peter and John often are found together (3:1,4,11; 4:13,19; 8:14). Typically, Peter did the speaking while John remained in the background.

3:2. As Peter and John made their way to the temple, they passed by a man crippled from birth who was sitting at the temple gate called Beautiful, the precise location of which is uncertain. The man was carried there each day to beg from those going into the temple courts. His very existence depended upon the donations of concerned people.

3:3. As Peter and John approached the gate and prepared to enter the temple, the man saw them. The word translated saw also can mean perceived. Perhaps the man noticed something about Peter and John that made them stand out from others entering and leaving the temple. At any rate, he asked them for money. Over and over each day the man asked for benevolent donations. Usually, donors would simply flip a coin in the man's direction, hardly even noticing him.

3:4. Having stopped immediately, Peter and John looked straight at him. The Greek verb literally means gazed. The two disciples could have passed the man many times before, seeing a beggar rather than a person who was begging. At this point, both of them fixed their total attention on this man. Evidently, the beggar avoided eye contact with the people from whom he begged. Peter commanded—Look at us!

3:5. Possibly expecting an unusually large donation, the man gave them his attention. What he expected to get from them, however, was far from what he actually received. God was preparing him to receive a blessing far greater than he had dreamed.

3:6. After getting the man's undivided attention, Peter said to him, Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. Those words dashed the man's hope for a significant sum of money. Maybe he thought Peter and John were about to share some food with him. During Jesus'

earthly ministry, He performed many acts of healing. When Peter declared, In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk, he was declaring Jesus' power to continue healing.

3:7. We can describe what happened next only as a healing miracle. Peter took the man by the right hand and helped him up. At this point the man needed some encouragement. He never had walked, and Peter had called him to take a literal step of faith. Peter understood this, so he reached out and took the man's hand in an encouraging gesture. When he did, immediately the man felt a surge of strength flow into his feet and ankles. The word translated became strong literally means made firm. The man experienced a stability he never before had felt.

3:8. Jumping to his feet, the man began to walk, moving with Peter and John into the temple. Before this day the man had sat at the entrance to the place of worship, but he could not enter. Physically impaired, he could not gain access to the temple (Lev. 21:17-20). Having been physically healed, he could enter the house of worship. The man entered the temple walking and jumping, and praising God. The Greek word translated jumping is used in the Greek translation of Isaiah 35:6, referring to the messianic age: "Then will the lame leap like a deer." His jumping validated that the messianic age had dawned with Jesus' coming. The man also praised God. He recognized God had acted in his life, and he wanted to give God the glory.

3:9. All the people in the temple observed the man's actions. How could they not see him? Any of us would notice someone entering God's house jumping and praising the Lord. God had touched his life profoundly, and he worshiped the Lord with great joy.

3:10. The people recognized him as the beggar who always was sitting at the temple gate. They were filled with wonder and amazement. As a result they ran toward the man, seeking to understand how this had come to be. More important the people's gathering together provided Peter another opportunity to preach Jesus. Genuine miracles always point people to Christ and the necessity for personal faith in Him.