

Day 31, Acts 3

by David Servant

The Holy Spirit's power is essential for proclaiming the gospel and making disciples of all nations.

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Repentance"

Description

David Servant preaches on the miraculous healing of the crippled man at the Beautiful Gate, emphasizing that it was not Peter's ordinary faith but a special anointing by the Holy Spirit that led to the healing. This miracle served to attract listeners to hear Peter preach the gospel, resulting in thousands coming to believe in Jesus. Peter's sermon focused on repentance, forgiveness of sins through Jesus, and God's desire to bless all people groups through His Son.

Transcript

He asked for alms, but got legs! This healing of the crippled man at the Beautiful Gate didn't occur because of Peter's faith. That is, Peter didn't see the crippled man and say to himself, "I'm going to have faith for that man to be healed, and so I'll lift him up and tell him to walk!" If that had been the case, Peter would have healed many others besides this one man. Rather, the crippled man was healed because Peter was suddenly anointed by the Holy Spirit with a special gift of faith (3:16) and a gift of healing (see 1 Cor. 12:1-11). It takes more than ordinary faith to seize a crippled person by the arm, lift him up, and expect him to stand and walk. If you don't believe me, try it sometime and see what happens!

The miracle occurred not only for the crippled man's sake, but also for the benefit of everyone who would be attracted to hear Peter preach the gospel. Those who are called as apostles and evangelists today should expect that God will miraculously use them in order to attract listeners to hear the gospel. As a result of one miracle and one sermon, 5,000 men came to believe in Jesus, not counting the women and children (Acts 4:4). At this point in the church's history, the Jerusalem church had at least 8,120 members, and it was only a few days old. And it was all due to the demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power. As I've previously said, if we removed the miracles and their effects from the book of Acts, there would be no book of Acts. Oh how we need the Holy Spirit's power!

Peter's sermon is a good example of how the gospel should always be proclaimed. He spoke of his audience's guilt before God (3:13-15, 19, 26) and of God's wrath (3:23). He told them about Christ's crucifixion, sufferings and resurrection (3:15, 18, 26). Also notice that Peter invited no one to "accept Christ" or "invite Jesus into their hearts," but rather told his listeners to repent because God wanted them to turn from their "wicked ways" (3:19, 26). If they would, they would be blessed, according to Peter. The

chief benefit of believing in Jesus was not gaining better self-esteem or more material possessions, but receiving forgiveness of sins (3:19). How the gospel has been altered today!

Peter concluded with a quotation from Genesis in which God told Abraham that in his seed all the families (tribes or culture groups) of the earth would be blessed. We know, of course, that the seed was Jesus (see Gal. 3:16). God desires to bless every tongue, tribe and people group in the world through His Son. In Revelation 5:9 we read of a future scene in heaven where the Lord will be worshipped with a new song: "Worthy art Thou...for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Thus we see that God's plan from the time of Abraham was to purchase people from every people group on the earth, and according to Revelation 5:9, God's plan will succeed.

Some ethnologists estimate that, although there are about 200 nations in the world today, there are about 16,000 different culture groups. As of this writing (late 2008), there are at least 6,000 people groups who have no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize them, and those people groups make up 40% of the world's population. For example, there is not a single known Christian among the 55 million Yadava people in India. They are an unreached people group.

Imagine living in a place where most of the people have never heard anything about Jesus, where it is next to impossible to find a Bible, where no Christians live. Jesus wants us to make disciples of all the nations, or literally, among every people group in the world. The task is still before us! For more information about the world's unreached people groups, visit JoshuaProject.net.

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