

May 14, 2023

“Jumping for Joy”
Lesson 3

Acts 3:1-11

Intro

In Acts chapter 2, there were “many signs and wonders performed by the apostles” (2:43). These miracles brought healing to many, but their primary purpose was to confirm the truth of the gospel message. Jesus Christ was the Son of God, come to earth to die as a ransom payment for the sins of humanity. Peter and John use their Holy-Spirit given gifts in this way and for this reason in today’s passage.

Read Acts 3:1-11

1. vs. 1: Peter and John go to the temple to pray, specifically at 3 in the afternoon
 - Jews prayed at three specific times during the day
 - Early morning, when the priests made the sacrifices
 - Mid-afternoon
 - At sunset
 - Peter and John grew up in the practices of the Jewish faith
 - Though they are now Christians, they maintain many of these practices

2. vs. 2: Information is given here about a lame man
 - He has been lame from birth, not as a result of some accident
 - He has people who care for him, carrying him to the Beautiful gate
 - He seems to have standing; he is put in the same place every day apparently
 - The gate where he is near is a high-traffic area, increasing his chances for receiving

3. vs. 3: This man asks Peter and John for money when he sees them
 - The word for money is sometimes translated as “alms”
 - This refers to money specifically given to the poor and needy
 - It also carries the implication that one is duty-driven to help
 - Peter and John have no doubt seen this man before, perhaps even daily

4. vs. 4-5: Peter looked “straight at him”
 - He gives the man his full, undivided attention
 - He tells the man, “Look at us!”
 - He wants the man to give them his full, undivided attention as well
 - The man does so, “expecting to get something” says the text

5. vs. 6: Peter tells the man he has no coins to give him—“no silver or gold”
 - To not give alms is failing to meet at least the spirit of the law
 - God’s people are called to care for those in need (Deut. 26:12)
 - But Peter then says he will give him something else—“what I do have”
 - Instead of coins, he gives the man the ability to walk again! (for the first time!)
 - Peter correctly gives the source of this miracle—Jesus Christ of Nazareth

6. vs. 7: Peter helps him stand and “instantly” he has physical strength in his feet and ankles
The man has been lame since birth—his feet and ankles have never done this before
The text says Peter lifted him “by the right hand”

This detail indicates an eyewitness account

The right hand is indicative of honor and fellowship

In our society, we shake hands with the right hand

Note that he was restored to health “instantly”

This indicates God’s miraculous power

This wouldn’t have happened any other way

7. vs. 8: His first actions are amazing—walking and jumping

Babies take a long time learning to walk

Adults with traumatic injuries can take a long time re-learning how to walk

This man has never walked before, but now he not only walks, but jumps

This is advanced-level; his body knows what to do to a high degree

Additionally, beyond walking, he is praising God

Peter told him who was responsible for the miracle

The man accepts that and offers praise to the One who deserves it

Only one of the healed lepers offered thanks to Jesus

This man does what is right before God

8. vs. 9-10: In these verses, the people recognize this man

They note that he was the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate

The phrase says “the same man”

There is no doubt that this man who couldn’t walk was healed

They are “filled with wonder and amazement”

Unusual events should produce this reaction when it’s God’s doing

The people are in the temple courts to honor God

Their wonder and amazement must be in what God has done

9. vs. 11: The healed man “held on to Peter and John”

He wants to stay connected to the ones who brought healing to him

Meanwhile, all the people who were in the temple courts come to the three men

They come running and the text says they are “astonished”

Priests serving in the inner courts could not be disabled (Lev. 21:17-23)

It is not certain whether a worshipper who was disabled could enter these courts

If they could not, this man is here for the first time!

His first action upon being healed is to enter the temple courtyards

He has sat outside the walls at the Beautiful gate always

Now he is able to walk into the courtyards and praise God

Application: Over half of Jesus’ miracles involved people who were sick, blind, mute, deaf, or some other kind of physical disability. This doesn’t count the verses where he says Jesus “healed many”. The word frequently used to describe Jesus’ attitude and action toward those with physical challenges is “compassion”.

Peter and John's care for the man in today's passage gained the attention of others who were then eager to hear what they had to say. As with all of both Jesus' miracles and those of the apostles, that was the point of the miracles done—for people to see God and to be willing to hear about Him. That is to be our practice as well. The care we take, the compassion we show, to those who have physical challenges and needs should make the gospel message more inviting and attractive to them so they too can have eternal life.

Prayer: Father God, help our hearts and our actions to be toward serving those who have needs. Help us not to focus on the actions themselves, but on our obedience to Jesus to share the gospel after we have prepared the way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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