

Acts 3

Verse 1

a. When was the time that Peter and John had set aside for praying?

Peter and John went to the temple in Jerusalem to pray at 3 pm in the afternoon. (The ninth hour is the equivalent of nine hours after sun rise which was at 6 am.)

b. Have you set aside time for prayer?

If we don't set aside time for prayer we cannot expect God to do miracles in our life. The Christian life is a life of dependancy on God and the evidence and deployment of the power of the Holy Spirit is in direct response to our prayers. We communicate our desires and concerns to God in prayer.

Verse 2

a. What did this lame man do for a living? How do you think he felt about his condition?

He was lame so he could not hold a job. His condition was bad enough that he had to be carried and was laid at the gate so that means that it was impossible for him to sit or stand. To beg for a living always carries a stigma so he probably was frustrated not being able to work at a normal job. People often look down on people who are begging and usually have some sympathy for a person in that condition.

b. How do you think you would feel if you had to do that especially in light of the fact that there were no welfare or public assistance programs?

Most people would feel that begging is demeaning but starving to death is the other option especially back then. Today some human traffickers exploit people with handicaps or unable to find work and often abuse them.

c. Do you know anyone who has a handicap and cannot work? What could you do to help that person?

There are physical and emotionally handicapped people. Others are socially isolated and need friendships. If you do not have anyone in your circle of friends that need help you have isolated yourself and need to get out and help others. Many agencies who help people are looking for volunteers, so if you call them and they turn you down move on to another. Your church should be involved in some way helping others.

Verse 3

What did the man do when he saw Peter and John?

He asked Peter and John for alms. Alms is another word for money, food or other donations given to the poor.

Verse 4

How did Peter respond to the request?

Peter looked at him and requested that the lame man pay attention to them. People who are forced to beg often do not feel good about themselves so they do not make eye contact. When you are ignored by others time after time, requesting help, you feel helpless and hopeless. By talking to the man Peter changed the dynamic of what was normal in these relationships.

Verse 5

a. Why did the man pay attention to Peter and John?

He thought that they would give him something. This was probably outside of the normal pattern of interaction for the lame man.

b. How do you respond when others ask for help?

Are you willing to help others in need? What is your response when you see poverty or handicaps? Have you ever helped people in need and what was their response? Have you ever asked God what to do in those situations and had a prompting from God to go and help? What has God blessed you with to give to others to encourage and help them? Has God given you anything that you could share with others in need: talent, finances, skills, friendship, or things you don't need?

Verse 6

a. What did Peter give to the man?

Peter and John were not taking the money from the church people like so many preachers do but they had exhausted their resources by helping the needy in Jerusalem. Acts 2:45 says that they sold property and possessions to give to the needy. When we exhaust our resources God will come through in ways that we never would believe. Ephesians 3: 20 says that God will do "more than all we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." Peter and John were going to a prayer meeting in the Temple when this event occurred. That was the source of their power and intimacy with God to know how to handle this situation. Peter gave this lame man the gift of healing.

b. Why do you think Peter make such a bold statement?

Peter had seen miracles done when the 12 and the 70 were sent out to villages in Galilee to share the good news about the Kingdom. The church was seeing miracles done by many of the disciples so this was not something new. This was the result of the Holy Spirit working through prayer and trust in God by Peter.

c. Do you think miracles like that can happen today? What do you think it takes for something like that to happen?

d. What do you have to give to others?

Every one can give something. It may be money. It may be an encouraging kind word. It may be shelter or clothing. It may be sharing food or a meal but we can all give something to people who have problems. Write down someone who you can help this week.

Verse 7

What did Peter do for the man?

He took the man by his right hand and helped him up. God did a miracle of strengthening the man's feet and ankle bones.

Verse 8

a. What did the man do when he realized he was healed? What do you think you would have done?

He leaped up, stood and then walked into the temple with them. He did not just do it in a calm collected way. He was leaping and praising God for the miracle he experienced. He was full of joy and exuberance. Have you ever been so happy that you felt like jumping for joy. Think of a special gift you have received or an experience of healing or message of hope you received.

Verse 9 - 10

Who witnessed this healing?

The people who had come to the temple and especially those who were in the court of the gentiles. They knew that it was the lame man who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Verse 11

Why did the people gather at Solomon's Portico?

Solomon's Portico was a covered area where all people, Jew and Gentiles could enter and we read that the followers of Jesus went there to pray at 3 in the afternoon. Believers in Jesus, knew this would be a place to gather to pray together. When people heard about the miracle, they ran - note, RAN - to see this man that was healed. Normally we would not allow running in the church but since this was an outdoor court of the Temple, the people were so excited that they left social decorum behind and ran to see the excitement!! Do we run to see what Jesus is doing in the lives of others?

Verse 12

a. What was Peter's response to the crowds that were gathering?

Peter made clear that it was not his own power or personal works that allowed them to heal the man.

b. Do you think God could use you to be a part of a miracle? Why or why not?

Verse 13- 15

a. What are the names Peter uses for God and Jesus?

Peter talks about “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”, “the God of our fathers”, “the glorified Servant Jesus”, “the Holy One”, “the Just”, “the Prince of life”, “God”.

b. What did Peter accuse the Jews of doing?

The Jews delivered Jesus to Pilate. They denied who He was. The Jews asked for a murderer to be released instead of Jesus and then killed Him.

c. What happened after they killed Jesus?

God raised Jesus from the dead and the disciples of Jesus were witnesses of the living Christ.

Verse 16

What did Peter claim had made this lame man strong?

It was in the name and through faith in Jesus name that made this lame man strong so he could leap and walk.

Verse 17

What were the questions that Peter asked the crowd gathered in the temple?

1. Are we excused if we sin in ignorance?
2. Does it matter to God if we don't know better and do things which are contrary to God's word?
3. Is ignorance an excuse for not being responsible for our sin?
4. Will it matter on the day of judgement?

Verse 18

What did Peter claim happened to Christ?

He claimed that the prophets had foretold of His suffering (some 60 prophecies concerning Christ) and that all was fulfilled. Jesus was not something new but was a fulfilment of words spoken about him hundreds of years before.

Verse 19

What does it mean to repent and be converted?

The Greek word for repent is '*metanoew*' which is a compound word combining '*meta*' and

'*voiew*'. '*meta*' is a preposition meaning to accompany. '*voiew*' is a verb - to think or exercise the mind. Repent is then to realize our disobedience, our sin and rejection of God's love and asking Jesus to become our substitute for our sin to have our sins removed and be cleansed. To be converted is to change into something different. 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." When we repent and ask Jesus to become our master, director, and Lord, He sends His Holy Spirit to guide and transform our lives. Our sins are gone and we have a new freedom.

Verse 20

What will happen when we repent and are converted?

The Father will send Jesus to us and Jesus brings the Holy Spirit into our hearts that we might be guided into the truth, receive spiritual gifts and grow in our spiritual life.

Verse 21

What can we look forward to in the future?

All the prophecies of Daniel and other prophets will be fulfilled when God's period of restoration to the way things were before the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden will come and sin will be judged.

Verse 22 - 23

What prophetic word did Peter quote to encourage the people to repent?

Peter quoted a prophesy from Moses in which God said through him that God would raise up a prophet like Moses and the people were to listen to whatever He said. If they did not listen to that Prophet, the people would be utterly destroyed.

Deuteronomy 18:15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19 If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.

b. Have you listened to the prophet Jesus?

Of course He is more than a prophet. He was the Son of God and He died for our sins. If we believe we shall not perish but have everlasting life. We are to do everything which He commanded until He returns or He takes us to heaven.

Verse 24

How do the prophets in the Old Testament bring continuity and unity with the New Testament.

We are to listen to the prophets in the Old Testament and recognize that we don't get rid of the Old Testament but we live a fuller life and get greater understanding by reading and also following the New Testament.

Verse 25

Are Gentiles also sons of the prophets?

Most Christians are not the descendants of Abraham but Paul writes that those that believe that Jesus died for their sins have been grafted into the vine. We are then spiritual children of the Jewish faith and receive the covenant which God promised to Abraham. We too are blessed when we understand the spiritual heritage that we possess as followers of Jesus.

Verse 26

How does Peter interpret the blessing that Abraham gave us?

Jesus was that descendant who brought blessing to the world. He is the only one who can forgive us our sins and cleanse us so that we can be made righteous and stand before God in Heaven. We need to repent and turn away from all rebellion, disobedience and iniquities.