



The Power of His Name

Devotional

John Stott tells of an English Salvation Army drummer who was beating his drum so hard that the band leader had to tell him to pipe down a bit and not make so much noise. In his cockney accent the drummer replied, "God bless you, sir, since oi've been converted, oi'm so 'appy, oi could bust the bloomin' drum!" (Christianity Today [6/12/81], p/ 19.)

Our text records the first miracle in Acts that God enabled the apostles to perform after the Day of Pentecost. Peter and John, going up to the temple for the 3 p.m. prayer service, encountered a man in his forties (4:22) who had been crippled from birth. He asked for a handout, but Peter spoke a word of healing to him in Jesus' name, reached out his hand and pulled him to his feet. Instantly, God's miraculous power strengthened the man's feet and ankles, so that he could walk. He followed Peter and John into the temple, but by now he wasn't just walking, he was jumping for joy! It may well be that some stern religious leader told him to calm down: "Don't you know that you're in God's holy temple?" But the man would have replied, "I'm so happy that I could jump and dance all night!"

I believe that the man was not only healed physically, but he also was healed spiritually, because he was now praising God. If he was not yet clear on the gospel, I'm sure that he responded to Peter's sermon that followed. The man's joy is a fulfillment of what Jesus the Messiah would do. Isaiah 35:5–6 says, "*Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy.*" These words were fulfilled in Jesus' ministry (Matthew 11:5).

So this story in Acts attests to the divine Messiahship of Jesus. It shows that Jesus was continuing to work through His apostles and that His name was still powerful to perform the same gracious miracles of healing that took place when He was on this earth. Luke shares it as a specific example of what he reported in 2:43, that many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. He picked this miracle because it led to Peter's second sermon (3:12–26) and to the first persecution against the early church (4:1–22). But it was not just a miracle of physical healing; it is also a picture of the spiritual healing that God brings to a spiritually lame world. It teaches us that ...

God's miraculous gift of salvation should cause us to praise Him with exuberant joy so that others will marvel at His mighty power.¹

¹ Sermon by Steve Cole found @ <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-10-exuberant-joy-god-s-salvation-acts-31-10>

Open it

1. Tell your group your full name given at birth. Why were you given the name? What nationality or background does your last name come from? If you could change your name would you?²

Read it

Acts 3:1–26

Explore it

2. Who did Peter and John come across on their way to the temple?
3. What did this stranger want? What did Peter do instead?
4. What was the response of the healed man?
5. What did Peter do when he saw a crowd forming around him?
6. What command does Peter give the people in verse 19?

Apply it

As Peter and John moved along with the flow of the crowd, they providentially encountered a beggar being borne on a litter to his usual post. He had been a congenital cripple for all of his life. Having never taken a step, he had to be carried everywhere he went. His begging post was one of the best spots in the entire city because it was at the Beautiful Gate, or Nicanor Gate, which Josephus tells us was fifty cubits high and forty cubits wide, was overlaid with Corinthian bronze, and was such a work of art that it “far exceeded in value those plated with silver set in gold.” What a compelling sight the impotent beggar made against the backdrop of such opulent surroundings! It was the perfect place to solicit funds. Further, Judaism considered almsgiving a meritorious art. So the man’s position at Israel’s religious center would have profited him well.³

² All study questions by Tim Badal. Village Bible Church, Sugar Grove Campus.

³ Hughes, R. Kent. Acts: The Church Afire (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 883-889). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

7. What role do Christians have in caring for the needy around us? Why must discernment be used in these situations?

8. While ministering to the temporal needs of others is commanded in Scripture, what important truth can we learn from Peter's response in verse 6?

How should his answer help us as we meet the needs of those hurting around us?

This man had been lame from his mother's womb. He is a sad picture of the human race, maimed by the fall. This was not a day when there were concrete wheelchair ramps for those who were crippled. In fact, there were no wheelchairs or handicapped parking places! If this man left his house, it was only because more than one friend came over, put him on a stretcher, and carried him.⁴

9. Look again at Luke's description of the lame beggar. In what specific ways does his physical condition serve as a picture of our spiritual condition before salvation?

The Bible uses many different metaphors to picture the fallen condition of the human race: dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1); blinded by the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4); ignorant and unable to understand spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:8, 14); deceived and deluded (2 Thessalonians 2:10–11); deaf and dumb (Mark 7:32–37); leprous (Mark 1:40–42); and, lame (Mark 4:1–12).⁵

⁴ Sermon by Steve Cole found @ <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-10-exuberant-joy-god-s-salvation-acts-31-10>

⁵ *ibid*

10. Which of the metaphors listed above do you see as most prevalent in society today? What specific course of action is needed to help rescue the lost from their sin?

There were no operations available that could cure his congenital condition. No physical therapy or efforts at self-improvement could help him. He had no hope that he could ever walk. And so he did the best he could to get by—he begged for money.⁶

11. While nothing could alleviate his condition, money might have made life a little easier to live for this crippled beggar. In what ways do unbelievers seek to make life a little easier instead of finding new life in Jesus Christ?

“What I have I give you,” Peter said. You cannot give what you do not have, but you must have to give. The impotence of many Christians in this exciting, thrilling hour of history is due to the fact that they simply have nothing to offer but a few coins, and alms will not save a sick society. Healing, reconciliation, salvation can be shared only when we have it. We can give only what we have, and some of us are not giving because we do not have.⁷

12. While the gospel is the greatest thing we can give the world, what other things do we have as believers that can pave the way for the gospel to be shared?

To do something in the name of Jesus Christ is to act consistent with His will; to do what He would do if He were here, to act in His authority and with His delegated power. Peter had seen the Lord heal countless times. Now, acting on behalf of His Lord with the power delegated to him (cf. Matthew 10:1), he commands the beggar to walk.⁸

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Richard C. Halverson, *Relevance: The Role of Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (Waco, TX: Word, 1968), 87-88.

⁸ MacArthur, John. *Acts 1-12 MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) (Kindle Locations 1942-1944). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

The early preachers were supremely concerned with exalting the name of Jesus Christ. It was in that name that they baptized (Acts 2:38) and healed (Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10). Even the church's opponents recognized how central the name of Jesus was in apostolic preaching (Acts 5:40). Philip preached the name of Jesus (Acts 8:12), as did Paul (Acts 9:27). The Jerusalem council commended Barnabas and Paul as "men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:26), and Paul expressed his willingness to die for that name (Acts 21:13).⁹

13. The name of Jesus is trampled upon in our society by people using his name in vain. Why is the name of Jesus so important and what things can we do to keep it reverent?

This man was healed instantly. Peter grabbed his hand and pulled him to his feet and before he was upright, the strength pulsed through his feet and ankles. He didn't have to go slow until he built up his weak leg muscles. He didn't have to go for months of physical therapy to learn how to walk (remember, he had never walked before!). He not only could walk, he could leap, and leap he did, over and over again! He was instantly healed.¹⁰

14. Why was it important for the healing to be instant? Would it have mattered if the healing had taken place over a longer period of time?

15. While Peter was the one seen doing the miracle, it is God who receives all the praise. When is it reasonable for Christians to receive accolades for things that God enables them to do?

How do we make sure that those we serve turn their praise to Jesus and not onto us?

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ Sermon by Steve Cole found @ <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-10-exuberant-joy-god-s-salvation-acts-31-10>

PETER'S SERMON PART 2

Peter uses numerous titles that apply to Jesus, but they are all summed up in the phrase, "the name of Jesus." He emphasizes this in verse 16, which harkens back to verse 6, *"And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; ..."* Jesus' name stands for everything that He is. The Jews had a holy reverence for the name of God, so much so that they would not even dare pronounce it. In the Hebrew Bible, whenever they got to the name, "Yahweh," they would say, "Adonai," which means "Lord." "The name" became a way of referring to God. Peter here exalts the name of Jesus.¹¹

16. Look through the opening of Peter's message as Luke records it in Acts 3:11–16. What names does Peter give for Jesus and how do these names declare who Jesus is?

17. Peter says that "faith in Jesus has given this man perfect health." How can this verse be abused today? How would you caution someone who thinks that having faith in God guarantees health and vitality?

John Piper speaks of the restoring work of Jesus when he says:

All authority. He has authority over Satan and all demons, over all angels— good and evil— over the natural universe, natural objects and laws and forces: stars, galaxies, planets, meteorites; authority over all weather systems: winds, rains, lightning, thunder, hurricanes, tornadoes, monsoons, typhoons, cyclones; authority over all their effects: tidal waves, floods, fires; authority over all molecular and atomic reality: atoms, electrons, protons, neutrons, undiscovered subatomic particles, quantum physics, genetic structures, DNA, chromosomes; authority over all plants and animals great and small: whales and redwoods, giant squid and giant oaks, all fish, all wild beasts, all invisible animals and plants: bacteria, viruses, parasites, germs; authority over all the parts and functions of the human body: every beat of the heart, every breath of the diaphragm, every electrical jump across a million synapses in our brains; authority over all nations and governments: congresses and legislatures and presidents and kings and premiers and courts; authority over all armies and weapons and bombs and terrorists; authority over all industry and business and finance and currency; authority over all entertainment and amusement and leisure and media; over all education and research and science and discovery; authority over all crime and violence; over all families and neighborhoods; and over the church, and over every soul and every moment of every life that has been or ever will be lived.¹²

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Merida, Tony. *Exalting Jesus in Acts (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary)* (Kindle Locations 1507-1515). Holman Reference. Kindle Edition

18. Peter says that Jesus will one day “restore all things.” How does this truth give you hope? How does this miracle bring confidence that He can do this?

19. What area in your life needs restoration? What can you do while you wait for it?

THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT

This is a beautiful word picture. Parchment was expensive, so sometimes scribes used acid-free ink as they wrote on it. The ink just lay on top of the parchment, so a person could take a wet sponge and wipe a message away, blotting it out. To put Peter’s point in modern terms, imagine having all your sins listed on a dry-erase board. Now, imagine sitting there pondering the weight of your sin record and the certainty of coming judgment without having any hope of changing your sad reality. But then, when you feel eaten by shame and fear, someone marches in and forever wipes that record of your wrongs off the board. He declares you innocent. Would that not make you soar in worship to the one wiping away your sin? It should! That’s what’s happened! Jesus Christ has wiped out our wrongs. We have no guilt. We are under no condemnation. And as sure as Jesus wipes our sin away the moment we ask Him to do so, he will wipe our tears away later (Revelation 21: 4).¹³

20. Peter says that faith in Jesus blots out our sins and brings refreshing to our lives. How does your salvation bring refreshment and restoration to other’s broken lives?

¹³ibid