

Small Groups @ TBC - Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: 5 March 2017

Speaker: Mike Levy

Title: Peter and John went to pray

Read: Acts 3

Introduction:

Following the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and a description of Fellowship life we arrive at the first healing recorded after the Ascension and also the second sermon of Peter.

Review:

For Peter and John, the day began like any other day, going about their routine which included temple prayers, for the lame man the day began like any other day going about his routine of begging by the beautiful gate. The day, however, turned out to be a life changing day for all three of them and set in train a series of unstoppable events. There are 4 thoughts that strike us from this healing.

1. We should expect the extraordinary stuff of God to break into the ordinary stuff of day to day life.
2. We should just go for it - Peter and John did not hold back they just prayed and left the rest up to God.
3. Why this man? Peter and John had probably walked past many more beggars crying out to them, so what drew them to this man?
4. This is part of a continuing narrative, Jesus was still at work by his Holy Spirit just as if he were physically present.

There are 28 specific supernatural events or general references to miracles in Acts, one for every chapter, Luke records them accurately and concisely, they were part of the life of the early church, it is impossible to remove them from the Acts without destroying the book.

Peter's second sermon starts by pulling no punches, directed at the Men of Israel he is blunt in pointing the finger at their part in the death of Jesus then later he softens his tone, echoing the words of Jesus on the cross he concedes that they may not have known fully what they were doing. We may find it difficult to reconcile the fact that the death of Jesus on the cross was part of the plan of God yet Peter says it was the actions of others that placed him there but this would not have been an issue for Jews who had a view of God with total authority but who created humans with the dignity to make their own decisions. Peter also echoes the account of Jesus on the road to Emmaus when he pointed to scriptures to explain who Jesus was and what it meant for those listening.

It is easy to see all of Acts 3 as a simple cause and effect, Peter and John healed a lame man which gave them an opportunity to preach. QED. However, it can also be a picture of something bigger, the lame man could not come to Jesus on his own, broken all he could do was cry out then one day his cry was heard and he was healed. Isn't this in some way a picture of the gospel of Christ for the whole world?

Reflect and Respond:

1. In Peter and John's day no-one looked at a Beggar unless they were about to meet their need, reflect on how much this is true today and how this challenges us as follows of Jesus.
2. Does the 'name of Jesus' still have the same power to heal today? In what ways should we encourage this?
3. Peter and John had no money but they were used by God to heal the sick man, reflect on whether there is any connection between poverty and power?
4. The miracle is both quick and complete, why do you think healings like this are rare today?
5. In what way is repentance more than simply being sorry?
6. How many titles and descriptions of God's Son can you see in this passage and what do they mean?
7. Jesus came to Jews first, what is the relationship between Jews and Christians today and what should it be?
8. Is there ever a need to be as blunt as Peter was in the first part of his sermon? In our effort to be loving, gentle and kind do we also become apologetic and afraid of causing offence?

Pray: Let your prayers be led by what comes out of your reflection.