Jesus Heals

Acts 3:16-19

The whole chapter of Acts 3 tells a wonderful story which most of us know fairly well. Peter and John encountered a lame man and they introduced him to Jesus and the man leapt to his feet and danced. He grabbed onto Peter and followed Peter and John into the temple. This man was miraculously healed. In an instant he went from being a crippled man to being fully capable; he was healed. As he danced into the temple many people noticed this was the crippled man who begged outside the temple. Now he was on his feet and was no longer crippled. He had experienced a miracle and he was thrilled. Can you begin to imagine how excited he must have been? This was a wow moment that he would never forget.

The people in the temple were also amazed that they had seen this miracle. Things like this just do not usually happen. This was a special day and they witnessed this miracle. Because of the healing of this crippled man, it was easy for Peter to get the attention of the people who gathered around.

Most sermons on this chapter focus on the crippled man and what was done for him. However, I want to focus on what Peter told the crowd after the man was healed. When something amazing happens, people usually ask how that happened. Apparently this happened because Peter took the time to explain what happened. In a nutshell, he said the name of Jesus healed this poor man.

(2)

Peter took this opportunity and he told the amazed people that the name of Jesus is the power that healed this man. This needed some explanation for these people were not fully aware of all the events that had recently occurred. They knew that there had been a crucifixion and there had been talk of a resurrection but they did have an appreciation of what all of this meant. Peter explained that this Jesus who was crucified was the Messiah that they had been anticipating. He also used the Scriptures and used the prophets to show that this Jesus who was recently crucified was that Messiah they were seeking. Then he explained how it was their disbelief that led to his crucifixion. Then he told them how their leaders had charged Jesus with heresy and they wanted him dead. Then, the leaders and the people clamored for a murderer to be released instead of the Messiah that God had sent.

Peter’s sermon touched the hearts of many of the people. With their hearts softened, he continued and told them how this crippled man had been healed. He said in verse 16, “By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.” What made the man whole again? Jesus made this man whole again.

When you were in elementary school, did you have show and tell? It was often interesting to see the things kids brought in and there was often something to be learned from these. Well, Peter had a show and tell lesson. There was a crippled man whom everyone knew about. He set outside the temple so everyone saw him often. They knew he was lame. He could not walk. That is why he sat outside the temple begging. Now, they see him standing on his lame legs and feet. He is healed. He is not just walking, this man is dancing. His joy is over the top. He cannot contain it.

The people can see all of this and, of course, the question on their minds is, “How did this happen?” That is a good question. How was this man cured of being a crippled who had to beg for a living and how was he healed so dramatically? Peter tells the crowd that this man’s faith in the name of Jesus had healed him. This man had faith in the one who was hanged on that nasty cross and who arose on the third day. This crippled man believed in the name of the one that was hanged on that cross because you people in this crowd did not believe in him and you wanted him killed. How were the people in the crowd feeling now? I am pretty sure that Peter had their undivided attention.

(3)

Peter tells them in verses 17 & 18 that they acted in ignorance, just as their leaders did. He seems to be offering some comfort. Then in the following verses he tells them what they must do. Is that not what the Gospel teaches? Even though a person sin, he has the opportunity to believe in the Savior Jesus and repent and be saved. That is wonderful good news. Here are a bunch of people who clamored for the death of Jesus and now they have the opportunity to be saved. That is a picture of grace. Do these people deserve to be saved by Jesus? No! Do these people have any claim on Jesus? No! Does Jesus owe them anything? No! Will Jesus accept them if they come to him? Yes! That is wonderful news and that same wonderful news applies to people today. Jesus will accept even the most vile sinner if that person will believe in Jesus and accept that gift.

Is it possible that the miracle these people have just seen and Peter’s message caused fear in these people? I believe they were frightened. They have just seen the power of Jesus. They know what they have seen but they cannot explain what has happened. They know it was a miracle and where do miracles come from? Miracles come from God? The question in their hearts must have been, “Did I contribute to killing of God’s Messiah?” And, “What will an all powerful God do to me for my part in this?” I believe that these people were really experiencing the awesome fear of God.

(4)

Peter gives them a solution to their concerns. He tells them what they must do to again be right with God. He says, “Repent then, and turn to God…” Let’s examine what that means. The word repent in the Bible means to turn away from sin, disobedience and rebellion and to turn back to God. It is truly sad but many people today will claim to be a believer but they cling strongly to some sinful way of life. To truly repent a parson must turn from the sin and move toward God. A famous preacher told the story of a time he was counseling with a young couple who were living in adultery. He challenged them on this. They said, “We have prayed about this and we are at peace. God has approved because we are in love.” This is at best self deception and at worst rebellion against God. In all of God’s word there is never a time when He suspended His word because someone was in love. Many condone homosexuality claiming that God made them that way. Again, this is rebellion. Many in academia promote many things that go against God’s Word in the name of intellectualism. Government expels all things Christian from the public life. This is rebellion for what does not fall under the sovereign power of God?

(5)

If a person turns away from sin, disobedience and rebellion, his/her life changes. Sin is anything that separates a person from God. That is the definition of sin. Disobedience is failure to obey. We all know what God has commanded and whether or not we obey. Many deliberately go their own way developing many arguments which are actually rationalizations to make themselves feel better about being disobedient. Then to be rebellious is to be sinful and disobedient with an attitude of being defiant. To be saved, this way of life must go and it will go when a person turns to God and submits. A person who lives in continuing sin, disobedience and rebellion does not have a saving relationship with the Son of God.

Peter continues in the same sentence and he tells the people gathered, and us, when one turns from his sinful ways to God there is a refreshing time that comes from the Lord. This might also be translated as a peaceful time that comes from the Lord. I have heard a number times from believers that when they placed their faith in Jesus, a strong sense of peace came over them. This comes from God. It cannot be gained any other way.

Peter explains clearly to the crowd that the crippled man was healed by his faith in Jesus. Then we can see the grace of God when he explains to the crowd how they can be saved and healed. We have seen Jesus heal the crippled man and now we can see the potential for a great amount of healing to take place. Did Peter reach the hearts of some of those who have witnessed this healing? He probably reached many hearts. What is the condition of those hearts at this time? It must be troubled. He has just explained how they contributed to the wrongful execution of the Messiah. Since God knows all things, He knows what they have done and said. What will God do? Will he take revenge on those who approved of the execution of Jesus? Will He take revenge on those who shouted out, “Crucify him!”? Would this cause fear?

What will God do with those who today deny the sacrifice He made? Are the hearts of many people troubled? Many people today suffer from depression and other mental difficulties. The rate of suicide today is high. Crime is terribly high. Drug use is out of control. Many people today are suffering from these painful conditions of the heart. Just as faith in the name of Jesus healed the crippled man, that same faith can bring a lot of healing to the hearts and minds of people today.

What ailment do you have today? We all have physical ailments and He decides to heal some and not others but I think that too often we do not place that ailment before him. Then, if/when we place that ailment before him, where are our eyes? Are we looking to Jesus, are we looking at him? Or, are we looking at ourselves or at our difficulty. On Sunday night we looked at the paralyzed man by the Pool of Bethesda which we see in John 5:1ff. The man went 38 without being healed. He placed his eyes on the water in the pool instead of on the one who could save him. This can be a measure of our faith. Are our eyes on the malady or the problem or are our eyes on the one who can cure the problem?

We also have emotional ailments and the same can be said for those. Why does He heal some and not others? He is sovereign and we cannot always answer that question. However, we must keep our eyes on Him and not on our problem. When we take our eyes off of him we cannot expect great things from him. We can take some comfort that if we are faithful and He does not heal us, He will gives us the wherewithal to deal with the difficulty. Paul, a man of great faith had a problem that he prayed about and the Lord did not heal him. However, the Lord did say to him in 2 Cor 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for you.” Even though the Lord did not heal Paul, He gave to Paul the ability to deal with the problem.

(6)

Peter told the people in the crowd that believing in the name of Jesus healed the crippled man. He told those people that the Lord can refresh them and he told us the same. The one requirement is that we believe in Jesus, the risen, Son of God. I have seen the short little poem which says that faith is not believing that God can do something, it is believing that He will. We must have the faith that God will do what is right for those who trust Him.

We must keep our eyes, our focus, on Our risen Lord and not on the problems that trouble all people and trust that he will do that which will glorify him.