

FPFWC Christian Development



The Birth of the Church

May 2023

Spring Quarter

May 13, 2023

Jumping for Joy

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Acts 3:1-11

ICE BREAKER –

1. How can compassion be used as a tool when ministering to people?
2. Why is it important to praise the Lord when He performs a miracle in our lives?

Key Verse: “The leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.—Acts 3:8

LESSON BACKGROUND

Acts 2:42–47 summarizes the ongoing activities of the just-birtherd church in Jerusalem, which included miraculous displays after the Day of Pentecost. Those ongoing displays are described as being “many wonders and signs ... done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43). Hebrews 2:4 confirms God to be the one who authenticated the truth of the gospel preaching by “signs and wonders, and with divers miracles.” Although miraculous healings obviously brought compassionate relief to the afflicted, their primary purpose was to validate the truth of Christianity in general and the person and work of Jesus in particular (see John 20:30–31). Today’s lesson forms part of that larger tapestry.

We are not told exactly how long the events of today’s lesson occurred after the Day of Pentecost, but it was probably several weeks later. The church had been busy, including a ministry of the selling of property to provide funds for relief of the poor (Acts 2:45). The apostles were still in Jerusalem, not having returned home to Galilee. They and the other followers of Jesus met daily in the spacious porticoes of the temple (2:46a). Activities included meeting in homes for “breaking bread”—fellowship meals that included celebration of the Lord’s Supper (2:46b).

LESSON COMMENTARY

The Ministry of Healing (3:1–11)

This extended section deals with the healing of a lame beggar, and both the positive and negative responses to this miracle. Like Jesus before them, the apostles had power to work miracles to authenticate their message. There was however a significant difference. Christ healed by His own authority. Peter and others healed “in the name of Jesus.” Their power was not their own, it came from the resurrected Lord.

The pattern of events in Ac 3 is similar to Ac 2. A miraculous event captured the attention of the people; then Peter capitalized on the excitement to proclaim that Jesus is the Servant of the Lord. The result, however, was different. Instead

of seeing remorse and repentance, the church came under attack because of the message of the resurrection.

3:1–3. As did all godly Jews, Peter and John went to the temple to pray. The **ninth hour** is 3:00 p.m. and is the second of three daily prayer times. They met a man who was physically challenged from birth. Because he was lame, he was not allowed to enter the temple area; so he sat at the entrance of the temple by the **gate ... called Beautiful** begging for a handout. It is not easy to identify this gate. Luke may have given the name “Beautiful” to the Nicanor Gate, which provided an entrance from outside the temple complex into the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of Women. Because it was considered an act of piety to give to the poor, the disabled man had strategically located himself in direct view of those coming to the temple to worship.

3:4–7. When Peter made eye contact, the man expected to receive a coin but was initially disappointed. Peter’s response was classic: “Silver or gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee” (KJV). Peter gave him a greater gift. **In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene** he healed him. The healing was instantaneous and complete. The expression **in the name of** stands for more than someone acting as the representative of another person. The name of Jesus identified the person of Jesus, who healed the man. Peter was only the agent, not the source of the power. The point of the healing was primarily evidential. Jesus was not dead; He is alive.

3:8. The man’s jubilant response was normal, not excessive. His leaping and praising God provided a dramatic illustration of what Israel could experience if they would recognize Jesus as Messiah. Isaiah had predicted that with the coming of the messianic age “the lame will leap like deer” (35:6).

3:9–11. The miracle was public not private. There is no doubt about the healing, and it has the effect of attracting a large crowd of unbelieving Jews.

LESSON NUGGET – The emphasis in chapter 3 is on the name of Jesus (Acts 3:6, 13, 16, 20), the name above every name (Philippians 2:9-11). Faith in the name of Jesus releases power so that lives are changed. To pray or minister in His name means to ask or act on His authority (Matthew 28:18-20) so that He alone gets the glory. The church continued Jesus’ healing ministry in obedience to His will. The miracle was accomplished through faith “in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Word For Today Bible, The Full Life Study Bible, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary*