

Acts 3:1-10: Is Jesus Offering to Solve All Your Problems or Much More?

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I. Introduction

What's your biggest problem? What's the one thing you want most, the thing that makes you say, "If I only had that, I wouldn't be so miserable," "If I only had that, my life would be perfect"? Some want financial independence, others success in their field, still others a spouse and kids. Would any of these or anything else make life perfect or would it still leave us wanting? Jesus promises to fix all your problems...but that's not His main concern.

II. Acts 3:1-10: Jesus Is Offering You Much More than just Solving All Your Problems

3:1, it's 3:00 p.m., the hour of prayer so Peter and John go to the Temple to pray. This was their daily habit (2:46; 5:42). Some might see a problem here: why would two Christians go to the center of Judaism to worship God, isn't that supporting the wrong religion? Remember what Christ sent Peter, John, and the rest of the apostles to do, they're to go out to a lost and dying world and be witnesses to Him, beginning with the nation of Israel (1:8). What better place to start than Israel's headquarters in Jerusalem.

3:2-3, as Peter and John are making their way into the Temple through the gate called Beautiful, they run into a lame man who daily laid by the gate to beg for money from anyone walking by. He was placed there by friends every day and it was a strategic place to beg because many people entered through this gate and during the hour of prayer people would be more apt to give this man something. We're told that he was lame from birth; in fact, he's been in this condition over 40 years (4:22). As soon as he saw Peter and John, he asks them for money.

Can you identify with this lame man? What was your condition before Jesus found you? How was your life lame? How were you a beggar looking for scraps to fill your life?

3:4-5, the man is looking for alms, but Peter has something else in mind. So he stares intensely at the man and says, "Look at us." The man thinks that perhaps Peter's about to give him a bigger donation than usual since Peter's asking for his undivided attention.

Why did Peter want this man to look at him, and not simply look, but stare into Peter's eyes? What's Jesus telling this man through these two apostles (by the way, it's Jesus not Peter who's talking to this man, Acts 1:1; John 14:16-18; 16:12-15)? This man's been there all his life, day after day, year after year. From his mother's womb he's been in this condition, over 40 years! So what's Jesus telling him, does He see his lame condition? Does Jesus see his problem and is his problem dead legs? Does Jesus see your problem? What's Jesus telling you as you read this story? Does He see your lame condition? Do you believe He sees it and can do something about it? Does He see your poverty? Does He see your dilemma? Jesus is not just staring into this man's eyes, He's staring into yours...He wants to say something to you about your lame condition.

3:6-10, the man was looking for money, but Peter wanted to introduce this man to his Lord, Jesus Christ and His power to heal not just his legs, but his entire life. This is what Jesus had done for Peter, John and the rest of the apostles. The moment Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have," the man must've been disappointed. But then Peter invokes the name of Christ and by His power, takes him by the hand and immediately his feet and ankles receive strength. The man is so ecstatic that he begins leaping and praising God as he enters the temple with Peter and John. The mobs of people in the temple recognize the man who's causing all the commotion. It's the man they've seen day after day at the gate, the same lame man, who'd been lame all his life...and they are stunned! They marveled just like the mobs of people who heard 12 Galileans suddenly speak foreign languages (2:7).

Why didn't Peter just say "get up and walk" the way Jesus did when He healed people (John 5:8)? Don't the apostles have the Holy Spirit in them, empowering them to heal? Yes (2:43), but whose power is it, whose Spirit? Jesus' (Galatians 4:6). He told His disciples, "If you ask anything in **My name, I will do it**" (John 14:14). It was Jesus who was healing this man not Peter. His name represents everything that Jesus is: Son of God and Savior of mankind (Luke 4:18). And Peter wanted this man to know it. Jesus not Peter is offering this man a new life not just new legs.

Why did Peter say that he had no silver and gold? Didn't the apostles take in a lot of money from all the possessions that were sold (2:45 [4:34-37])? And didn't God say that ministers of the Gospel have a right to live from the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:8-14)? If you were one of the apostles, wouldn't you have kept some of it for yourself, not to enrich yourself like Judas (John 12:4-6), but to provide for your needs? So why didn't Peter? What did Jesus teach the apostles in the three years He was with them? What's the most important thing in life? Money for your needs?

This man has a problem: he has to beg in order to survive because his legs don't work. What will solve it? New legs? If he had new legs, he could get a job and support himself, no more begging. Problem solved right? Aren't there plenty of people with healthy legs who're still miserable? So what's the answer? What will fix all our problems, financial independence, a successful career, a husband, a wife, kids,what if we had it all, would that do it? Aren't there people who have it all and yet they are still miserable? Jesus taught Peter that the key to life was not chasing after the things of this life nor eliminating all your problems, in fact, tomorrow would bring another problem. The key to life is living every moment with Jesus (Matthew 6:25-33). Jesus was not just looking to fix this man's legs nor is He just looking to fix yours.

What did Jesus give this lame man? New legs, is that the point of the story or did Jesus give him much, much more? Jesus is not just offering to solve all your problems, He's offering you a new life and a giant family to go with it (2:41-47). This lame man is now part of Jesus and His family, which means he's got plenty of homes and relatives to turn to (Mark 10:29-30). That's not all. It also means that you and Jesus are inseparable (Galatians 2:20; 4:6). He will always be there to personally guide and assist you through everything that happens to you (Matthew 28:20). He'll be there to keep you from every bad habit and to teach you every good habit (Galatians 5:16-26).....but do we get this? I'm afraid that most of the time all we see in Jesus is a new pair of legs and it's on to the next crisis, which means another set of legs from Jesus, and on and on it goes.

III. Conclusion

And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us.".....Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.