

## WEEKEND Edition 11/12 June 2022

### “A Healing Name?” (Acts 3:11-16)

Hello my 'Walking with Jesus' friends,  
Hey, it's the weekend and I hope you have something enjoyable, maybe even exciting planned.

So, let me ask you... do you most enjoy exciting things that happen spontaneously or exciting things you've diligently planned to the detail? *Come with me, let's rejoin a very exciting experience happening totally unplanned, totally spontaneously in the city of Jerusalem, about 2000 years ago.* I left you in the middle of it yesterday. The story is found in Acts 3 in the Bible. Disciples of Jesus, Peter and John, had been on their way to the Temple when they stopped to chat with a man crippled from birth, sitting on the ground near the gate called Beautiful. Sadly, neither Peter nor John had any money with them, but rather than do nothing, Peter did something outrageous, something I doubt he had planned. The record says when the beggar asked Peter and John for a handout, Peter's response was shocking:

***"Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk!' Taking the beggar by the hand Peter helped him up and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk..."*** (Acts 3:6-8)

*I don't know what your definition of a miracle is, my friends, but this is a miracle!* It took only minutes for people in the crowded Jerusalem Temple courts to hear and they came rushing to see for themselves. Suddenly Peter finds himself surrounded by a crowd all shouting for answers! The record says: ***"When Peter saw this, he said to them, 'Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we made this man walk?"*** (Acts 3:12) Look at the crowd! They are of course befuddled. There was no logical explanation for what they are seeing. They'd all seen this man for many years sitting in the same place near the entrance to the Temple begging. Now he's jumping and laughing and calling for anyone in the Temple area to come and see the unbelievable! As far as we know this cripple did not know Peter and John by name, so I'm imagining the miracle cripple is simply pointing at Peter and shouting *"Him, he's the man! This guy healed me! Look, for the first time in my entire life, I can walk, and I can jump!"*

*But Peter is smart enough to know he is NOT a healer!* In fact, I suspect Peter is scratching his head trying to figure it out! He'd never done anything like this before. All Peter knew was that he did exactly what he felt strongly led to do and say! Led by who? Well, I think Peter would say he was led by God!

Once before, maybe only a few days before, Peter had found himself in a similar situation as a crowd had come together hearing normal Galilean Jews speaking in languages they did know but were dialects spoken in the far reaches of the Roman empire, from which these pilgrims had come for Pentecost! Peter had explained God was at work, and 3000 people had responded, trusted in Jesus as their Messiah, and been baptized. So, it should not surprise us that Peter did it again. He stood up on whatever he could find... maybe a barrel, waved his arms asking for some quiet and shouted: ***"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified His servant Jesus. You handed Jesus over to be killed, and you disowned Him before Pilate, though Pilate had decided to release Jesus. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer [Barabbas] be released to you. You killed the author of life but God raised Him from the dead!"*** (Acts 3:13-15)

Peter is now pointing to his friend John as another eyewitness of these things that he is talking about. I'm sure you can imagine that these people feel as though someone just punched each of them in the face! They are stunned! Many of them were probably in the crowd that day when Pilate brought Jesus, badly beaten, and Barabbas, a convicted criminal dragged up out of the dungeon, and placed them both before the people asking which one he should release? The crowd had demanded Barabbas be set free and when Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, their response was a defiant cry, ***'Crucify Him!'*** (Matt. 27:22) By now, it had been perhaps 75 days or so, since that horrific crucifixion day. But suddenly it seemed to these people like it was yesterday, and Peter was making it very clear... they had sent Jesus, the author of life, to His death on the cross.

Peter didn't wait for them to respond or run... rather, he continued with his passionate speech. Pointing to the crippled man jumping and praising God, Peter shouted: ***"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was healed and made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him that has completely healed this man, as you can all see!"*** (Acts 3:15,16)

So, let me ask you my friends... what would you have done if you had been in that crowd that day? No one can deny the miracle, a lifelong cripple is jumping right in front of you! But Peter's explanation is beyond reason, even beyond imagination! ***How could faith in a man's name, even the name 'Jesus', unleash such healing power?*** You'll remember Joseph and Mary were told very specifically, by angelic visits, that their miraculous baby should be named ***"JESUS"***. (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31) The angel had explained to Joseph ***"because He will save His people from their sins."*** Gabriel had told Mary, ***"He will be great and be called the Son of the Most High."***

Jews understood the importance of names. They very carefully prayed before naming their children.

They knew God had many times in their history sent angels to speak to pregnant women telling them what they should name their soon to be born baby. Names are evidently important to God also! *This name "JESUS" means "Savior, Deliverer".* YESHUA in the Hebrew language. Peter was saying that this crippled man was able to stand in response to Peter's invitation because he had placed his full trust in the Name and the Person Jesus Christ, believing the power of Jesus could heal his lifelong paralysis and help him stand and walk! *In response to that faith, Jesus had, from His throne room in heaven, unleashed some of His mighty, healing power, and made that man's legs, feet and ankles strong and gave him the ability to stand, walk and jump!*

Now let's pause right here friends. I believe some of these Jews in this crowd in Jerusalem had seen Jesus, perhaps many times, as He visited the city. Some had likely seen Jesus heal blind people or crippled people, since He had done it many times in Jerusalem. Now they are seeing the evidence of Jesus' healing power, but Jesus is nowhere to be seen, and Peter is quick to say this healing is NOT his doing! So, my friends all around the world... *what is your explanation of this miracle? Do you have the type of faith this cripple had?* Have you ever been faced with a situation which gave you the opportunity to trust Jesus for a great miracle? I have a song for you to ponder, while you consider what it would take for you to experience the unleashing of Jesus' healing power in this way? And tomorrow, let's come right back here and see what God did next!

**Today's Scripture is Acts 3:11-16.**