

Heal - Save LAME Sinners

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[0:00] Go to the book of Acts. Acts chapter 3. If you're visiting with us, on the black Bible in the chair in front of you, go towards the back of that black Bible and find page 93.

93. You'll find Acts chapter 3. We're going to do the first 10 verses this morning. Acts chapter 3, verses 1 through 10.

Page 93 in that black Bible. Notice the screen is working. It came last week, the week before that. The guy fixed it. You should see it.

It's like all these wires everywhere. It's a pretty nifty little shindig you did in there. So, hopefully it doesn't go out again. If it does, I don't know.

We'll just figure it out. Okay. Acts chapter 3, verses 1 through 10. I'm going to read that. Now, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.

[1:12] A certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.

And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon him and said, Look at us.

He began to give them his attention, expected to receive something from them. But Peter said, I do not possess silver and gold. What I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, walk.

And seized him by the right hand, he raised him up, and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened, and with a leap he stood upright and began to walk. And he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the beautiful gate of the temple to beg alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

[2:25] My kids used to watch a video of Bible songs. And one of the songs that they had on there was called, Silver and Gold Have I None.

And it actually is almost verbatim from this passage. Peter and John went to pray. They met a layman on the way.

He asked for alms and held out his palms, and this is what Peter did say. Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. He went walking and leaping and praising God. That's how the song goes. Walking and leaping and praising God in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

And the kids would just get up and walking and leaping and praising God. I was going to have the kids come up here and do that, but then they'd be fine. They'd be like, you want to do what? I wasn't going to do that.

[3:30] Anyways. But I like that song because it's just verbatim here from chapter 3, what's taking place. And so as we come to this part of Acts, just do it, be who you are, let God use you, let God use us to fulfill His mission.

Here we see that this mission is to heal or save lame, quote unquote, sinners. That's the mission.

To heal sinners or to save lame people. Lame people. That's us. It's a picture of that.

God's mission. God is a heart. God loves. God looks for lame people. Losers. That theme from Luke still keeps coming up, doesn't it?

That God goes after losers. He seeks sinners. We don't seek Him. He seeks us. The statement for you, God, God will use the healing of this lame man to show that His mission to the world is to heal

or save lame sinners.

[4:49] His mission is at work. Here's His healing is the perfect picture of salvation. You'll see it unfold. This historical account, real, true, historical account is a picture for us of salvation.

We saw in chapter 2, verse 43, wonders and signs are being done by the apostles. Here's one of them. Here's one. God was showing that He was now working through His apostles, but even more, this miracle is going to produce a chain reaction, you will find out.

It will be felt all the way through chapter 4. There will be a sermon by Peter and there's going to be a reaction. You see this happy, enjoyable, walking and leaping and praising God event, it will turn into an evil attack over the next couple weeks.

What was God's great power being displayed is going to be questioned. By whose power are you doing this? Luke will show that it was a miracle that brought about the persecution from the Sanhedrin.

A miracle brought about persecution. Not some unlawful acts by the Christians, not by some unlawful act by those who were followers of Jesus.

[6:09] No, it's by a miracle. By something amazing. This miracle would challenge the crowd but also fly in the face of the Sanhedrin who would be severely reprimanded by Peter to stop rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ.

We'll see that over the next few weeks. Here in our text, Luke is pushing, pushing the suddenness and the completeness of the healing along with the bystanders being totally amazed and flabbergasted.

And Peter would eventually challenge them to repent and trust Jesus. He warned them not to reject Jesus. To respond as this man responded. So in this miracle, God was showing that He was working through the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So it stood as a test. They have God's mark of approval. Plus, God's kingdom is here. And judgment was coming so they should respond now.

Now is the time to respond. Because the wonders and signs were being done. And you might say, wait a second, wait a second, what do you mean judgment was coming? Jesus didn't come at that time. No, no, He didn't come at that time.

[7:29] He didn't return. No, He did not. But the judgment that was coming that they faced was going to be just like the return of Jesus. Because remember the destruction of Jerusalem?

that took place that time period of just absolute despair and judgment. That's what it's going to be like in the future. Judgment is coming.

Respond to Jesus. It's coming soon. Jesus is coming soon. Don't wait. Respond to Jesus today. And this miracle points to the fact that Jesus transforms and gives new life.

Says one writer. God's promises are met in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in Him is not something new. This whole thing was talked about in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament was pointing to what Jesus was going to do. To what the Lord Jesus Christ was going to do on behalf of sinners. He was going to transform, change sinners. That's what He does. He did it in the Old Testament. He did it in the New Testament.

[8:35] God, praise His name, is in the business of transforming people from lameness and disability to walking and leaping and praising God.

This miracle is a picture of what God does in the lives of people He calls to Himself. It's like what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17. If anyone is in Christ, what is he?

A new creation. All things passed away. New things have come. That's what it's like. It's a picture of this. That's what Peter would proclaim after the miracle we'll see in a couple weeks.

Repent and return. Be changed by responding to the Lord Jesus Christ. And by the way, another point that we can make. God is working His mysterious plan for this man.

We're going to see later in chapter 4. this man was lame from birth. We'll see it in just a few minutes. For 40 years, over 40 years, he was lame.

[9:39] Who would have thought that God wanted to do this work at this time in his life? That's why he was lame. He wanted to show His glory in this man's life. So do not underestimate what God's doing in your life.

You never know. God is working out His mysterious plan. God moves in a mysterious way as the song went, right? Before we go into the passage, the account follows a typical pattern of healings.

Circumstances are described with the contact between a healer and the one healed. You'll see the illness is described, the request for help, every act of healing, and the completion of the healing. And then the impression of those around. So His mission, God's mission, that mission is to heal or to save lame sinners.

Notice what first comes up though, our first point. The first point is that we are in desperate need. We desperately need verses 1 through 3. We need Him to save us because we're just in need.

[10:47] We're in despair. Starting in verse 1, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. Peter and John went to the temple to pray for the afternoon prayer time in Judaism.

It was at 3 p.m. It was one of two key prayer times. One was at 9 a.m., the other at 3 p.m. Now this was a unique time, you've got to understand.

Christianity is the fulfillment of the promises made in the Old Testament. Which is why at first, the new community, they were still part of Judaism. Because Jesus fulfilled all that Judaism was pointing to.

All that Judaism was looking forward to, Jesus was the fulfillment. So Christianity, they were connected with Judaism that way. Jesus is God's chosen one, the Messiah. Now eventually, Christianity would separate from Judaism because the Jewish people overall would reject the truth about Jesus who fulfilled God's promises.

And the book of Acts is going to show that progression. It's going to show how Judaism, that Christianity was there together and then eventually going to show them split. Judaism is going to go down because they rejected Jesus.

[12:02] Christianity is going to go up. Not in any evil part on the new community, no. So they're going up to the hour of prayer.

Verse 2, A certain man who'd been laying from his mother's womb was being carried along. Lame from birth. Not just lame from some freak accident, as tragic as that is.

This man did not know what it was like to walk and leap. He'd never done this before. He could not do anything but beg. There was no social security.

There was no such thing as disability. There's no workman's comp. None of that. He relied on begging. And notice, he relied on his friends or maybe relatives.

They carried him. They sent him down in front of a gate. Every day at the gate of the temple, which is called beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who are entering the temple to get some kind of financial aid.

[13:17] The gate was probably the Nicanor or Corinthian gate. It was made of bronze. It was large. Sorry, they called it beautiful. Seems like that gate was located close to the court of women and the court of the Gentiles.

So, all these people would be going through there. And to give alms is a serious responsibility in Judaism. They did this as a way to show compassion to their poor Israelites.

Israelites were called to take care of their poor brethren in certain times in these certain ways.

Exodus chapter 23, verse 11, you should care for those who are poor among you. The Israelites were poor.

But not just Israelites who were poor. The Lord told them, round the corners when you're doing your little agricultural harvesting thing, round those corners. Don't go up and then back down because those rounded corner parts, that was for the poor people among you, your brethren, and for the foreigner.

So this man had no means of substance except to sit and beg. And this would be the perfect time to sit and beg for alms because the vast amount of people were going through the gates to go to the temple for the time of prayer.

[14:31] So it's almost like a put your money where your mouth is type thing. It was even worshipping God. Hey, I'm kind of in need here. Yet he would end up getting a lot more than money.

Verse 3, and when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. He saw them going. So the idea is, plus the idea of the verbs is that it's an ongoing appeal to them.

As he was also requesting alms of others, he kept asking them for alms for a handout. Friends, you notice what a picture of us.

We are lame from birth because of sin. Sin sticks with us, debilitating our whole lives. With a physical ailment, we might receive help from the outside. But only God can help us with our spiritual ailment. Only he can save us from our desperate state. And then help us come from the outside. It can't come from him.

[15:39] He can't help himself. He's got to rely on other people. And maybe other people can help our sin state, but it cannot solve it. Only God can fulfill our desperate need.

Only God can take away our sins. Only God can propitiate for our sins. Only God can atone for your sins. Only God can do that. Nobody can help you in this way.

They might be able to take care of the symptoms, but they will not be able to take care of the main problem for you. You have to go to God first and foremost. Most.

Nothing helps. Doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, meds, group individual therapy, management classes. Friends, these things only deal with the symptoms, but they do not deal with the heart issues, the idols of our heart.

They will not deal with your sin. You have to go to God. You have to go to Him. We desperately need, we are in desperate need.

[16:53] We are in desperate need. But notice point number two. God powerfully initiates. We are in desperate need and yet God powerfully initiates. He goes looking for us.

He goes looking for sinners. Verse four and five. For Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon Him and said, look at us. He began to give them his attention expecting to receive something from them.

Peter was the main character and spokesman and he demanded the man give his attention to them. Look at us. They fixed their gaze upon Him. They looked at Him with such fixity and intensity. God was about to show His kingdom was here and that His apostles were His instruments to repent and trust Jesus.

So the man, he turned his attention to them hoping to receive alms from them. He was eagerly looking and hopeful that some financial help was on its way. And there's two of them.

[18:01] This is even better. I'm going to get double the portion. Not just one simple corner, maybe two. Not just two, but maybe four. Interesting too, usually, with people begging, we normally look the other way, don't we?

Well, at least I do because I think the majority of them are a bunch of scammers. That's my problem. Me personally. So interesting, when Peter and John called him to look at them, I mean, he's thinking, this is awesome.

I mean, this is great. People are normally ignoring me, but now these guys are not ignoring me. They're going to give me some major bling-bling type thing, right? Yeah, he's going to end up receiving a lot more than just bling-bling.

Friends, I want you to notice something. The fact that Peter initiated things with this man shows us that God sovereignly initiates salvation by His grace. Sinners don't look for God, but God goes to look for sinners.

God looks for sinners. He goes looking for sinners. We will never go looking for God. We want things our way. We're wicked, totally depraved.

[19:16] We're dead in our trespasses and sins. But God, being rich in mercy, He goes looking for sinners. He initiates. And God calls for a response, giving the sinner everything they need so that the sinner will respond and the sinner will respond.

Isn't that cool? So, we are in such desperate need and yet God powerfully initiates and then notice God powerfully speaks. The message is spoken.

You must hear the message of the gospel. God is a Savior in a vacuum. By the way, election doesn't save you. Predestination doesn't save you.

Jesus saves you. It's the message of the gospel. Notice what Peter does, verse 6. Peter said, I don't possess silver and gold.

You can imagine what would happen to the guy. He went, I go, what? Then what are we doing? I mean, why are you even talking to me?

[20:22] Hello? You know how you think really fast? I mean, you can just imagine what a guy is saying. He's like, what? You know? He's kind of bummed. I don't have silver and gold. Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee in the name of Jesus Christ.

Notice, the man, Peter does not appeal to the man's felt needs. Churches, they try to do that. They try to appeal to people's felt needs. Peter didn't do that.

Peter would not make a really good seeker driven type church guy. He wouldn't. Because it doesn't appeal to his felt needs. No, he appealed to his real need.

He truly had something he could and would give to him. In the name of Jesus Christ and as we walk, Jesus gives you new life.

New life. New life in the sense that this man had never known life as one able to walk. So things would be truly, drastically, severely different for him.

[21 : 27] It would be a total transformation. But the message had to be spoken. He must speak the message.

He must speak the words. And notice, Peter, he gave this command under the authority of Jesus, who is both Lord and Christ.

Remember, chapter 2? The only one who could heal this man's leg so he could walk. Peter replicated the work Jesus did but as one who did it through the Lord Jesus Christ.

So in other words, when he said to him, in the name of Jesus Christ, it is by Jesus divine authority and continuing power that the blessings of salvation can be granted to you.

in the Lord Jesus Christ, people can experience the blessing of salvation. It's only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[22 : 26] That's the message. We speak to people. It's not Jesus plus, it's not Jesus plus Buddha. It's not Jesus plus Hinduism. It's not Jesus plus Muhammad.

It's not syncretism. There is no syncretism right now. Syncretism is not happening. It's Jesus alone. Christ alone. It's not about having the right formula.

It's about having the right source. Jesus is the source of salvation. And if this man would receive far more than what pounds upon pounds of silver and gold could give to him, he would walk.

And friends, Peter is speaking this to the man. This is what we do or rather what we say. We call people to come to the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved.

Come. Come. Repent. Trust in Christ. Come. That's what we say to people. Come. That's the message of the gospel.

[23 : 32] We tell people, God is a holy just God. You deserve his judgment. You are sinful. You are a lame sinner. You need grace.

And God shows grace and love and compassion in Jesus who lived, who died, and who rose.

Repent. Trust in Jesus. Come. He'll save you.

We're in such desperate need. God initiates powerfully. God speaks powerfully using us. Why? Who knows?

Using us. And then, number four, God powerfully transforms. And then I put in parentheses, a sinner responds. A sinner responds.

This is fun for seven through eight. This is really fun how Luke gives you the details in detail format. The proof of the healing.

[24 : 31] And what happens? Seizing him by the right hand. Raised him up. Immediately, feet, ankles strengthened. With a leap, he stood upright, began to walk.

He entered the temple with him. Walking and leaping and praising God. I love singing that. It's fun. Those are the details that Luke's giving to us.

Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Rapid firepower, machine gun type. Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. Here you see God's great divine power strengthened his legs that had never been used before and never had that kind of strength before.

All of this was given to him and now the man had to respond. It probably was elementary but faith in Jesus was truly required at this point. The man responded. He's given all the ability to respond.

He runs to that point. That's what God does. He transforms the will of the person so they'll run into the arms of Jesus. They'll respond.

[25 : 34] And not only did he leap and stand upright, he walked into the temple for the first time in his whole life. Friends, this is important because it was prohibited for the lame to enter into the temple.

He'd never been in the temple before. Now he could come and he wasn't just walking. He was leaping. He was jumping.

He was ecstatic. Instantly walking and leaping and praising God enjoying the gift given to him through the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Lord Jesus Christ, through the work of Peter. and this healing was a complete success. His life was changed forever. What a picture of conversion.

Isn't this a picture of conversion? It portrays what Jesus did in the hearts and lives of people. They're called to give attention to him.

[26 : 45] They're commanded to walk. They're given his hand. He gives them the strength to respond to him in absolute trust. He pulls them up and they come to him. They respond. It brings to mind Isaiah 35, verse 6, with a lame man leaping.

It's a sign of the salvation that has come to God's people. God's kingdom is here. Salvation has come in the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's kingdom is here. So not only was God affirming Peter and John, communicating that he was speaking through them, not only was God showing that his kingdom was here and judgment was coming, but God shows that he transforms the lives of people.

He transforms this man's whole life. And so when the gospel is proclaimed, we respond in repentance and belief, and God transforms.

He changes. He changes. Are you here today and you don't know Jesus? Are you not a Christian? You are called to respond to God in repentance and trust.

[27 : 57] And God changes you. He'll transform you. What are you waiting for? Come! Come! And God will powerfully transform you.

Are you here today? You don't do know Jesus. We do the same thing. We must repent and trust. We must continue to come in repentance and trust.

We continue to turn away from our sin and we put all our trust and guess what? God keeps transforming us as Christians, doesn't he? It doesn't stop. That's salvation.

It continues on. So we're such desperate need. God initiates powerfully. The message is spoken. God transforms.

A sinner responds. And then people amazingly react. Or people react in amazing ways. How do you want to put that? It's got to go together. Preachers, you know, we've got to do stuff like that.

[28 : 59] So it looks like we're doing something throughout the week. Verses 9 and 10. And all the people saw him walking and praising God and they're taking note of him. What's the reaction of the people?

They're shocked. They're amazed. They're stunned. They're dazed. They're surprised. They're blown away. They saw him walking and praising God and they realize, hey, I've seen that dude. I know that guy is the same guy. They recognize he was the one taking note as being the one who used to sit at the beautiful gate of the temple to beg alms.

I've seen that dude just a moment ago. He's the guy begging for alms. As a matter of fact, he was the same one who's been begging for alms for decades at the temple.

As they realized what happened, they were filled with great wonder and amazement recognizing this was a prime miraculous event because this man was over 40 years old.

[30 : 05] We'll find that out in chapter 4, verse 22. By the way, do you notice three times, three times the text described the man as walking?

He was truly healed. I'm 42. So it'd be like I'm lame from my birth to now. Can you imagine that? It could not be denied. It could not be denied that God has done something amazing. Friend, do not underestimate the pain that you're in now.

Christian, do not underestimate the pain that you're in. The difficulty that you're facing now. God moves in mysterious ways. You never know what He's going to do. Does it mean He's going to hear you?

I don't know that. But do you notice the ricocheting effect that this had? So much so, they began to speak the Word of God with great boldness as a result of this miracle back in chapter 4.

[31 : 29] They were selling their things and giving them to the apostles. More people were coming to Christ. All this because this guy was healed. See, in this guy's mind in his life, I'm lame from birth.

I can't do anything. But God had moved all the way up to this point and God's going to use him to change the lives of thousands of people. As a matter of fact, hundreds of thousands.

As a matter of fact, millions of people because it's etched forever in His Word that this guy was healed. Isn't that amazing? Who would have ever thought that this would happen?

Do not underestimate what God's doing in your life, Christian. So this will be the setup for Peter's sermon of repentance to the people who were impressed with this spectacular event but had not yet responded to what it signified.

They had not yet responded to God's powerful grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. And they will. They will. Notice how we see that the new era has come.

[32 : 37] The kingdom was here. New life comes in the Lord Jesus Christ. God was speaking through these men, giving and revealing to them they needed to be obeyed.

This was serious stuff. God's promise was being fleshed out. People were being transformed by His power. Others were amazed at what God was doing through these men.

The time to respond is now. Come. Come to Christ. Come. Repent. Don't wait because God commands to respond today.

Again, if you're here you don't know Christ. New life comes in the Lord Jesus Christ. The day of judgment is coming. God, yet He's extending His hands to you.

He's like this to you, sinner. He's looking for you, sinner. What are you waiting for? His hands are extended to you.

[33 : 38] He'll raise you up. Come. God will transform your lame, disabled, separated, cut off from Him life to a living, vivacious, close, intimate relationship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Come to Jesus today. Don't wait. Christian, I'm going to speak to you again.

And or member of Cottonwood Bible Church, I'm going to speak to you again. God uses the very gospel to transform us too. God uses this very gospel to transform us because through this gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, He changes us so that we reflect the image of His eternal Son.

So Christian, what do you need to repent of today? Have you forgotten your identity in Jesus? Have you forgotten your identity in Jesus? Christian, are you faking who you really are?

Are you hiding who you really are? Are you pretending you're not as sinful as you really are? Do you really think you can perform for God?

[35 : 01] That's crazy. And does your performance come out in your criticism of others? Instead of showing them grace as God has shown you grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian, what are the idols of your heart? What do you need to give? What do you look to to give you when only Jesus truly and satisfactorily gives to you in His life, death, and resurrection?

Everything's given to you. What do you go to to give you satisfaction? It will not satisfy. You know, it's this gospel that enables and empowers us to live lives that please our Savior, Lord, Master, and Redeemer.

Repent and trust, Christian. Keep repenting and trusting. And again, do not underestimate. God has your life in His hands. Don't underestimate what He's doing in your life.

No matter what you're struggling with, God moves in mysterious ways. Behind a frowning providence, He has a smiling face.

[36 : 19] Let's take some time. Let's think and let's ponder. Let's take a few moments of silence. I'll let you take a few moments of silence to see what we've seen, to ponder what we've seen in God's Word here in chapter 3 of Acts.

Give you a few moments of silence and then we'll do our time of giving. Worship the Lord in song, two songs, and we'll have our closing prayer.

■ two songs, one morning in tel