

# Peters Sermon About Miracles

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[ 0 : 00 ] I feel like I'm from a slightly different generation because I've been singing that hymn ever since I was in knee pants. Has anybody else ever sung it before? I would like Mr. Norman to notice that there are some.

And it's a lovely hymn, and I'm grateful we sang it. We're this morning on the second hymn. We're on a second sermon in the Acts of the Apostles.

And this is the sermon that's preached on the occasion of a famous miracle recorded in Acts chapter 3, which took place at the gate of the temple in which a man who from his birth had been lame and who by the best ministry of his friends was laid at the temple gate, almost the way lottery tickets are sold at the liquor control board store.

There's a certain relationship between the two. Mysterious. You don't understand. It's the same reason that the beggar sat at the gate of the temple hoping to arouse the conscience of the prayers is the reason I suspect that the lottery ticket sellers set up outside the liquor store hoping to arouse the conscience of the drinker.

So it's that kind of familiar scene. The setting is not unlike, I might say, Robson Square. This setting was dominated by the great temple of Herod and all the outbuildings that surrounded it and the walls and all that that was part of a magnificent building scheme fulfilled by King Herod, probably even more magnificent than our courthouse and art gallery.

[ 2 : 02 ] But that's the kind of center of the city situation that they were in where this beggar sat by the wayside and begged for alms.

And when he begged, he perceived that what he needed was alms, but he wasn't aware of his real need because he had no hope of it ever being realized.

And so we very often avoid our real needs because we suspect they will never be met. And I would like you to learn from this passage of Scripture that you must expect your real needs to be met.

And there is one who is able to meet them who knows what they are. And so you don't need to be afraid to acknowledge them. I tell you that partly because I came to this passage in a deep sense of personal depression and attributable to a whole lot of different causes that come together in my life.

And I am just in preparing to talk to you convinced that we must, in a sense, hold up our hands and cry for alms, but wanting something more from a God who is able to meet us in our situation.

[ 3 : 38 ] It has often been my secret desire that following a service like this, that when we have a sense of special need, that we minister to one another in praying for one another and in doing what the apostles, Peter and John, did for this lame man, they fixed their gaze on him, commanded him to look at them, and took him by the right hand and said to him, silver and gold, I can't give you, but such as I have, I give you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, stand up and walk. And that's the ministry that we have to one another. I'm sure that's what we must do.

Lots of us, in the course of our day, see lots of what I would call non-miracles. As I proceeded down King Edward last night in the right-hand lane, and somebody in the center lane took a right turn, that was a close non-miracle.

Simply because I didn't want it to happen, and I didn't need it to happen. I'm grateful it didn't happen. But it's the kind of thing that takes over our lives, and our lives are full of non-miracles.

Surely we have a clear call by God to expect miracles in the circumstances of our lives. And miracles can't be defined because if they could, they would not be miracles.

[ 5 : 35 ] But they are the outpouring in a special situation of the grace and mercy of God and to meet needs which we may know or we may not know, but which God knows and is able to meet.

I'm interested that in this miracle, Peter and John were together. They were ministering together, as it were. Not only that, but we're commanded that we are to pray together.

And I'm sure in the ministry that we have to one another, it's better we should take somebody with us, a second person whom we can seek to in the name of Christ and in the power of Christ and in the faith of Christ to claim God's grace and mercy on a third person.

There's something else about it, too, which strikes me very strongly, and that is that what were Peter and John on their way to do? They were on their way into the temple where this occurred to me, too.

When we kneel, we are almost adopting the position of somebody who is lame from birth. Our legs are buckled under us.

[ 7 : 03 ] And spiritually, that probably illustrates a very important truth. It makes it very appropriate for us to kneel, to pray, because spiritually, we can't walk in our own strength.

Peter and John were on their way into the temple to pray so that just as this beggar held up his hands to them and said, alms, they were on their way to kneel before the God of Abraham, the God of Jacob.

They were on their way to kneel before him and hold out their hands and ask for his grace and goodness in their lives. So they understood in a deep way what he was doing.

And what they were expecting inside the temple, they made this beggar aware of it outside the temple. So, the miracle occurred.

And the man was raised to his feet. And having been raised to his feet, you have that lovely line of scripture which says that he was walking and leaping and praising God.

[ 8 : 30 ] According to page 273 of the book of Alternative Services. Sorry, that one went past you too.

It was a kind of spontaneous response which, of a man's heart to worship. Walking and leaping and praising God and witnessing that kind of worship from one whom they recognized, they gathered quickly around to see what was happening.

And when they gathered around, Peter stood up and preached his sermon. And I want you to hear it as in fact our Peter stands up and reads it to you.

Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this? Or why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?

The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

[ 9 : 51 ] But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you and killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead.

To this we are witnesses, and his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. And the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled.

Repent, therefore, and turn again that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.

Moses said, The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as he raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.

[ 11 : 16 ] And it shall be that every soul that does not listen to the prophet shall be destroyed from the people. And all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and those who came afterwards also proclaimed these days.

You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God gave to your fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

God, having raised up his servants, sent him to you first to bless you in turning every one of you from your wickedness. Peter develops the sermon by telling them first of all that it was not he and John that performed the miracle of healing, that it was one who that very crowd had seen tried, condemned, and crucified in that same city.

And they said, this is how it's happened. It's not us. It's the risen Lord Jesus Christ in his name, by faith in him, this man is made whole before your eyes.

And that Lord Jesus Christ is still among us. Now the response of the crowd there was, you don't mean that that miserable wretch of a man, broken under the weight of the cross, cruelly crowned with a crown of thorns, taken out and suffering an agonizing death on a cross, is the anointed one of God.

[ 13 : 11 ] that can't be. That's how they replied to Peter and John. But Peter said to them in this sermon, yes, I do mean that that is the anointed one of God.

The prophets told you from the beginning that the Christ must suffer and you, albeit in ignorance, have been the means by which that prophecy has been fulfilled.

You have betrayed him. You have turned him over to be crucified. And the very thing which the prophets foretold has been realized at your hands so that the one whom God has sent to be the Christ you have crucified.

Now at that point in Peter's sermon, he might have come thundering down on them and said, and now is the day of vengeance of our God.

But he didn't do that. He said, God does not demand vengeance. He invites repentance and the wiping away of your sins.

[ 14 : 42 ] He promises not vengeance, but times of refreshing coming from the very presence of the Lord.

The times of refreshing which in the midst of the tribulation of our days are the very foretaste of heaven that there is a place of refreshment.

There is a place of renewal. The times of refreshing are to come to give us a foretaste of those good things which God has promised to us in Jesus Christ.

And Peter goes on to tell them, and they probably understood better than we do, but he said, Moses, you remember, promised that there would be such a prophet.

And Samuel and all the prophets that came after him told you that there would be such a one and that you were to hear him and that not to hear him was to be excluded from the people of God if you don't hear the prophet of God.

[ 15 : 59 ] And Peter went on and said to them, and the parallel to us I trust is obvious, Peter went on to say to them, you are the sons of the prophets.

This prophecy is your inheritance. You are the sons of the covenant with Abraham. The promises of this covenant belong to you.

And he brings the sermon to an end and says, in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed. God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first to bless you in turning every one of you from your wickedness.

He was saying, you have seen this miracle. you have seen the very specific blessing of God on this man who was born lame. You've witnessed it.

Now that is the evidence of the nature and character of the God who seeks to bless you. That is the type of the blessing he wants for all of you, every one of you, in the circumstances of your life.

[ 17 : 25 ] God wants that blessing in your life. And I'm convinced that God wants that blessing in my life. And he wants it there for the very specific purpose that because you, by God's grace, are able to appropriate that blessing, you will become the means by which all the families of the earth will be blessed.

The blessing which you receive will be conveyed to others by you. In other words, you are to be blessed in order that you might be a blessing.

someone for whom I have profound respect and who suffers from perhaps good humor, I guess, he tends to think of us as a congregation as a bunch of psychological cripples and not very flattering.

however, probably closer to the truth than most of us would like to admit, but you see, it's not that reality that we are to wallow in.

The reality that we are to wallow in or to be immersed in is the reality of God's purpose to bless us.

[ 19 : 08 ] as he blessed the man born lame and to bless us in such a way that we might be a blessing to others.

God's love Now, I know that in this congregation this morning there are people who are very mindful of being psychological cripples and not unmindful of it myself about me.

And I know others of you are carrying extraordinary burdens burdens and some of them are long range burdens and some of them are difficult to share and some of them are very secret and secrets must be respected.

But I can't see that Peter's purpose in preaching this sermon was not to use that one miracle to tell all the people of God's purpose of blessing for them and that their business was not to qualify for it because all they qualified for, Peter assured them, was the just vengeance of God.

But what they were offered was repent and turn and enjoy the time of refreshing which comes from the Lord. And I think that's important that we do that.

[ 20 : 48 ] it's not a conclusion I want you to come to. It's an experience I want you to share in.

The purpose of God's blessing for you. And I don't want to upset you or threaten you or anything but if you were to look in the prayer book on page 584 you'd see a very simple service in which we do for one another what Peter and John did in the name of Christ and in the faith of Christ for this beggar.

And I know of one and there may be others of you who would like after the service to gather in the chapel over there that we will have this simple service.

Some of you might come because you have been wonderfully blessed and by your prayers and presence want to be a blessing to others. Others of you might stay behind because you sense the need for God's blessing in your life and would like to receive the laying on of hands.

So if you fit into either category you're welcome to stay for that service. What happens usually after a service is that everybody gets up and goes. Mr. Norman plays his postlude and when that's over we have this service for any who choose to stay behind in the chapel.

[ 22 : 49 ] And it won't take long but how silly that we haven't got time to. Anyway, I just invite you to consider that and if you wish to please feel free to and don't feel anxious about it.

Just in quietness and confidence prepare your heart for what I hope will be a quiet time of appropriating God's blessing to us that we might be a blessing to others by our lives.

The man born lame walked and leaped and praised God and by that extraordinary behavior gathered a crowd of people together to hear the message that Peter had to give them.

And so he was a blessing very soon. And I'd like you in claiming the promises of God to find a blessing in your own life and to be a blessing subsequently to others.

So that's the invitation I leave with you. Amen. Amen. Now we sing together hymn number 467 and as we sing the offering will be received.

[ 24 : 26 ] hymn en T ten two Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. We sing together the last verse again.

Amen. Amen.

[ 28 : 14 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Let us pray. Will you turn in your prayer books to page 395?