

The Name of Jesus Christ is Glorified!- Part I

Text: Acts 3

Introduction:

"Wait a minute! That's the lame beggar; the one who always lays out by the gate, 'beautiful,' begging alms...but that can't be? He is jumping up and down and shouting praises to God, clinging to those two ordinary men over there. What happened? How is he doing that? How did he get well? He has been lame from birth. We see him there at the gate all the time. It must have something to do with those two men, to whom he is clinging. Do they have some kind of supernatural powers and abilities? Look, everyone notices what we notice, and they are going over to the men. Let's go find out how this has come to be."

Indeed, in the healing of this lame man, God has set the stage, once again, for the Gospel of His resurrected Son, to be proclaimed to the Jews. In amazement, recognizing that a great miracle has been performed, a crowd rushes over to Peter and John, who are standing with the healed man, in Solomon's Porch. And once again, Peter is moved by the Spirit, to provide the necessary commentary, which is to accompany and explain the miraculous sign that has just taken place.

I. Peter's Sermon

Notice the steps that Peter takes, in providing an explanation for the sign:

1) Read verse 12. Step 1: Peter must get the attention of the people off of Peter and John, recognizing that the tendency of people is to glorify the vessels, rather than the true object of the power that has gone forth, in the healing of this man. The people are marveling, but their natural gaze is fixed upon Peter and John, and so, they must first remove themselves from the focal point, ultimately redirecting the gaze of the people, toward the invisible, but no less, real source of the miracle. There is nothing inherently powerful or righteous in any of the vessels which God uses for His glory. God uses broken, clay vessels, still in repair, to carry forth His divine power and message. And the danger is always for the vessels to think themselves more than vessels. But Peter here gives the pattern, which every preacher and servant of God

must follow: "Look friends, why do you stare at us and ponder us, as if our power or our righteousness have brought about this sign. We are nothing. We are nobodies; mere vessels of God, used to proclaim the real source of this power. We must decrease, but Another; the One who has done this in truth; the source behind this power, must increase!"

2) Read verse 13a. "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers..." Ahhh...he has their attention now, and that, in a very welcoming way. "Israel's God; the only true and living God, who has covenanted with our fathers from the beginning; He is involved in this. He has authenticated, approved and caused this." So far, so good, from the Jew's mind's eye. But now, Peter must draw the critical connection, which will challenge the conscience of the people, and prick their hearts with the arrow of conviction.

3) Read verse 13a-b. "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, *glorified His Servant Jesus...*" "Israel's covenant God has exalted and magnified the Person and glory of His Servant, Jesus. Yes, Jesus of Nazareth is God's Servant, with whom He was well pleased. And our God has exalted and lifted Him up to a very high and prominent position, which is directly *connected to* and *evidenced by* this glorious miracle; this sign that you have witnessed in your presence.

4) Read verse 13. Indeed, our covenant God, glorified His servant Jesus, the one "*whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.*" "The One whom Pilate declared innocent, over and over again; the One whom you demanded to be crucified, over and over again; the One whom you unbudgingly condemned to death; God has raised up and glorified, being well pleased with Him!"

5) Read verse 14. "Indeed, you denied the Holy and Just One. You denied the One, in whom was found no wrong; no sin, whatsoever. And when given the option, you chose Barabbas, a murderer, over Him. You freed the guilty and condemned the innocent."

6) Read verse 15. "Indeed, you killed the very Prince/Originator of Life; you condemned to death, the Author of life itself; the One within whose hands, your very life breath is held and sustained." "But God raised Him from the dead. He did not remain dead. No, He was raised up...this is evidenced right here in this sign. And furthermore, we are witnesses to His resurrection. We have seen Him on multiple

occasions, following His death. The tomb was empty; He met with us; He commissioned us unto a very specific task; and this miracle attests to this reality."

7) Read verse 16. Here is the crescendo, brethren! Here is the link, which binds the present miracle/sign with Peter's present words. "And it is in His Name; it is through faith in His living and very Present reality, that this man, whom you know very well ("you know this man, and the condition of this man from his birth"); it is by the Name and reality of Jesus; it is by the confident faith in His resurrected Person, that this once lame man (from birth), has been healed! Indeed, the faith which comes through Jesus [the faith itself, which is authored by this Jesus] has made this man wholly well, as you see, in your very presence. The miracle cannot be denied. You know the man very well. You have seen him here, day after day. You see his association with us; and we tell you that the power, which we have invoked unto the healing of this man, is not our own, but rather, it has come from the Jesus, whom you had crucified!"

At this point, Peter has done the good work of bringing the arrow of conviction to the hearts of the people. He has properly induced guilt, breaking them down, but only as a means of rebuilding them in Christ. The evidence is in; the sign proves it; the people are guilty; to be sure, uncomfortably guilty; dreadfully guilty, and very prone to despair, if Peter leaves it here, and fails to throw them a life line of hope in grace. And so, now Peter will seek to soothe their pains of conviction, by offering them a Gospel hope, in the Name of the very Jesus, whom they have wrongfully and unlawfully crucified.

But brethren, by way of application for a moment, notice that Peter, before offering the hope of the Gospel, did not shy away from confronting the people with their sin. Peter did not begin his message with, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." He didn't start out with, "Jesus loves you and is your friend." No, he confronted them with their very relevant sin, seeking to break into their consciences, so that they might be led to the place where they mourned their sin, which would in turn lead them to genuine repentance toward God, and faith in Christ.

We live in a time, when people want to eliminate the critical step of confronting people with their sins. And because of this, the Gospel is marred, and many, who make a so-called, "profession of faith in Christ," turn out to be hypocrites. Brethren, people must be confronted with their sin; they must recognize their guilt before God, if they are ever going to embrace Christ as their Savior in truth. God

saves and delivers the desperate, and not the self-righteous. Indeed, people do not want to hear about sin, because who enjoys coming face to face with conviction and guilt? But that is the only path to true life, brethren. If people are to desperately fall upon Christ, they must lose every hope of their own innocence and self-righteousness. If people are going to repent of their sins, and overcome them in any respect, they must behold them for the evil that they are; they must abase themselves, so that they might die to them in Christ. The needed righteousness of Christ is only found by those who find no security in themselves. And so, only those who are broken by conviction, will find themselves properly rebuilt in Christ. [Ex: The painful resetting of a broken bone, which has already begun to heal wrong]