

## INTRODUCTION

Today we read of a lame man healed in the name of Jesus Christ, and consider how the good news of forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ is illustrated in the healing of this man.

READ THE TEXT: Acts 3:1-9

## BODY

For a key to interpreting this miracle, let us read Luke 5:18-25.

Luke 5:18-25 Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. (19) And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus. (20) When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." (21) And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (22) But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? (23) Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? (24) But **that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins**--He said to the man who was paralyzed, "**I say to you, arise**, take up your bed, and go to your house." (25) Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

- Jesus healed that man so the witnesses would know that He has power to forgive sins.

For another key to interpreting this miracle, let us read Luke 24:44-49

Luke 24:44-49 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." (45) And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (46) Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, (47) and that repentance and **remission of sins should be preached** in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (48) And you are witnesses of these things. (49) Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

What is going on is that Jesus Christ is forgiving sins.

His apostles are preaching that forgiveness of sins in His name.

He performed miracles to show that He has power from God to forgive sins.

By His Holy Spirit, He is enabling them to do miracles in His name, to show that He has the power to forgive sins.

This lame man, then, becomes a powerful proof that the Jesus preached by the apostles has power to forgive sins, and a vivid illustration of how this forgiveness of sins comes to a sinner.

I. This man was lame from birth, from his mother's womb;

It is not that this person was fine when he was born, then was made lame by some disease or injury.

A. and so every person is unable to keep God's law, or to do anything to save himself from the wrath of God upon lawbreakers, even from the moment he is conceived

B. As David said in Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

C. As Matthew Henry says, all such congenital disabilities are "designed to show us what we all are by nature spiritually: without strength, lame from our birth, unable to work or walk in God's service"

D. In the words of our Confession 1689.6.3, "conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal"

E. This biblical doctrine was the theology of the Southern Baptist churches officially as recently as 1962. But it was changed officially in 1963.

F. APPLICATION: As soon as we read the bible say, "from his mother's womb," our minds go to babies who die in the womb or who die while they are still small children. We ask, "If we are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, with the guilt of Adam imputed to us, do babies who die go to heaven?" All Christian belief that small children who die go to heaven must be belief that they are saved from God's wrath by the blood of Jesus Christ. Any belief that infants who die in infancy don't need saving, because they are innocent, is not Christian.

II. This man had to be carried, could not even move himself

A. Note that this man could not hobble on crutches, or scoot along the ground, but was so disabled that he had to be carried

B. How humbling, how degrading, how damaging to human pride

C. This is indeed the spiritual state of every person as he comes into this world; he is utterly unable to keep God's law, or do anything else to gain God's favor

D. APPLICATION

1. Let it be that we humble ourselves to think low enough of ourselves as we were before the grace of God came to us.
2. If you are still in your sins, humble yourself to conceive of yourself as this low
3. Resist any doctrine that you can do some good thing to save yourself
  - a. moral
  - b. religious
4. Resist the urge to insert the word "choose" or "choice" into this discussion

### III. This man was just outside the temple gate

- A. Psalm 84 has told us that it is sweeter to be in the temple for one day than be anywhere else for a thousand, and that it is better to be a doorkeeper in the temple than to live anywhere else.
- B. But what bitterness it was to be laid at the gate of the temple, and to see the worshipers entering every day, and not to be able to move himself to enter
- C. And just that is the condition of the sinner! He can be near God's church; he can have a member of God's church for his brother or his mother; he can even sit in the assembly of God's church. But though he sits so near the gate, he is not in!
- D. We have been contemplating in the morning bible study that part of the bitterness of the damnation of sinners on the day of judgment will be grieving over what they have missed.

### IV. This man sought temporal benefits from the worshipers

- A. Those who could go in the temple were going to worship, to gain eternal, spiritual benefits from the Lord
- B. But to this man, the temple and the worshipers in it were not a source of everlasting benefit, but only of temporal benefit. They could provide him with a few coins, with which he could buy enough bread to feed himself.
- C. When some of the very apostles of Jesus Christ, with the gospel of forgiveness of sins in His name, come to the temple, even of them this lame man wants only coins. When those apostles demand his attention, still he thinks only of the money they might give him.
- D. Again, the sinner has the same relationship with God's church.
  - 1. he might think of the church only as a charitable organization from which he may beg some money to pay his bills
  - 2. he might think of the church as a self-help society, where he can learn principles to better himself in this life
  - 3. he might think of the church as an activity center, where he can enjoy various recreations
  - 4. ironically, he might think of the church as a medical clinic, where he can get healed from all his physical diseases, thinking that the miracles of healing done by Christ and His apostles teach us that the same is to be expected today
  - 5. but just as with the lame man begging at the temple gate, always his thoughts are of how he can get temporal benefit from God's church

V. But this man was told that the good news of Jesus Christ is not about money

A. Peter said, “silver and gold have I none”

B. Within the church there is much dealing with money

1. Peter and John were having whole estates laid at their feet, as the wealthy in the church sold their possessions to provide for the needy in the church

C. Later pages in the bible show that providing for the necessities of those in the church who have no way to provide for themselves is an essential duty of the church

C. But it was not their business of the church and its preachers to relieve the temporal needs of the beggar; they did not bear the message of financial well-being in the name of Jesus Christ

D. Instead, they bore the message of forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus Christ! And to prove the authenticity of their message, they were granted power to perform a miracle for this lame man.

VI. This man was told to rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth

A. It would be useless, and indeed cruel, for a person to tell this lame man to walk, for he could not walk

B. How useless also, and indeed how cruel, for preachers and others to tell lost sinners to perform some work of religion in order to be forgiven their sins. You know the littyany:

1. look up here at me
2. raise your hand
3. stand up
4. walk down front
5. ask Jesus into your heart
6. repeat this prayer

C. But it was not useless in the least to tell this man to rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

1. He is Jesus, Yeshuah, which means, “God saves”

2. He is the Christ, the Messiah, which means, “the one chosen, anointed, and sent by God”

3. He is the real man, the man who grew up in Nazareth, the one everyone in Jerusalem knows was crucified and buried, and has heard has risen from the dead

D. In His name, the lame can be told to rise up and walk

E. In His name, also, those sinners dead in trespasses and sins can be told, Believe! Call on His Name! Repent and be baptized!

1. some opponents of true biblical Christianity accuse us of some gap in logic or credibility at this point: we say sinners do not have the power to believe or repent, yet we tell them they have to do that to be saved
2. but see what happens next

VII. This man was pulled to his feet and given strength to walk (7)

- A. Having given the command, Peter also reached out and began to pull the man to his feet
- B. As he did so, the Lord strengthened his poor, helpless, feet and ankles
- C. See here just what God does for sinners. He knows the sinner is powerless to save himself. He can't believe when told to believe. He can't repent when commanded to repent. But when God commands the sinner to believe, He gives that very belief, that faith, as a gift. When he commands the sinner to repent, He grants that repentance.

VIII. This man leaped up and stood and walked (v. 8a)

- A. There is not a slight improvement here, but a radical change
- B. He had to be helped to stand, but now he can stand
- C. Healed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, not only can he stand, but he can walk

IX. This man entered the temple with the apostles, walking and leaping, and praising God (v. 8b)

- A. Now he can enter the temple!
- B. In the temple, he is walking, leaping, and praising God

## CONCLUSION

X. All the people saw him walking and praising God (9)

- A. Let all who see you in God's temple see that you are walking with the apostles of Jesus Christ
- B. Let all who see you in God's temple see that you are praising God for what He has done for you

entered the temple with the apostles  
walking, leaping  
praising God

others were amazed at what had happened to him

JRY:

Do we identify with the lame beggar in this story? We should!

Calvin:

we have in this history a universal type or figure of our spiritual restoring; namely, that as the Word, laid hold on by faith, did restore the cripple to his limbs, so the Lord pierceth into our souls by the Word, that he may restore the same. And, first of all, he speaketh by man's mouth, and pricketh us forward by the obedience of faith; that done, he moveth our hearts inwardly by his Spirit, that the Word may take lively root in us; finally, he reacheth out his hand, and by all means he finisheth his work in us. We gather out of Matthew that miracles must be thus handled.

MacArthur:

to that early church, God gave certain signed gifts. Gifts which were not meant for the building of the body, but which were meant to be signs to unbelievers for the purpose of confirming the preaching of the gospel.

Rayburn:

But, it is also a sign of the work he is doing in the world and how it is done.

Henry:

Thus it is in the healing of our souls, which are spiritually impotent.

Barnes:

Precisely like this is the condition of the sinner. God commands him to do the thing; to repent, and believe, and lead a holy life. It is not merely to attempt to do it, to make use of means, or to wait on him, but it is actually to repent and believe the gospel. Where he may obtain power to do it is another question. It is easy for him to involve himself in difficulty, as it would have been in these cases. But the command of God is positive, and must be obeyed. If not obeyed, people must perish, just as this man would have been always lame if he had put forth no effort of his own. When done, a convicted sinner will do just as this man did, instinctively give all the praise to God,

Henry:

a sign, plainly intimating the help he should receive from God, if he exerted himself as

he was bidden. When God by his word commands us to rise, and walk in the way of his commandments, if we mix faith with that word, and lay our souls under the power of it, he will give his Spirit to take us by the hand, and lift us up. If we set ourselves to do what we can, God has promised his grace to enable us to do what we cannot;

Barnes:

This may be employed as a beautiful illustration of the manner of God when he commands people to repent and believe. He does not leave them alone; he extends help, and aids their efforts. If they tremble, and feel that they are weak, and needy, and helpless, his hand is stretched out and his power exerted to impart strength and grace.

Henry:

he does his part, and Peter does his, and yet it is Christ that does all: it is he that puts strength into him. As the bread was multiplied in the breaking, and the water turned into wine in the pouring out, so strength was given to the cripple's feet in his stirring them and using them.

Call to Worship: Psalm 84:10-12

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

Sermon: Acts 3:1-10 Rise Up and Walk

Benediction: Isaiah 40:31

G 184 We Have An All-Sufficient Word, Camille Piano, Anna Clarinet or sing

T 36 Psalm 29 (Adeste Fideles) Anna Piano, Camille Sing

T 430 I Lay My Sins On Jesus, Camille Piano, Anna Clarinet or sing

G 81 I Will Glory In My Redeemer, Anna Piano, Camille Ukele