

Last Sunday we spent our time looking at the very specific and powerful way the HS moves in our lives. This unnamed man, lame from birth, was lifted up and given a brand new start by the power of Jesus Christ. It's one of those stories that should build confidence in us that God moved back then and will move in ways we never even thought were possible today. That's the way God works, one minute all seems lost, or just another business as usual kind of a day and then out of now where, God steps in and everything changes.

This man that was raised up from brokenness was an incredible thing, but even more so was the timing that God chose. Remember the city was packed with a crowd that was gathered for the day of Pentecost. Sometime earlier the HS had fallen upon the disc gathered in the room and now more than ever the HS was hard at work. Hundreds if not thousands headed to the temple that day and as we'll discover, not just this man but the huge crowd was a part of the plan God had for this awesome day.

Lets back up into last weeks text and get a feel for the flow of today's vs. 9-12 And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this?"

In typical God fashion was using the healing of this man as a catalyst to get the crowds attention. Remember this is the new way of doing kingdom business. God is establishing the fact that even though Jesus is no longer available bodily, His saving power, His healing power and any other attribute of Jesus that you can think of is still available. The works and the wonder of the Jesus are alive and well via the HS

Notice the reaction of the crowd, they were blown away. Reminds me of myself. Even though we know the HS is still available for us today, when God moves, sometimes it's a big surprise. It's almost Like we pray for some situation or someone but we really aren't expecting God to do anything.

Prayer becomes a formality that we display but deep down we tell ourselves, Praying to God is cool and all but eventually I'm going to have to take control, God is just not moving fast enough or at all it seems and it's our own labor, or finances or efforts that are going to have to step up and do whatever it may be that needs to get done. Let me remind you today that prayer is not just something we do to save face and then go to work in and of ourselves, That is dangerous ground. *Zech 4:6 Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,'*

Look at the example of this man here in 5 ***So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.*** Let me ask you this, whatever it may be that you are praying for, are you expecting to receive from the Lord or are you expecting the situation to stay just as it is? In either case, Faith or lack thereof plays a huge part in how we interact with the Lord.

Faith and trust in Jesus allow us to expect the right things. Without faith, what's the point of even trying? Countless stories come to mind that show the results of simple faith. Moses, Noah, Abraham and Isaac on and on the list goes throughout the bible, check out Heb 11 and review the infamous hall of faith. Ultimately through each of their stories we will find a common theme, They expected God to do as He said, and their faith grew as they saw that expectation fulfilled.

Sometimes we can become kind of like this crowd. Amazed at the fact that God is still working. We marvel when God moves not because its so big that it blows our mind, but sadly we marvel at the works of God because we really weren't expecting any change to happen at all. Believers, we need to change our perspective on things. Be encouraged that we are not alone in our doubt.

Last week we looked at the feeding of the 5000. We learned about the faith that it takes to grab hold of what God is wanting to do and yet knowing full well that it is far beyond our abilities. The outcome is of that day is incredible to say the least. You would think that kind of event would produce solid, faithful believers who are able to meet the demands of this world head on. Not so much. ***Mark 6:45-52 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.***

I love these guys!! This is one of those scenes in the bible that I would love to watch on a big screen. They just finish the most awesome dinner ever and Jesus sends these guys on a trip across the sea. You kind of get the feeling the Lord is setting these guys up with another lesson. Notice how Jesus doesn't get in the boat, He sends them over by themselves so that He can go pray. Fast forward a few hours later these guys are still trying to get across the water. They had made it about half way and the wind was really pushing against them.

In typical Jesus style the Lord decides to bail these guys out. I would like to think that at this moment of frustration and exhaustion I would be relieved and somewhat excited that Jesus is headed out to the boat. Miracles aside, at the very least that puts a couple more arms on the oars and best case scenario Jesus just zaps us all over to the shore. Their reaction would be kind of sad if it wasn't so funny. ***And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."***

Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

After all of the miracles and personal time with Jesus, the one on one vocational training by the Master and Commander of the universe and they scream like a bunch of junior high girls when they saw Jesus walking. Why?

They didn't understand the lesson of the loaves and they didn't understand why this Man was walking on the water because at both of these events they really weren't expecting God to show up and just be God. It's a simple lack of faith, the Lord would teach these guys over and over about the blessing of trusting in Him. They were going to need it.

By the time we catch up with Peter here in Acts, that tentative nature is all gone. He is boldly acting on the promises and the prompting of God. Now, Peter is functioning with a full measure of faith. No longer doubting that the Lord can provide, no longer hiding from little girls by the fire, gone is the Peter that thinks he has it all together and in his place is a new creation that has been restored and empowered and refuses to miss another opportunity to share about Jesus Peter puts the focus on where it should lie, Christ. ***Acts 3:12-13 why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?***

It's all about Jesus, it always has been, it always will be. The bigger picture here is coming into view. God has chosen a single person out of a crowd to bring in a huge chance for Peter to share the gospel. ***13-16 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.***

This little section in scripture should be subtitled, "how to witness 101". It is a valuable example of delivering a timely and strait forward message into a field that is ripe for harvest. These people may have been amazed by the work of the HS through Peter, but that doesn't mean that they are saved. Saving faith doesn't come by just witnessing a miracle. ***Rom 10:17 faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*** God has got the attention of the crowd and now He is using Peter to deliver the message.

Notice how Peter starts off..***The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus,*** He makes it absolutely clear which God he is in reference to. There were so many gods around in that day, so many false idols. People were praying to anything and everything they could get their hands on. Sounds a lot like the time we live in today. So many gods, lower case g, so many paths are available for the lost to latch on to and yet salvation lies in only one. Make that distinction clear

when you share with someone.

We might have similar words and similar concepts but just because someone says they worship god doesn't mean they worship our God. The God of the bible. People don't mind if you find god, just stay away from that Jesus guy, He is far to radical and strait arrow. His narrow minded ways do not conform with the modern world, stick with the other gods that really have no boundaries at all.

You can choose to worship anything and people will get behind it, just don't decide to follow Christ, Why? *Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" True power lies in the name of Jesus, in the God of the bible. Peter brings out the big guns..

13-14 whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life,

Peter wastes no time here. He really brings out the big guns. The God of the bible, the God that you say you serve, came to this earth. Jesus, the only begotten Son of God and you rejected Him, delivered Him to be judged and when He was found blameless, with out a single fault, you deny His freedom and instead chose the guilty over the innocent. You killed the prince of Life.

Man that is some brutal stuff. You may think you have some boldness when it comes to family and friends, but Peter is the boldness king. Remember this crowd is at full attention, responding to the healing of this crippled man. The God of love just extended a huge blessing, i wonder what we are going to get? Bam!! You killed the Son of God..happy?

Peter continues..***15-16 whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*** Here is where it all combines. Yes Jesus was the Son of God, yes you delivered Him to be crucified, yes He died, we all saw Him die. But God raised Him from the dead, the grave couldn't hold Him, ***Phil 2:8-11 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*** He and He alone is Lord and is worthy of our praise

Jesus has conquered sin and death, and it's by His name that this man stands. Its in the power of Jesus name that we stand. Through the perfect sacrifice of the cross, Jesus has made a way for us to be saved from penalty of our sin. A blameless and perfect man was sent away and now we have a choice to make, do I believe that Jesus is God and rose from the dead or do i reject all of that as nonsense. There are only two options, no middle ground is available, it's a simple yes i believe, or no i do not. That's about as clear as the Gospel message can be made.

17-18 *"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.* Peter is kinda softening the blow a little bit. But he is not removing the need we all have for a Savior. Just because you aren't aware of your sin doesn't mean it's not there. The most simple vs. in the bible say it the best..*Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. 1 John 1:8-10 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.* Those two vs. by themselves should remove any and all doubt you may have concerning your sin. You and I are sinners, we fall short and we need to be forgiven and accept the sacrifice of Christ. It is a huge mistake to think otherwise.

Peter reminds us here in vs 18 that this is all just part of the plan. The cross wasn't a last resort in case all other attempts to reconcile man failed. The death and resurrection of Jesus was from the foundations of the earth. The new covenant of Christ was set in motion long before the arrival of Jesus to this earth. **Gen 22:16-18** *"By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son — blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

Paul brings clarity to the Seed of Abraham..*Acts 13:16-2 "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.*

"After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.² And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior — Jesus —

Notice Paul makes it clear, a singular seed, not plural seeds, but only one. One seed according to the promise given to Abraham..Jesus is the promise. The Law is fulfilled in the arrival of Christ, the old covenant has been replaced with the Son of the Living God. **Heb 1:1-2** *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,*

The bible makes it crystal clear the path we should be walking.. **Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Now what? *Acts 3:19-26*

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

All of the commotion of the day to deliver a very simple message. Repent. We hear that word a lot in the church because it really is the key to understanding a faith filled life.. You can be ignorant of your sin but that doesn't mean you don't have to face the consequences of those sins, you can be aware of your sin but until you deal with it there is no eternal hope, you can even be sorry for your sin, but until you repent of that sin, turn away from that sin, through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ you are guilty of that sin.

No amount of sorry or trying to do better is going to make the situation better. Peter says to repent and be converted. If you don't know Christ, take the first step, ask Him into your heart and He will change you life. and then stop continuing on the path you are on, turn and go in the opposite direction.

This word converted speaks of an entirely new being. Not just turning over a new leaf and getting your life strait, but converted, transformed in to something brand new *Ps 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,*

You bible studiers will know that this word "create' is the same word used to describe the formation of the heavens and the earth.. *Gen 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* God didn't just fix up an old broken down universe, got it real cheap on Craigslist and flipped, it was a brand new universe, never done before and the same is true of your heart when you ask God to take residence there. You become a brand new creation, born again, able to walk and talk with a new spirit and new awareness that God has forgiven you of the debt caused by your sin. You are eternally secure and safe in the Fathers love.

If you haven't made that choice for Christ, Peter, myself and the believers around you, say repent. Notice there the times of refreshing that follows all of the sin surrounding your life being removed, blotted out and remembered no more. The bible says that God cast your sin as far as the east is from the west, in other words gone, never to come around again. The weight of sin is too much, the heavy load is more than you were ever meant to bear,

Matt 11:28-30 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

You don't have to believe a word I say, search the bible for yourself and you will find rather quickly that God loves you, Jesus came and died for you and Heaven awaits any who will call upon His name.

The Prophet Peter is speaking about here in Acts is a reference to the person of Jesus. Those who will not hear will be utterly cut off, terrifying stuff. There is a way out, Jesus has made that way for us, The bible says that today is the day of Salvation, and the urgency of your eternal choice cant be more important. ***Eccl 12:1-8***

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them":

While the sun and the light, The moon and the stars, Are not darkened,

And the clouds do not return after the rain;

In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, And the strong men bow down;

When the grinders cease because they are few,

And those that look through the windows grow dim; When the doors are shut in the streets,

And the sound of grinding is low; When one rises up at the sound of a bird,

And all the daughters of music are brought low. Also they are afraid of height,

And of terrors in the way; When the almond tree blossoms,

The grasshopper is a burden, And desire fails.

For man goes to his eternal home,

And the mourners go about the streets. Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken,

Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well.

Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Solomon is simply letting us know this is all coming to an end, whether you live to be 100 or not is irrelevant. What we do know is that time is slipping away, and if you haven't made the choice while there is time, you need to make a commitment to Christ. Not a scare tactic just the truth of the bible. God was about saving souls then and you can be sure He is about saving souls today.