



MIDWEEK FILLUP | THE STUDY OF ACTS

ACTS 3

The disciples were now experiencing the abundant life Jesus had spoken about. This is what He meant by their abiding in Him and He in them. Finally, everything made sense; the prophecies, Calvary and the empty tomb. The victory of the Messiah was now clear to them.

In the days to follow Pentecost, the apostles were busy men. They were busy preaching and organizing the crowds of people receiving the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peter later describes the indwelling of the Spirit as ***“partakers of the divine nature” 2 Peter 1:4.*** John refers to it as an ***“anointing received from Him [that] in you” 1 John 2:27.*** Paul describes it as ***“Christ in you, the hope of glory” Colossians 1:27.***

The disciples are now seeing what Jesus meant when he said ***“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.” John 16:24.*** He told them He was the vine and they would be the branches. Now they are discovering what He meant.

What we are seeing in the Book of Acts is the Holy Spirit in hyper-mode. We see God pouring out His power on the world as He establishes His church. He takes ordinary men and empowers them with the Holy Spirit. We see the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit on display (Galatians 5:22-23). **In Acts chapter 3, we see faith being multiplied, the gift of healing and the working of miracles.**

The main purpose of the Holy Spirit which is to build the Kingdom of God. The ultimate work of the Holy Spirit is always to bring people to the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ. As we review chapter 3, watch for this consistency in all that takes place.

THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN

ACTS 3:1-8

The healing of the lame man provides great insight into the work of the Holy Spirit and what was taking place at this time. Let's make some observations and discuss this text.

What was so unique about this miracle? It was spoken by Peter rather than Jesus.

One can't help but think Peter must have asked himself, "What would Jesus do here?" He knew the answer, Jesus would heal the man. Could they? Dare they try? And then Peter did what Jesus would do, he commanded the man **to rise and walk**, *for Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Do we have any evidence the lame man had faith and was thus being rewarded? No. in many other cases of miracles, it was their faith that made them whole but not in this case.

What did the lame man do after he was healed? He started walking, leaping and praising God.

THE SERMON FOLLOWING THE HEALING ACTS 3:11-26

The people were accustomed to seeing the lame man just outside the gate begging. He was there virtually every day. They knew this was truly a miracle and it got their attention. Let's discuss some things that ensued as a result of the healing.

What did the people do when they realized the man was now walking? They ran to Peter.

What did Peter do when all the people gathered around him? He began to preach.

What does Peter say did not heal the lame man (vs. 12)? Power and godliness did not heal him. Peter addresses the two things most religious Jews sought, power and religious impeccability. Peter was showing that nothing of his own doing was responsible the miracle.

What does Peter say healed the lame man (vs. 16)? Faith in the name and where does this faith come from? It comes from Jesus Christ himself as the Holy Spirit. It involved faith on Peter's part but even that faith was a gift from the Holy Spirit.

In verse 19, what does Peter instruct them to do and to what end? Repent and be forgiven and experience abundant life. In order for anyone to experience the forgiveness of salvation, they must first acknowledge the sin in their life. If preaching of grace is to be effective, it must also include preaching of sin and repentance.

The purpose behind the power. The miracle prompted the opportunity to preach the gospel and cause more people enter the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit caused the miracle for the explicit purpose of furthering the kingdom of God.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION...

Can such healings be done today?

Why do we not see such healings today? Why can't our most faithful and studied ministers today not lay hands on people and command their healing? Yes, we can pray for people and we do see miracles as a result of prayer. *But we do not see anyone with complete confidence and power command the healing of people today.*

- **This was a gift afforded only to the apostles following Pentecost.** Clearly the Holy Spirit was being thrust upon the earth in a manner we do not see today as God was establishing His church. The miracles being displayed were getting the attention of the

same crowd who crucified Christ. They were hearing the gospel, repenting and receiving the gift of salvation from the very one they crucified. Healings seemed to serve as an attention getter and a way of validating the power of God and what was about to be said. In other words, it gave authority to the speaker and message that was to follow.

- Today, we have the proof of God's Word. We have the documented accounts of Pentecost. Furthermore, we have generations of testimony of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. We sit on the other side of Pentecost and we observe all that took place. We do not need further proof or validating, we simply must decide to believe or not to believe; to receive or to reject.
- **No one among us has the faith to do what the apostles did.** Perhaps we are too caught up in our own self-centeredness and comforts to have such focused faith to allow God to use us for the powerful activities as healing. Maybe we are missing some gifts of the Holy Spirit because we do not have the faith to put them to work. Do we have limited access to the power of the Holy Spirit because of our lack of faith? This answer to the dilemma is particularly difficult to deal with. If the first answer is correct it is a little easier because God chose to limit the gift of healing to the early apostles and not to today's servants. But if the problem is a matter of faith on our part, then fault appears to be in our lap.
- If the reason we cannot speak the gift of healing is because of lack of faith, what must we do to gain such faith? And, there is the issue of other men who have dedicated their lives to serving God; men far more learned, faithful and spiritual than me. Why do they too pray for God's healing but not command the gift of healing? Is there no one among us who has the faith to be given the gift of healing?
- **Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ."** Is the problem that we are not hearing enough? Do we need to read the Bible more and listen to more preaching in order to have greater faith? The Bible also tells us that trials and struggles build our faith. Perhaps we need more difficulties in my life in order to have the faith to acquire the gift of healing.
- **Faith is not a humanly produced attribute.** As a human being, we have no ability to acquire or buildup my faith. Faith comes from the Holy Spirit indwelling within us. If we somehow thought we had the power to heal people, we would quickly squander it. We would either sheepishly tell someone to rise up but at the same time doubt if they would and worry about what others would think of our failure. Or, if we knew it would work and we could heal anyone we commanded to be healed, we would abuse the power and use it for our own personal gain. Peter would have been the same way.

- The point is that nothing about the healing was Peter. It was the Holy Spirit of God acting through Peter. With the Holy Spirit in complete control, there was no doubting and there was no abuse of power because it was not man at work in any way but the Spirit of God.
- It is pointless to tell ourselves that we can somehow gain faith by our own efforts. We cannot produce faith. Faith is a response to Christ's love revealed to us. Faith comes from hearing and experiencing all that is encompassed in the atonement of Christ. The response is to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and thus we are filled with His Spirit and receive the gift of growing faith. Faith is given to us by Jesus Christ just at the faith came through Christ for the lame man to be healed (vs. 16). **Faith is not a gift we give God but rather a gift God gives us.**
- **The Holy Spirit gives gifts as God wills.** The Holy Spirit who gives us the gift of faith to believe the gospel also gives us other gifts as God wills. Speaking of the gospel, Paul writes in *Romans 1:17* "For in it [the gospel] God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: *The righteous will live by faith.*" As we walk in the faith we are given, we learn to trust the Holy Spirit from one level to the next level; from some to more and more; from what Christ did for us to what He is ready to do through us. In that sense, there is no limit to where the Holy Spirit will take us and our faith in order to accomplish its purpose of building the kingdom of God.
- **All healing is the result of the Spirit of God.** While today we may not observe on-demand healing as recorded in chapter 3 of Acts, we must recognize that all healing is through the power of Christ. He is the giver of all life (John 1:1-5); every breathe we take is a gift from God. There is no healing that takes place apart from Him. All manner of healing power is available to Christians today by the power the Holy Spirit through prayer.
- First, we must pray in order to know what to ask. Then through the gift of faith given by the Holy Spirit, we can ask with confidence for the healing power in the name of Jesus Christ.

