

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 32 (August 4-10, 2013)

Many of God's miracles that were done by the disciples of Jesus following His ascension into heaven are recorded in the Book of Acts. We will look at some of these for the next few weeks.

Sunday -- August 4 (Acts 3:1-11)

The disciples are in the middle of a great revival. They have baptized three thousand new converts on one day (see Acts 2:41) and new believers are being added to that number daily (2:47). You might think that the demands of a growing church would be so great that the disciples would not have time to pray. Instead, we see that Peter and John follow the Jewish set time of prayer (3:00 p.m.) which takes priority over other needs within the church (v. 1). How does this line up with your actions? Are you allowing other demands for your time to push prayer to the back burner? I have never seen a Bible-preaching church fail for lack of members or finances, but I have known **many** to fail or stagnate due to a **lack of prayer**. Peter and John are about to see God perform a miracle. A church that does not pray will fail to see miracles take place within the congregation.

Monday -- August 5 (Acts 3:1-11)

Peter and John have their personal agenda interrupted by a man who has been crippled all his life. He sits daily by the temple to beg for money from the worshippers as they enter the gate (v. 2-3). As the two disciples are about to enter the temple, he asks them for money. Peter and John look him in the eye and say (v. 4), "Look at us!" We saw yesterday that **prayer** is vital if we expect to see miracles in our churches. This verse tells us that **example** is important as well. Those who are spiritually lame outside our church building should be able to **see** Christ living through us. What we **do** will speak so loud that they may never hear what we **say**. Our mission is to get their eyes on **Jesus**, so we must live in such a way as to enhance that goal. Are you ready to tell lost people to look at your life so that they can see how a Christian lives and talks? If not, commit to that goal today.

Tuesday -- August 6 (Acts 3:1-11)

We have seen that **prayer** and **example** are vital if we expect to see miracles in our ministry. A similar point emerges from the same verses (v. 3-4). Spiritually lame people outside the church need your **time** as well. These two busy disciples have "good" reasons why they can ignore the lame man. After all, they may be late for their prayer meeting if they stop to deal with the beggar. Thankfully, they take the time to stop and look deep into the man's eyes. He waits anxiously for their contribution (v. 5) only to hear them declare that they have no money to give him. What they **do have** is much better, however. Peter says, "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (v. 6). Just like the lame man we met last week in John 5, this lame beggar can leave his life of dependency on others and become a vital part of society, able to earn his own living. Will he accept their offer?

Wednesday -- August 7 (Acts 3:1-11)

We have seen that the spiritually blind folks outside the church need our **prayers**, our **example** and our **time**. Today, we will see that they can also use our **assistance**. Peter takes the man by the right hand and helps him up. The disciple has enough faith to believe that God will heal him and the man has enough faith to reach out and take Peter's hand. Together they form a **team of faith** that God honors with his healing power (v. 7). There are folks outside all our churches who are unsaved and, therefore, lame when it comes to walking with Jesus. They need our help! They need someone who will go where they are and tell them about the love of Christ. They may need someone to pick them up in their vehicles and bring them to church. They may need someone to sit with them and introduce them to others who are established in the church. They may need someone to care enough to introduce them to Jesus Christ.

Thursday -- August 8 (Acts 3:1-11)

The newly healed man goes immediately into the temple to testify to the healing power of our Lord. As I said in last week's studies, we should **expect** anyone who has been touched by Jesus to be present in church whenever possible. The other worshippers are amazed as they see the change the Lord has made in his life (v. 9-10). If you have been touched spiritually or physically by Jesus Christ, shouldn't you, like this formerly lame man, be anxious to share your story with other seekers? This beautiful passage ends with a hidden warning (v. 11): "**while the beggar held on to Peter and John....**" If God uses another person to lead you to Jesus, make sure that you hold onto **the Lord**, and not **the messenger**. At this point in my ministry, I often quote John 3:30: "He must become greater; I must become less." Only God is omnipresent and omnipotent. Do not try to usurp His role or put someone else up on a pedestal. Worship God only!

Friday - August 9 (Acts 3:11-26)

The healing of the lame man gives Peter a platform to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. He makes sure that **God** gets the glory for the miracle they have witnessed. Peter also makes them aware that **they** killed the author of life, "but God raised Him from the dead" (v. 12-15). WOW! What happened to the coward who denied Jesus three times before a servant girl? (See Matthew 26:69-75) He is now filled with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:1-13). Peter again gives glory to Jesus (v. 16) and then leads into an invitation to "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out" (17-20). Next, he concludes his sermon by connecting the Old Testament prophets with the New Testament Christ (v. 21-26). What a powerful message of redemption! We'll see tomorrow how the religious leaders accept this message.

Saturday -- August 10 (Acts 4:1-17)

The religious leaders arrest Peter and John for preaching salvation through Jesus Christ (v. 1-3). (I expect to live long enough to have that happen to me too.) Nevertheless, the people respond and the church grows to 5,000 converts (v. 4). The disciples have the opportunity to testify before the Jewish leaders, and Peter reminds them that **they** crucified God's Son, "but God raised Him from the dead" (v. 5-10). He, then, confirms the truth taught by our Lord in John 14:6: Jesus is the **Cornerstone** and He, alone, offers salvation to the world (v. 11-12). The men are amazed that God can use unschooled, ordinary men (v. 13—This verse is on my tombstone), but they cannot deny the miracle because the "lame" man is running, jumping and praising God. Perhaps **your** personal testimony can start a revival where you worship!