



A Lame Man is Healed

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Acts 3



Peter and John saw the REAL need of a lame man. The man thought that his greatest need was to have money to buy the things he needed. Peter knew that God had a much bigger plan for this man. Through the power of the name of Jesus, Peter healed the man. The lame man suddenly had a new life, and the power of Jesus was made known to everyone around him.

Day #1: Peter Restored

Have you ever done something you were ashamed of? Have you hurt someone's feelings or let your parents down? This has happened to everyone. When you think back to that time, you can remember the feeling of shame and wishing you had done things differently. Many times we have the chance to apologize and to make things right with that person. Think about how relieved you were when you were forgiven and your shame was wiped away. The disciple, Peter, lived out a dramatic example of shame and restoration.

Peter was one of the first men that Jesus invited to follow Him. Peter would have been a very interesting person to hang out with. He was never slow to speak his mind. He was not shy or timid. He always jumped into a situation with both feet. Life with Peter would have never been dull! Peter was the first disciple to claim that Jesus was indeed God's Son, the Messiah (Matthew 16:16). And, many times, Peter showed that he had great faith in Jesus (Matthew 14:30, Luke 5:5). But, at times, Peter also failed.

On the night Jesus was arrested, Peter promised that he would never leave Jesus. Jesus told Peter that before the night was over, Peter would deny that he even knew Jesus three times (Matthew 26:33-34).

But Peter said, "I may have to die with You. But I will never say I don't know You." - Matthew 26:35a

Of course, it happened just as Jesus said it would. After Jesus was arrested, Peter told three different people that he was not a disciple and that he did not even know Jesus (Matthew 26:69-74). After he did this, Peter was very disappointed in himself. Matthew 26:75 tells us, "He broke down and sobbed." Peter spent many days in shame, knowing he had done the opposite of what he said he would do. In his fear, Peter abandoned Jesus.

After Jesus was crucified, and arose from the dead three days later, He spent time with the disciples once again. In His loving mercy, Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to come back into a good relationship with Him. Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. Jesus asked not once, but three times. Three times, Peter said that he loved Jesus. Peter was not as bold as he was before. He measured his words and answered very carefully (John 21:15-19). With these questions, Jesus wiped away Peter's shame. Then, Jesus made it clear that He would use Peter to build God's kingdom. God specializes in making good things out of bad things!

Day #1 continued:



God uses people who have made wrong choices to do His work. If God only used perfect people, who would He use? (There is no one who is perfect! Romans 3:23) Remember, it is God who chose you to follow Him, and God will work through you.

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. - Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

Day #2: Spirit Power

Before Jesus went back to heaven, He told His disciples that He would send the **Holy Spirit** to live inside them and give them power. He told them to go everywhere to tell people about Him.



But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. - Acts 1:8 (NLT)

The Bible tells us that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit in a mighty way (Acts 2:1-4). Peter, who had once denied knowing Jesus, now stood and preached about Jesus to thousands of people! He spoke to the Jewish people. Many of these people had been involved in crucifying Jesus (Acts 2:23). Peter spoke *boldly* to the very people he was once afraid of! Peter explained that the Old Testament prophets had told all about Jesus. Peter reminded them that Jesus did miracles in front of them, and that God raised Him from the dead (Acts 2:16-36).

When the people heard this, their hearts were filled with shame. They said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" - Acts 2:37

Peter understood their shame. Peter told them to turn from their sin and put their faith in Jesus. He told them they would be forgiven, and they, too, would receive the Holy Spirit. *Thousands* of people who heard Peter's words put their faith in Jesus and were baptized (Acts 2:38-40). **It was God's power, through the Holy Spirit, that gave Peter the ability to speak boldly about Jesus to this crowd.**

The believers met together daily to encourage one another and praise God. The disciples performed many miracles and more people put their faith in Jesus every day.



Do you ever feel like you are afraid to tell others about Jesus? Do not make the mistake of thinking Peter was able to work up his own courage to be bold for Jesus. Jesus promised power through the Holy Spirit, and that was the key! This is the SAME Holy Spirit that lives inside ALL believers today (1 Corinthians 6:19). God's Spirit gives us power to say the right words about Jesus. Another apostle, Paul, put it this way:

I came to you in weakness - timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God. - 1 Corinthians 2:3-5 (NLT)


When you don't have the right words to say, or the boldness to speak, pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the right words and the courage to say them.

Day #3: God's Plan


One afternoon, Peter and John were going to the temple to pray. They came across a crippled man. This man had been unable to walk since he was born. Every day, he was carried to the Temple gate. He had to beg people for money, because he had no way to work to earn money for himself.

Try to imagine how this man felt. He had never been able to run or play as a child. And, now, as an adult, he could not work to earn money. He had to depend on the pity of strangers. He even had to depend on someone to carry him to the Temple gate every day. Back in these times, many people believed that a person had done something bad to deserve their illness (John 9:2). He was forty years old (Acts 4:22). By now, he was used to people turning their heads so their eyes would not meet with his. Every day he sat on the ground, looking up at everyone who passed by. Surely, he had given up ever hoping to be made well. His best day was a day when a stranger glanced his way and tossed a silver coin in his direction, although the person most likely would not even stop to speak to him. A simple coin was the most this crippled beggar ever dared to hope for.

When the beggar saw Peter and John about to enter the Temple, he asked them for money. There was something very different about these two men. They did not keep walking past the man like most people did. They did not just toss a coin toward him. They had something better to offer him.


 Peter looked straight at him, and so did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man watched them closely. He expected to get something from them. - Acts 3:4-5

The beggar hoped for no more than a coin. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, Peter and John knew God had a much bigger plan for this man. Peter and John LISTENED to the Holy Spirit. They were on their way to pray, but they interrupted their plan to do what God wanted them to do. Tomorrow we will see what amazing thing God had in store for this crippled man.

 Often, we have our whole day planned out. Our plans can be good plans - plans to do good things. But we must always LISTEN to God. When the Holy Spirit makes us aware of a need, we must be willing to help someone, listen to someone's problem, or tell someone about Jesus. We must not see these things as an interruption of our day, but as an opportunity to be used by God!

Day #4: Crippled Beggar

The crippled man hoped that he might get a coin from Peter and John. With that coin he could buy a loaf of bread, or perhaps, some oil to heat his home. But God longs to give His children much more than we could ever dream or hope for (Ephesians 3:20).


 Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk." - Acts 3:6

Peter grabbed the man's hand and pulled him to his feet. Remember, this man had never walked before. Have you ever seen a baby learning to walk? It takes weeks and weeks for a baby's legs and ankles to become strong enough to carry his weight. But, read how God enabled the once-crippled man to walk.

At once the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. He went with Peter and John into the temple courtyards. He walked and jumped and praised God. - Acts 3:7b-8

Day #4 continued:


Immediately after Peter called on the powerful name of Jesus, the man was able to walk! Not only did he walk, but he jumped and praised God! It must have been quite a sight to see this man, inside the Temple courtyard, jumping and shouting for joy. Those who had come to the Temple to pray quietly did not expect to hear a grown man shouting out like a child. All heads turned to look at the healed man who simply could not contain his excitement. He had been set free from a lame body that held him captive for forty years. As their attention was drawn to the man, all of the people recognized him as the beggar they passed by every day. The Bible says the people were amazed at what had happened to the man.

 Ephesians 3:20 says, "God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. He does everything by his power that is working in us." Discuss how God's plan of healing the man was FAR better than what the man had hoped for - getting a few coins. (The man did not have to beg any longer, the man could work from now on, no one had to care for him anymore, and most importantly, God received glory!)

Day #5: Higher Purpose


When was the last time you saw something really exciting? Maybe it was it a big goal in a soccer game, or seeing your new puppy for the first time. Some things are so exciting, or so out of the ordinary, that we remember them for a long time. The day the lame man was healed at the Temple was a day like that for sure. The Bible says that all the people in the temple were amazed and they came running to him (Acts 3:11).

Peter took this opportunity to tell the good news of Jesus to the crowd. Peter gave all the credit for the miraculous healing to God.

 Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. "People of Israel," he said, "what is so surprising about this? And why stare at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness? For it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - the God of all our ancestors - who has brought glory to His servant Jesus by doing this." - Acts 3:12-13a (NLT)

Once again, Peter told the crowd that they had sentenced Jesus to die on the cross even though He was completely without sin. Peter proclaimed that God raised Jesus from the dead. And Peter explained how all the Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled through Jesus. Peter wanted the crowd to place their trust in Jesus so their sins would be forgiven. In Acts 3:19, Peter said, "So turn away from your sins. Turn to God. Then your sins will be wiped away." Because of this event, **thousands more** people believed and placed their trust in Jesus (Acts 4:4).

In this story, we see that God used the lame man's disability for a GREAT purpose. God's purpose was MUCH higher than one man's ability to walk. If God's ultimate goal was for this man to walk, God could easily have made him to be born without being crippled. God's plan was that thousands of people would be drawn to Him when the man was healed. If we could go back and ask the once-crippled man about his disability, he would say it was worth suffering for a time on earth so that thousands of people would gain ETERNAL life.

 God may choose for us to be in a difficult situation for a time. Pray that no matter what situation you are in, God will use it for the good of His kingdom. Remember that everything that is done for His kingdom lasts FOREVER.

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them. - Romans 8:28