

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Fourth Sunday After Easter, April 24, 2016**

✠ ✠ ✠

(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 324:1-5, 209:4, 385:1-4, 407, 644.

Lessons: Isaiah 55:1-11, Acts 3:1-10, Matthew 15:29-31.

Sermon Text: Acts 3:1-26

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Like the event in last week's sermon, this miraculous healing takes place after Pentecost. Today Peter heals a man who had been lame and unable to walk all his life.

New Testament miracles, like this one, had the goal and purpose of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Wouldn't it be great if Jesus' disciples could perform such healing miracles today? However, like other miracles performed by the followers of Jesus after he ascended into heaven, this is a unique event. We never dare say that God doesn't perform miracles today, but such miracles may be very rare.

Alleged miracles we hear about today more often are used for purposes other than sharing the marvelous gospel of eternal salvation. In fact, there are preachers who claim to perform miracles and then they personally benefit in some way from such events. We do know, however, that Satan has power to perform such miracles, counterfeit miracles, since they do not glorify God. Because of this, we today are rightly skeptical of some miraculous events although Christians must glorify God in all things.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name and power of Jesus Christ, Peter and John heal a 40-year-old man. This attracted much attention in the temple area, for everyone knew he was lame from birth and now they were amazed to see him walking and jumping around giving God, Peter, and John praise and thanks for his healing.

We see as a result of today's miracle that Jesus Christ is plainly proclaimed. Today let's follow carefully as

**PETER HEALS A LAME MAN**

- 1. Peter's miracle.**
- 2. The man praises God and wants to praise Peter.**
- 3. Peter gives all praise and credit to God, and preaches Jesus Christ.**
- 4. He urges all to repent and turn to Jesus for forgiveness.**

Peter healed this man in order to create a special opportunity to preach the Gospel to others. After he healed the lame man, he immediately told people by whose power the miracle had been done – and pointed the onlookers to Jesus. We are not able to heal people the way Peter could, but the Lord has given us other gifts. We can certainly use these gifts to point others to Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Peter used this opportunity to preach Law and Gospel, to proclaim Christ crucified for their sins. He also reminded them that they were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion. Unless they repented, God would punish them for all their sins in hell for eternity. So Peter exhorted them: "Repent and be converted so that your sins may be blotted out." After this incident, we read in the next chapter: "*many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.*" Acts 4:4 (NIV) God does work in mysterious, wondrous ways – far beyond our understanding, comprehension, talents and abilities.

In our text we have a pretty straight-forward event, although it shows the miraculous power of God. At this time in Judea, those who were crippled from birth didn't have many options other than to beg. Someone carried him every day to a well-known place in Jerusalem, a gate on the east side of the temple.

Luke is very specific about this event. At three in the afternoon, when many were praying in the temple area, a crippled man was ***“was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.”***

He saw two men coming and ***“he asked them for money”***. Peter got his attention, and he was expecting money. ***“Then Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk.”*** This was not what the man was expecting. But it was more valuable than simply some money. And before this event is over, Peter and John give this man – and many others – something that is much more valuable, priceless, the things that Isaiah was telling about in our Old Testament lesson.

But notice that God gave Peter the gift of healing as well as the boldness to preach and to spread the message of the Word of God.

Peter tells this crippled man to get up and walk, not because he, Peter, had special power, but Peter had faith that Jesus Christ could make this man stand up and walk.

So Peter helped him stand up ***“and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk.”*** Notice that this healing was done ***“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth”***.

This man didn't just say ‘thank you’ and go on begging. ***“Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.”*** People recognized him and saw him not just walking but jumping and heard him praising God. They wondered how in the world this could have happened. Peter gives the answer: ***“When Peter saw this, he said to them: ‘Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?’”*** Peter freely admits that he personally did not heal this man. He was simply God's messenger and the vessel through whom God did the healing.

Then begins his marvelous sermon, preaching both Law and Gospel, with an appeal to repentance. Peter immediately identifies who is responsible. ***“The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.”*** Jesus Christ is to be glorified in this event, not the man who appeared to do the healing.

In his sermon, Peter gives many specific details reminding them – and perhaps telling some who had never heard the history of the past few months – about who this Jesus Christ of Nazareth is. He doesn't tell jokes or personal anecdotes, but he gets right to the point. He boldly proclaims the truth of God's Word to them.

He jumps right to the heart of the message. He proclaims sin, their sin to them. ***“You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.”*** Wow! These were events which happened just months earlier, so it was surely fresh in the minds of many of Peter's hearers. Now Peter likely knew that what he was saying was not popular. To bring up such a sore spot with the Jews would surely get him into trouble with their leaders and any of his hearers who happened to be among those who at Jesus' trial who had been demanding that Pilate should release Barabbas, a murderer and revolutionary and a terrorist instead of the sinless Jesus to walk among them. Peter's words surely would not be welcomed by those who had shouted “Crucify him!” to execute Jesus.

Peter is telling these very people that they killed Jesus, whom even the Roman governor had recognized as not guilty of the crimes of which he had been accused.

When Peter speaks of their having disowned ***“the Holy and Righteous One”*** that is plainly a reference to the long-awaited Messiah whom God had promised to send.

Peter personally disclaims any credit for the healing and then tells them more about this Messiah, the Savior of all mankind. ***“When Peter saw this, he said to them: ‘Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.’”***

He points to the power of Jesus, and the power of faith in Jesus as the cause and power for accomplishing what has happened in front of their eyes. ***“By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.”***

How powerful is faith? What can faith do? It can do this and more. It can save eternally. It can not only make the lame walk, it can open the gates of heaven, so that believers can enter in because Jesus Christ has taken away all their sins.

When we see this lame man walking, we might wonder ‘what is the picture of the lame walking?’ We might be reminded that we cannot approach God by ourselves. We cannot walk to God by ourselves. We confess that we ‘cannot by our own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ my Lord. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.’

Having showed their sinfulness, Peter now tells them of what God accomplished through the death – and the resurrection, too, – of Jesus. He gives them an exhortation to repent so that their sins can be wiped out.

Here is the plain Gospel. ***“Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”*** Peter assures these Jews that Jesus is the long-promised prophet and Messiah.

***“For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.’ Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’ When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.”***

Of course, this message about Jesus did not sit well with ***“the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees [who] came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.”*** Acts 4:1-3 (NIV)

Although Peter’s message was unpopular, just as the proper preaching of Law and Gospel isn’t appreciated by many today; that did not hinder or deter the followers of Jesus Christ from continuing to proclaim all the truths of God’s Words. We read that even through Peter and John were put in jail because of this, ***“many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.”*** Acts 4:4 (NIV)

God did his work through the witnessing of his faithful followers and many were blessed unto eternal life. Who knows what blessings will come from our simple witnessing? May God give us the courage and the words to speak faithfully about the hope that Jesus has put into our lives! Amen.