

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH

Acts 3:1-26 (key verse 6)

“Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

In this world one of the most valued thing is money. This is because we know what we can do with money, money can provide us with an illusion of a sense of security and good life. Most of the time when a friend or relative needs help it involves money. There is a saying, that money makes the world go round. However, through this passage we learn something amazing, though Peter and John did not have money, they had something more valuable than money. They had faith in the name of Jesus and a shepherd heart for the beggar. The beggar at the gate asked for money, however he received healing and could walk for the first time in his life. This was an amazing waork of God through faith in the name of Jesus Christ. May God help us repent and have faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. May we too like Peter learn to have a shepherd heart through faith in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!

Look at verse 1, “One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.” Peter and John had become men of prayer, this was an amazing transformation in their lives. Through prayer they could spend time with the risen Jesus in personal fellowship. The more they prayed the more they wanted to pray. Prayer gave them wisdom and strength. In the past they would fear to come to the temple in order to avoid religious persecution. However, now they boldly enter the temple. They had become men of courageous faith because of a prayerful life. Let us now see who they met as they went to pray, verse two says, “Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.” The temple gate was the best place to be at in Jerusalem in order to beg because Jerusalem was a religious place and many went in and out of the temple. However, this man had to be carried daily to the temple gate because he was crippled from birth. This means he had never walked in his life. As a boy he never had chance to play soccer with other boys. Now as a grown up man also could not find a descent job and contribute to society. He had to be carried to the temple gate, which also shows that he was a burden to society. Perhaps those carrying him to the gate got a share of what he made at the gate that day. Which means they used his disability to make money. This man had probably mastered how to spot people who would give him some money. It also appeared to him that Peter and John were people who could give him some money. So we read in verse 3, that when he saw Peter and John he asked them for money. Look at verse 4-5, “Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.” Peter looked straight at the men’s eyes, he gave him full attention. The man also in turn gave them full attention expecting to get something from Peter and John. Usually we want to avoid direct eye contact with a beggar, especially when we do not have money to give them. Many times giving them direct eye contact makes us also feel more sad and shameful, same time making the person begging feel hopeful we would give them something. So we choose to ignore them and give them a cold shoulder. However, Peter and John looked straight at the man. They were shepherds in the image of Jesus, ready to give to those in need. Even the beggar was not looking at Peter and John with full attention until they said, look at us. Let us see in verse six how this interaction went.

Let us all read verse 6, “Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Peter did not have silver or gold. Even though this was what the man was expecting. Yet still Peter and John gave this man their fullest attention. They were passing by the gate not to give this man attention, however, when the man stopped them with a request for money, they did not just pass him by, they gave him their attention. When they looked at him carefully, they could love him with Jesus’ shepherd heart. They did not have what the man wanted or expected, however they had something different and were more than eager to give this man what they had. For they said, Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth walk. Though Peter did not have money, he had faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Because of Peter’s shepherd heart for this man, he could look beyond what this man wanted, and see what this man needed. What this man wanted would not solve his fundamental problem. He needed to walk and be turned to God. He needed healing from his beggar’s mentality. Peter wanted to solve this man’s problem from the root. His root problem was from birth. But who could solve this problem? Peter knew full well that only

Jesus could do this. And so Peter said, In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. Peter was a mere human being like us, also had weaknesses and strengths. However, through the Holy Spirit he had faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In the name of Jesus, Peter could call on the man to walk because of the authority of Jesus Christ. Only Jesus has the authority to solve this man's root problem. And so Peter gave this man what he had. For Peter had faith in Jesus of Nazareth, and because of this faith, Peter could have Jesus shepherd heart for this man. Peter could then seek to be used by Jesus in this man's life even though he did not have what this man expected, which was silver or gold. This is really remarkable and goes to show the power of having faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Peter could now say to a crippled beggar with full conviction, "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Let us see what happened to the man.

In verse 7 we see that when Peter said walk, it seems the man remained there still not able to even stand up. Peter did not rebuke him to get up. Rather, Peter through faith helped him up, and as he did so, the man's feet and ankles became strong [7]. The man jumped to his feet and began to walk. He even went into the temple courts, praising God [8]. He was not only healed physically but also spiritually. Imagine for how many years he had been coming to the temple gate as a beggar. With victim mentality, hopeless to ever be healed. Went to the temple gate daily yet never praised God and never saw the need to enter the temple. The temple is a place of God's presence, where people entered to go pray and have fellowship. Yet this man never entered the gate, got stuck at the gate because of his beggar's mentality. However, today he entered the temple praising God, as though he brought liveliness into the temple. This is all because of faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Jesus could change this man from victim and beggar's mentality into being his witness. Before he could not give anything, now he can give praises to God, because of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. 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..., and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him [9-10]. There is power in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth through faith.

Do we have faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth? When a stranger, a friend or family member need help from us. What is our ultimate hope in helping them? Even when we do not have what they are expecting from us, where is our hope, how can we still help them. I have realized over many years of my life, that many times opportunities to present Jesus to others are most welcomed by others, when they come to me for help. Not to say this is the only time we should share the gospel of Jesus to others, however those moment when others come to us for help present a great opportunity to point them to Jesus Christ by faith. To have Jesus' shepherd heart for them, having hope that they will experience the power of Jesus. So they too may repent and turn to God and filled with praise for God. As we always say, that our ministry was founded by Jesus Christ through the faith of Korean missionaries. They came to South Africa with broken English, however one thing they had was faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. They could then be bold and overcome language barriers, visiting universities campuses to share the only thing they had, which is their faith in the name of Jesus Christ. We also have sisters and brothers in our various fellowships who I believe have been giving the only thing they have which is faith in Jesus Christ. Because student generally do not have money, however I am always moved to see our sisters and brothers giving the only thing they have, their faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This also became so clear, during the peak of covid in the year 2020 - 2021, when Universities restricted entrance to campus. It was our students through faith who brought new faces to our ministry. Because of faith in Jesus, they could have Jesus shepherd heart towards their friends and other students who were strangers to them. Many new students could join us in worship service to praise and sign to the lord. Also during orientation week, it was our students through faith in the name of Jesus Christ who worked sacrificially to give faith in the name of Jesus Christ to new students. Indeed faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth overcomes the impossible. May God bless our ministry with faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

South Africa needs faith in the name of Jesus Christ. There are so many spiritually crippled young people, some from birth some from broken families and some from this life situations. When we are spiritually sick we may not know what is the real root problem. Only Jesus can heal us from our fundamental problem. I pray that God may help us learn Peter's faith in the name of Jesus Christ so we may turn to God.

People knew this man very well and were used to seeing him at the gate. However, now they were seeing him on his feet standing with Peter and John [11]. They came running to Peter and John for they could not believe what they saw. There was confusion and shock in what had happened. Peter rebuked the people on why they were surprised, they stared at Peter and John as though they had some super human powers [12]. However, Peter with Jesus shepherd heart wanted the people to understand. And since they were Jewish people, Peter started to explain what was really happening and what they should do?

Firstly, by faith in the name of Jesus, Peter reveals who and what is behind this great miracle. Look at verse 13, “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.” Through the healing of the beggar, it showed that God had a seal of approval upon Jesus Christ. Since the man was healed through faith on the name of Jesus Christ. So Peter revealed that their God, the only true living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has glorified Jesus who is God’s servant. The amazing work was through the authority of Jesus Christ. However, they had disowned him and even asked a murderer be released instead of Jesus Christ. Peter without any sense of apology, revealed to the Jews that they had killed Jesus, the author of life [14-15]. That what they were experiencing today was because Jesus is alive, look at verse 16, “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 completely healed him, as you can all see.” It is Jesus name and the faith that comes through him that gave healing to the beggar, Jesus name is with effect because Jesus is alive, God raised him from the dead. Therefore faith that comes through Jesus is not in vain but can be witnessed practically. The man was crippled now he was for the first time in his life, not only walking but jumping and praising God, hallelujah!

Secondly, what then should they do, they should repent and turn to God, Peter did not beat around the bush, but directly revealed their sin. That they had killed Jesus and were in unbelief of the person whom God had appointed to be the savior of the world from sin. Peter does not condemn the people to hell or lose hope for their salvation. He knows that he too was sinner like them and disowned Jesus three times. However, Jesus restored his faith and forgave him. It was this grace that Peter also believed was also available for the religious leaders. With Jesus shepherd heart, he reveals to them in verses 17-18, that they had acted in ignorance, for Jesus suffering led to death and his resurrection was the fulfillment of the scriptures foretold by the prophets [17-25]. For we read in verse 26 that, “When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.” This is a great blessing from God through Jesus Christ. What then should they do?

look at verse 19-20, “**Repent, then, and turn to God,** so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. 20and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.” Now that Peter had made clear the scriptures and revealed that it is Jesus Christ of Nazareth who should be the object of their faith. And now because of Jesus name and faith that comes through his name, the crippled man and a beggar was completely healed, not only that but was jumping and praising God. The question left in their hearts was, what then should we do? Peter gave them a clear life direction, to repent and turn to God which is to practically trust in the name of Jesus and have faith in Him. Once they repent three things will happen, firstly, their sins will be wiped out, secondly, times of refreshing will come from the Lord and thirdly, they will receive and experience Jesus personally. Peter was challenging them to turn away from their false ideas about Jesus, to really turn away from trusting in their own human abilities and effort for salvation, from ignorantly following their leaders but to turn to God. If they could do this they would experience Jesus personally which is such a refreshment to the our soul. This is what happens when indeed we repent, we get refreshed because the great burden of sin would be removed from us, we can then praise God with much thankfulness like the beggar guy. It was clear that he was refreshed and had received faith in the name of Jesus, he was jumping and praising God like a little child. It is clear that repentance is the best thing we can ever do in our lives, for through repentance we will be refreshed and experience Jesus newly (the author of life). I believe a life of a Christian is a life of repentance, a life of turning to God, continual struggle day in day out to live by faith in the name of Jesus Christ. And this is possible because Jesus lives and has entrusted those who have faith in his name with the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter says, repent and turn to God. May we repent and turn to God

so that we too may have Jesus of Nazareth and the faith of Peter In our hearts so we may live by His faith and be refreshed daily. As we daily repent, may God also use us to have Jesus shepherded heart for others.

In conclusion, faith through the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth made the man walk for the first time in his life. May we have Jesus shepherd heart for others so we may give them what they fundamentally need through faith in the name of Jesus Christ. A man could be turned from a beggar's mentality into a man of God, a worshiper of God. May we repent and turn to God through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the amazing work of God available for any person who would but have faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Because Jesus is alive, our faith in him is not in vain. May we repent and turn to God through faith in the name of Jesus Christ, so we may experience God's amazing work, both in our lives and the lives of others. Amen.