

# The Crippled Is Healed (Acts 3)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] take a seat and let me read Acts chapter 3. So please, if you could all turn your Bibles on or flip them to Acts chapter 3. So as most of you know, we have been going through a series through the book of Acts, and this is us hearing about our first, the earliest Christians being empowered by the gospel. So turn with me to Acts chapter 3, and I'm reading for the NIV, but feel free to follow in the translation you've got in front of you.

This is the word of the Lord, Acts chapter 3. One day, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer at three in the afternoon. Now, a man crippled 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. When he saw Peter and John going into temple courts, about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, look at us. So the man gave him his attention, expecting to get something from them. 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. 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 they came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. 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. 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 ask 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. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus's name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

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 Messiah would suffer. Repent then and turn to God, that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah 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.

For Moses said, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people. He 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.

[ 4 : 1 7 ] 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.

All right, let's have a listen, and thank you so much for preaching for us. Well, first of all, it's just really great to be here and just spend this time with you. And just really encouraging just to see so many young adults. We're blessed at Howard Baptist to have quite a few young adults as well. And they're always an encouragement and they're so enthusiastic about the word. So it's just great to see you all and to see what William has been doing with you.

And isn't this passage that we just read such a fantastic passage? Let's just commit this time to the Lord in prayer. Let's pray. Lord, I just pray that the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts may be acceptable as we study your word this evening. Lord, bless our time in it, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

You know, 3,000 people were saved that day when Peter first preached the gospel at Pentecost in chapter 2. You know, those 3,000 people repented of their sin, they were forgiven, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit was devotion.

When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit or controlled by the Holy Spirit, there is devotion. These people devoted themselves to worship, to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to prayer, and to evangelism.

[ 6 : 40 ] They were devoted. And this is what happens when people are filled with the Spirit or controlled by the Spirit. There is a devotion there to the Lord. These are the marks of those who are spirit-filled.

Even more than that, there is a Christ-likeness about their lives. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

These are things that will characterize a person who is spirit-filled or a person who is being controlled by the Holy Spirit. You know, for this early church, the time must be really exciting seeing all these people.

Imagine having 3,000 come to the Lord in one day. What would you do with them all? The church was on the move. The Spirit of God was working in their hearts and lives, and the Lord was adding to their number daily.

Quite amazing, wasn't it? Imagine if every Sunday, all of a sudden, there'd be five or six new people in this congregation.

[ 8 : 01 ] Here, the Lord was adding to their number daily. Oh, gee, there's my phone going. Yeah, adding to their number daily.

Now, it would be easy to think that for the early church that life must have been a breeze, that this was exciting times for the life of the church.

However, it doesn't take long for the enemy to rouse his forces against the forces of righteousness. Any work of God will come under attack from the arch enemy.

And all through the Gospels, we see this opposition to a work of God. For example, Jesus, when he was born, has to flee to Egypt because of King Herod.

Jesus, at the start of his ministry, goes out into the desert and pray, and there he is tempted by the devil. From now on, in the book of Acts, we not only see the rise in the rise of the early church, we see the workings of the risen Christ, but also we see the rise of opposition to the church.

[ 9 : 31 ] It's this opposition along with the advance of the early church that dominates, actually, the rest of the book of Acts. For where the gospel is advanced, Satan will come in and try and attack.

It not only happens on a church level, it happens to the individual as well. If there's one thing the devil hates, it's to see God's kingdom advancing in this world. From chapter 3 on, we see just how quickly the opposition mounts, and it's not too long after Pentecost, it's only in chapter 7, that we see somebody already martyred for their faith.

Opposition began because of the effects or the impact the early church had on society.

You know, I wonder what sort of effects we have on society. How does society view you or me, our church?

We see how other major religions, such as Judaism, animism, and the worship of Caesar, began to affect the church and oppose the church.

[ 11 : 00 ] Here we see it's Judaism that rises in opposition to the church. Well, here Luke uses the same format he uses in chapter 2 to write his account of what happened in chapter 3 and 4.

Firstly, he describes from a spectator's point of view the miraculous event that took place with the cripple being healed in verses 1 to 10.

Next, Luke records the speech by Peter where he takes that miraculous event and he interprets it in such a way to glorify Christ, whom the hearers had killed but God had raised, whom the apostles testified to.

And thirdly, Luke describes the effects or the consequences of this miraculous event that had taken place. In chapter 2, for example, we see that the spirit-filled church devoted themselves.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, evangelism, prayer, and so forth, to hospitality. Here, the early church is persecuted, but it continues to pray and continues to share the gospel.

[12:19] It shows courage and boldness in the face of opposition. I want us to look at chapter 3 and the first thing we read is about the healing that took place.

And so the first point is, the cripple is healed, verses 1 to 10. You know, at the end of chapter 2, verse 43, we're told that many miraculous signs and wonders were done by the apostles. Here, Luke shows us a dramatic example of what he has just shared. Peter and John are going up to the temple about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, which was the time of prayer.

At the same time they were going up, a crippled man is being taken there at the same time, presumably by his relatives or by some friends, so that he could beg from those who were going to worship.

Perhaps these people who were going to worship thought, man, if I can just give this guy a little bit of money, there's a few brownie points for me. It's interesting how many people today still give out of the same attitude.

[13:32] They think that they will gain some brownie points from God if they happen to give some money or do something for charity. It makes them feel good. The place where the beggar was placed was at a place called Beautiful Gate.

Commentators have identified that gate as Nicanor Gate, which was the gate between the court of the Gentiles and the temple entrance. It was a magnificent gate.

It was about 75 feet high, or that's about 20 meters. High, huge double doors.

At the foot of this gate, this cripple with a bowl was seeking arms, seeking money to live on. But what a contrast we have here.

What a contrast between the people of the old covenant and the people of the new covenant. In chapter 2, verses 44 and 45, we have new covenant people doing this.

[14:40] It says, And all who believed were together and had all things in common, and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing their proceeds to all as any who had need.

That's what new covenant people do. They look after one another. Here, a few verses later, we have a person having to sit outside the temple and beg for money.

Old covenant. Furthermore, the gate he was sitting outside of was called Beautiful. What a contrast. The man who was sitting outside of the site was not beautiful.

He was crippled. He was a beggar. You know, I think Luke wants us to see that contrast. He wants us to see the difference between the old and the new.

The old had degenerated so much so that they overlooked their obligations, the needs of their people. So much so that it was just staring them in the face as they walked into the most sacred site of all, the temple.

[15:57] The new covenant community was one that met the needs of people. The spirit of Christ indwelling the believer, reaching out, caring for the needs of one another.

That's what new covenant people do. That's what spirit-filled people do. They look after one another. They have the other people's interests at heart.

Luke then goes on and tells the medical history of this man, and one cannot help but see how Luke's sort of medical background comes through in this passage.

We're told by Luke that this man had been crippled for over 40 years. So that's found in chapter 4, verse 22, that he's been so severely handicapped that he has to be carried there every day to beg. So this man did not have sort of a one leg shorter than the other sort of problem, or just a severe limp. This man was crippled. He couldn't walk. And there was nothing he could do about it.

[17:17] Even the non-believers recognize this man as a severe cripple. And next, Luke gives this sort of description of the healing in verses 3 to 9.

Peter and John are heading off to the temple, and this man sees them as they go through the gate, and so he pleads with them for money. I need money to live on.

But Peter and John look straight at him. I don't know what you do when you're walking down the street and you see somebody with a pamphlet or something wanting you to hand out.

You pretend not to look at them and you walk the other way, don't you? Or somebody's there and they want you to sign up to something, you know, and you think, oh, I'm not going to go there.

You know, Peter and John didn't do that. They did the opposite. They give this man their full attention. They see his need. They give him actually two commands.

[ 18 : 24 ] The first is in verse 4. They say, look at us. Look at us. I suspect this man was embarrassed.

Embarrassed, embarrassed about being a cripple. Embarrassed about being a beggar. Embarrassed about having to ask people for money.

He's embarrassed. He sort of pulls out his bowl like this. Peter says, look at me.

Look at me. And then Peter's second command to the cripple is Peter has something to give him better than money.

Look at verse 6. He says, silver and gold I do not have but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

[ 19 : 33 ] Walk. Wow. Wow. Isn't that amazing? The apostle doesn't hold back and watch the man sort of struggle to his fate.

Rather he steps forward. He takes him by the right hand and he helps him up. The power was Christ's but the hand of love was Peter's.

Peter's gesture was not a sign of unbelief on Peter's heart and Peter's heart. It was a sign of love. Peter had seen Jesus take Jairus' daughter hand. Jairus who was dead and Jesus takes Jairus' daughter by the hand and he lifts her up.

Peter is following his lord and master. Verse 7 says instantly the man's feet and ankles become strong so strong that he jumped to his feet and he began to walk which he'd never done before.

[ 20 : 44 ] Imagine that. Imagine never being able to walk and this guy for the first time at the age of 40 or older he can walk.

blow your mind wouldn't it? Not only that he now accompanies Peter and John into the temple courts all the time walking and leaping and praising God.

You see how excited he was. Boy I'd be leaping and jumping and praising God as well if I was him. Imagine that.

Verse 9 says the crowd gathered around because they saw him walking and leaping as if to emphasize the fact that you know four times Luke describes this man walking to emphasize the incredible fact that this poor cripple was now healed.

His legs were operational for the first time. you know people knew this man as the one who for years had sat at that gate begging for money and even the crowd are filled with wonder and amazement at what had just happened.

[ 22 : 22 ] It is an amazing miracle. It's incredible. Now I'm sure some of you are asking the question why don't we see those sorts of healings today?

Anybody seen any of those healings today? One like that? Where are the cripples that have been miraculously healed as this man was?

One of the dangers I think that when we discuss a subject like this is we easily get polarised. There are some who will say that these sort of signs and wonders should be everyday occurrences for the church and there are others who want to say that God doesn't work that way anymore.

My belief is somewhere in the middle. That is God is a God of order, God is a God of uniformity. We see that when God created the universe, he brings into the laws of nature and this is the basis of scientific enterprise.

But God also sometimes deviates from the norms. We see that all through the scriptures. And when he deviates from the norms, we call those miracles.

[ 23 : 40 ] Miracles are those phenomena that happen in which you have difficulty explaining. We see these miracles have occurred all the way through the Bible, but more particularly in certain places which I'll talk about.

So we have no liberty really in determining what God can and cannot do. We cannot put God in a box and say this is how you are to act.

You know, there are a couple of questions I think that perhaps we need to answer. Are signs and wonders meant by God to be everyday occurrences and the normal for Christian life.

You know, when one reads the book of Acts, we do not necessarily find widespread evidence for this sort of thought. You might think you do, but you don't.

Or even in the New Testament or the Bible in general, in Acts we see Luke's emphasis is that miracles were performed mostly by the apostles.

[ 24 : 51 ] And more especially by the apostle Peter and Paul that he focuses on throughout the book of Acts. Stephen and Philip also did signs and wonders and there were maybe others, but Stephen and Philip were unique in that the apostles especially laid hands on them for their unique role of laying a foundation for the church and worldwide mission.

In fact, what we notice in the Bible is that miracles generally occurred with new revelation. For example, we see many miracles occurring around the time of Moses when the law was given. There were many miracles.

We had ten plagues. Then there were the rise of the prophetic ministry with Elijah and Elisha. And again, we see many miracles there with Elijah and Elisha. And next, we see the onslaught of miracles with the coming of Jesus and then at the start of the early church.

[ 26 : 05 ] Each time it has occurred is when new revelation is being proclaimed. Now, this is not to say it didn't happen at other times.

It did. We see times when Israel won miraculous victories over the enemy. Other times like when Jonah was in the whale and he survived.

Or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when they were thrown into the fiery furnace and they never even got a hair singed. Or when Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, they were miracles.

However, these times were different than, say, the times of Moses or Jesus when miracles seemed to be happening regularly.

Since the establishment of the church, we have heard of genuine miracles occurring on the frontiers of mission and in an atmosphere of pervasive unbelief, which calls for almost a power and counter-beating Christ and the Antichrist.

[ 27 : 16 ] But these are special cases rather than everyday occurrences. verses. In the book of Acts, we see how there is a taping off of a sort of miracle activity when you read on in the book of Acts.

And when you read the epistles, we find Paul actually pleading with the Lord, remove this thorn from me, he says. Take this thorn. Three times, he asked the Lord, and what did the Lord say to him?

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. I just about pray every day for Donel to be healed, for her to walk again.

And he keeps reminding me of that verse. My grace is sufficient for you. My power is perfected in her weakness.

goodness. Scripture itself, I believe, says that these signs and wonders were special cases rather than part of daily life.

[ 28 : 30 ] Well, secondly, is today's claims of signs and wonders the same and parallel those recorded in the New Testament? Well, I'm sure there are miracles today that parallel those in the book of Acts.

However, I don't think that the miracles such as Jesus showed in his public ministry, the turning of water into wine, the stilling of the storm, the loaves and the fishes, the walking on water, are miracles that really relate to the subservience, to nature's subservience to Jesus' authority.

They were to show the lordship of Jesus Christ, power, his power, his authority over all things.

That's not to say that Jesus cannot meet our needs. Now he can and he does. Obviously, Jesus meets our needs every day and sometimes miraculously out of the norm.

there's a phenomenon like Ananias and Sapphira. Can you remember what happened to Ananias and Sapphira?

[ 29 : 44 ] Acts 5. And they were killed because they didn't bring their right offering. We don't see that today, do we?

Miracles which seem to be done on a different scale. Even the healing of the cripple was amazing and we note that it is the first of these types of miracles in the book of Acts and the longest account. It had five noteworthy characteristics though. Five noteworthy characteristics. Just briefly. The healing was of a grave condition.

This couldn't have been a miracle or a illness of a psychosomatic nature. Luke is at pains to show that this man had been a cripple from birth, was now more than 40 years old and was so handicapped that he had to be carried everywhere.

It wasn't psychosomatic. Secondly, the healing took place by direct word or command in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 30 : 57 ] This was without the use of medical means. There was no prayer, no laying on of hands, no anointing with oil, no special healing meeting or some hyped up emotional meeting.

This was a straight up miracle. All Peter does was give a helping hand but it was not part of the cure. This healing just took place as a direct word of command.

The name of Jesus. Thirdly, the healing was instantaneous. It wasn't gradual. Instantly, this man's feet and ankles were strong enough that he jumped up and he began to walk and leap and praise God.

In fact, what amazes me was this man could not only walk but he could leap and jump. He'd never walked before. Fourthly, the healing was complete and permanent.

Not partial, not temporary. It was complete and permanent. And this is stated twice in chapter 3, verse 16, and chapter 4, verse 10, before the council.

[ 32 : 16 ] And firstly, and I think we should really see this, this is really important. The healing was publicly acknowledged to be indisputable.

The healing was publicly acknowledged to be indisputable. There's no doubt or even question about it. The beggar was well known to the city. Now he was healed.

That is, it was not only the disciples of Jesus that were convinced that he was healed, it was the enemies of the gospel who also acknowledged it. The Jewish council called it an outstanding miracle in chapter 4, verse 14 and 16.

The unbelieving crowd were filled with wonder and amazement. No one could deny what had happened.

No one. If then we are to take the scriptures as our guide, we will avoid the two extremes. We will not see them as impossible, but rather that miracles are possible as the Lord sees fit to move.

[ 33 : 32 ] I would say that God is glorified whether we are sick or whether we are well. crippled. And sometimes I think Donelda has done her best work as a cripple.

We need though to be open to God who works both through nature and through miracles. And when a healing is claimed, we will expect it to resemble those in the gospels and the book of Acts. that it will be instantaneous, it will be a complete cure without the use of medical or surgical means. And saying that, God uses medical means to bring healing to people.

God has gifted people to be doctors and nurses and so forth. well, that's the miracle that took place. But secondly, the miracle gave an opportunity to proclaim Jesus and so we have Peter's sermon in verses 11 to 26. Luke described the reaction of the crowd in verse 10.

[ 34 : 55 ] They were filled with wonder and amazement. It's the same reaction as when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and chapter 2. Exactly the same. Peter sees the gathering of the crowd as an opportunity to preach the gospel.

Note, Peter doesn't wait to be invited to speak, he just speaks. He takes the opportunity. You know, Paul tells Timothy to do the same in 2 Timothy 4 too when he said, preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, exhort, be unfailing, impatience and teaching.

Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season. Preach when the opportunity is there and preach when the opportunity is not there.

Just preach. Tell people about Jesus. And the first thing Peter does is deflect the attention of himself in verse 12.

The crowd were hailing Peter and John for this miracle. Here are these miracle workers. They were the cult heroes now and it's the last thing John wants.

[ 36 : 07 ] Then in verse 13 he points the crowd to the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of their fathers. All the crowd knew this to be the God that their people had worshipped in the very temple they were going to.

But Peter goes on for it was the God they had worshipped who glorified his servant Jesus whom they had denied and killed that they had denied and killed the very one whom God had sent to save them.

Imagine saying that. That is bravery. That is courage. You killed Jesus. But God raised him up from the dead and we are witnesses to this today he said.

And in verse 16 Peter says and his name by faith in his name has made this man strong whom you see and know. And the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

In other words despite their best efforts to destroy Jesus God has raised him and is glorifying him now. therefore they must repent turn back that their sins may be blotted out in verse 19.

[ 37 : 31 ] And Peter goes on to say that even Moses spoke about Jesus and that they should listen to him and obey his words for if they don't they will have to account for their disobedience.

Furthermore says Peter in verse 24 he says all the prophets spoke of this day and that the promise made to Abraham that all the nations would be blessed through him.

You know what Peter's doing? He's showing through the Old Testament scriptures that the Old Testament scriptures have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Time and time again Luke shows that beginning with Moses and the prophets promise that what has happened has been fulfilled through Christ.

The Old Testament points us to first and foremost to the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter is saying we did not heal this man. Jesus did.

This man you crucified is still working today and he comes to you and asks you to repent and follow him. you see only when we have heard what God has done through Christ can we rightly consider what we should do.

[ 38 : 53 ] And this is the message of Peter's first sermon and it's the message of this sermon. You see all other religions focus on what we can do to win God's favour.

They have such a high opinion of themselves. But in biblical Christianity we must always begin with what God has done for us in Christ.

That he sent his son to die in our stead. To pay the price that we could never pay. To bear the punishment for our sin that we could never bear.

It's the message of the gospel of how God saves sinners like ourselves. You see this miracle was like a sign.

This miracle was like a sign. Verifying and confirming the veracity of the gospel. It's a glimpse at the truth of the message of the gospel.

[ 40 : 00 ] This man was helpless. This man couldn't save himself. This man was just a beggar hoping somebody would throw a few pennies in his bowl.

He was in a hopeless situation. And Peter gives him hope. The lame man leaping and dancing and praising the Lord is a reminder and a pointer to what every believer experiences.

is a man that once we were blind but now we see. That the old has passed away, the new has come, that Christ in Christ we are new creations.

It's appointed to that day when we meet Jesus face to face when this old and worn out body of ours will be changed to be like his. Only Jesus does this.

Only Jesus. He is our only hope and here Peter proclaims Jesus the gospel, the good news of Jesus is at the heart of this message.

[ 41 : 20 ] That God saves hopeless and helpless people like ourselves. Just like this lame man.

In fact, before we were saved, we were all cripples, just like this lame man. So that's the bulk of Peter's sermon.

he sucks it to them. You killed Jesus. You need to repent and get your life right.

So thirdly and briefly, how do we respond? How do we respond? you know, for those of you who do not know Jesus and who are not right with God this evening, Peter says you need to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is salvation in no one else, says Peter in Acts chapter four. There's salvation in no one else. Only Jesus can save.

[ 42 : 47 ] we've seen it with the cripple. And you who are Christians have experienced it in your own life. Only Jesus can change our lives.

and I would encourage any of you who have not put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ this evening. Put your trust in Jesus. Come to Jesus and follow him.

I'd encourage you to speak to William or one of the leaders of the church or even myself. Speak to someone in regards to your relationship with Jesus.

If you're not right with Jesus get your life right with Jesus. But what about us who believe?

What can we take from a passage like this? Well first we notice that Peter didn't wait to be asked to preach. He didn't hang around and somebody say oh could you say something Peter?

[ 43 : 55 ] No no no Peter didn't do that. He took the opportunity given to share Jesus. with the crowd. He's right into it. I wonder if we take opportunities to share about Jesus with people not just

to non Christians but what about with one another?

Do we talk to one another about Jesus? If we can't talk to one another about Jesus we have real difficulty talking to non Christians about Jesus Paul said he was unashamed of the gospel because it was the power of God to save people could I encourage you to pray for opportunities to share your faith with people and then take those opportunities to share take opportunities to encourage believers in the faith share with them about Jesus about his grace about his goodness about his worthiness think much about the worthiness of Jesus Christ and secondly just as Peter made Jesus the focus of his sermon may Jesus be the focus of our conversation with each other let us learn to speak about

Jesus to one another and lastly in contrast to what other religions ask people to do let us tell others about what God has done for us in Christ that we may point people to a saviour to the Lord Jesus Christ rather than asking them to save themselves Jesus is the answer Jesus is our only hope as we see in this miracle only Jesus saves like that let's pray oh father we we just thank you so much for the message of this miracle the reminder that salvation belongs to you and you alone that there is salvation and no one else a reminder that that once we were like that cripple without hope blind destitute and by your grace we have been saved not of ourselves but a gift from you lest any of us should boast we thank you for the wonderful message of the cross that message that that invites sinners like ourselves to

Jesus we ask this in Jesus name Amen