

## Empty Pockets – Effective Ministry – Acts 3

“Blessed are the Poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God.” These words from the Sermon on the Mount may well sum up what happens here in Acts chapter 3. The poor in spirit had nothing to offer – they knew they were dependent on God for everything. Peter and John go to the temple as the poor, with nothing to offer the needy but ... what God supplied. And from that place they saw the power of God manifest in an amazing way: they saw the Kingdom of God at work. It is hard to read this story and not long for more of God’s Kingdom to be revealed!

### The Prayer Meeting that Became a Praise Meeting

Text: Acts 3:1-10

1. Where were Peter and John going? At what time? What does this tell us about the relationship of Christians to Jews at that point? (vs 1)
2. What details are we given about the man brought to the temple? (vs 2)
3. Why might the man be taken to the “Beautiful Gate” to beg?
4. What did the beggar ask from Peter and John? (vs 3)
5. Verse 4 says Peter “fastened his eyes”(KJV) or “looked intently”(NLT) or “directed his gaze”(ESV) on the man. Explain what is happening here.
6. What command does Peter give the man? Why? (vs 4)
7. How did the man respond (vs 5)? Why?
8. How would Peter’s words first disappoint the beggar, and then mystify the beggar? (vs 6) what do we learn about Peter here? Who does the healing?
9. Describe the miracle the man receives (vs 7).

10. Can you see the progression in the man's miracle (vs 8). Describe it. What kind of service would they have at the temple that day?
11. What is the response of the people at the temple (vss 9-10). How is the scene set for evangelism?

Stop for a minute and think of the scene: someone crippled from birth and unable to help himself out of the situation. There are even barriers to God, and he sits outside the temple, unable to enter. But God comes to the man through Peter and John, and sets him free, healing what was broken. The man responds with joy and celebration. Is this not our story? Instead of cripple, write "sinful": instead of begging for alms, "seeking life." Instead of a physical healing, a "spiritual rebirth." Instead of temple praise, think "testimonies at Church and beyond." Maybe this lame man is all of us....

### **The Sermon**

Text: Acts 3:11-26

12. What drew the people together in the covered area called Solomon's Portico? (vs 11)
13. Who stands up and seizes the moment to testify? (vs 12) Once again, note the contrast in Peter before the coming of the Holy Spirit and after He came.
14. Who were the people thinking should be praised for the miracle? Who does Peter immediately point the people to? (vs 13)
15. Looking at how Peter describes God, what is the make up of the audience he is addressing? Contrast this to Paul's sermon in Acts 17:22-31.
16. How does Peter draw the crowd into the story in verse 13?
17. What contrasts does Peter cite as he describes redemptions story? (cf. vss 14-15)

18. According to verse 16 how was the man healed?
19. Describe what Peter is doing in verse 17?
20. In verse 18 Peter reminds the people that what happened to Jesus was not random but part of God's great plan revealed even in the scriptures. Is this important? Why?
21. What is the appropriate response to the news that we rejected and killed Jesus according to verse 18? What does "repent" mean? How does what Peter says in this verse help define the word?
22. Who will bring refreshing for our souls according to verse 20?
23. In verses 22-25 Peter cites Old Testament figures who spoke of the coming of Jesus. Who does he start with? Why? Who else is mentioned. What was to be the purpose of the blessing of God (found in Christ Jesus)? (vs. 25)
24. Verse 26 reveals an important part of God's plan – who is the Gospel revealed to first? Why?

How do you think the people responded to such a message? How would people today respond to such a miracle and message?

**Conclusion:**

Miracles are seldom for miracles sake. In other words, there is usually a purpose in God's economy for doing a miracle that points beyond the miracle itself. God is gracious and loves to restore broken bodies through miraculous events, but He usually is not finished at that point. The miracle then becomes the springboard for giving witness to the goodness and power of God through Christ. Think in your own life: have you been the recipient of a miracle, or have you seen a miracle? Make the miracle complete by sharing with others – maybe this study group – what God has done.

Song: 348 He Touched Me