


A Five-Day Devotional Journey
February 3 - 9, 2008

Acts 3:1-26

Kingdom Primer

The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing.

You can count on it.

John 14:12 *Message*

1 Get up and walk!

Read. Acts 3:1-6 NLT

Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money. Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"

Think.

- Put yourself in the place of the lame man. What would your journal entry look like on a typical day? How would it read following this encounter with Peter and John?
- If you had been Peter, what do you think you would have done with this lame man?
 - a. I would have done the same thing (or at least tried)
 - b. I probably wouldn't even have noticed him
 - c. I would have asked John for some change
 - d. I would have handed him a gospel tract
 - e. Other _____
- Has God ever healed anyone through your touch and/or prayer? Do you think God wants to use you this way? Why or why not?

Pray.

Lord Jesus, give me eyes to see how you would move through me in the lives of others today.

Live.

Pray with someone for healing today.

He shaded his eyes from the afternoon sun with one hand while he reached out with the other, palm upturned. "Mercy, have mercy on a lame man!" he called out repeatedly as throngs of worshippers passed by.

This was his life.

For forty years, the daily routine continued. For forty years he had subsisted on the generosity of others. For forty years he had watched people walk by. How could he have known that on this day, at this hour, his life would change forever as the shadow of two more worshippers passed over him...

You have to wonder what Peter and John were thinking as they were headed into the Temple that afternoon for three o'clock prayer. What was it that caused them to stop and look at *this* lame man *now*. This was a man they had evidently passed before – many times. Jesus had probably passed by him as well as he went about "doing what he saw the Father doing." The healing of this lame man had evidently not been on the Father's agenda before. Until *this* day as Peter and John passed by. "The works that I do, you also will do," Jesus had told them. And now they pause, sensing a divine moment, and then stepping into it.

Luke says that many signs and wonders were done through the apostles' hands. Acts 3 is simply a detailed account of one of them – a display of kingdom reality and Spirit-filled advent-ure that resulted in an immediate platform for proclamation. As such, this chapter really serves as something of a kingdom primer for disciples of all ages – an elementary text through which we can observe how to "do the stuff" and proclaim Jesus not just through our words but through his works.

2) He jumped to his feet

Read. Acts 3:6-11 Message

Peter said, "I don't have a nickel to my name, but what I do have, I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!" He grabbed him by the right hand and pulled him up. In an instant his feet and ankles became firm. He jumped to his feet and walked. The man went into the Temple with them, walking back and forth, dancing and praising God. Everybody there saw him walking around and praising God. They recognized him as the one who sat begging at the Temple's Gate Beautiful and rubbed their eyes, astonished, scarcely believing what they were seeing. The man threw his arms around Peter and John, ecstatic. All the people ran up to where they were at Solomon's Porch to see it for themselves.

Think.

- When's the last time you saw a divine moment of healing like this? How would you respond to the idea that God doesn't perform healings like this today?
- How do you account for some being healed through prayer and some not?
- Do you have any crippled areas in your life — physically, emotionally, morally or spiritually — that you would like to receive healing? How would he have you stretch out your hand for help?

Pray.

Father, take my right hand and pull me up today that I may jump and dance and sing your praises.

Live.

Celebrate an area of God's healing in your life.

4) Now it's time to change your ways

Read. Acts 3:17-20 Message

"And now, friends, I know you had no idea what you were doing when you killed Jesus, and neither did your leaders. But God, who through the preaching of all the prophets had said all along that his Messiah would be killed, knew exactly what you were doing and used it to fulfill his plans. Now it's time to change your ways! Turn to face God so he can wipe away your sins, pour out showers of blessing to refresh you, and send you the Messiah he prepared for you, namely, Jesus. For the time being he must remain out of sight in heaven until everything is restored to order again just the way God, through the preaching of his holy prophets of old, said it would be."

Think:

- Having rather directly confronted the people, how does Peter turn that bad news into good news?
- In your own words, how would you summarize Peter's call to action?
- What are the specific blessings he assures the people that God intends to pour out on them if they respond in repentance and faith?
- How have you experienced "showers of blessing" or "seasons of refreshing" in your life? How can this experience of blessing become an encouragement to others?
- What other insights do you glean from Peter's presentation and style?

Pray.

Lord Jesus, use my life to help turn others' faces to you so they may be refreshed by your presence.

Live:

Go out with a friend to share Jesus with others.

3) Faith in Jesus' name made him whole

Read. Acts 3:12-16 Message

When Peter saw he had a congregation, he addressed the people:

"Oh, Israelites, why does this take you by such complete surprise, and why stare at us as if our power or piety made him walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified his Son Jesus. The very One that Pilate called innocent, you repudiated. You repudiated the Holy One, the Just One, and asked for a murderer in his place. You no sooner killed the Author of Life than God raised him from the dead—and we're the witnesses. Faith in Jesus' name put this man, whose condition you know so well, on his feet—yes, faith and nothing but faith put this man healed and whole right before your eyes.

Think.

- What insights into effective evangelism do you see in this event?
- What initial points does Peter make in his response to this instant "congregation"? What additional insights about evangelism do you see here?
- When is it appropriate to confront people directly about their actions as Peter does here? How easy is this for you? How is Peter able to be so bold?

Pray.

Holy Spirit, empower me to not only do your works but to boldly speak your words — help me to more and more effectively and naturally share the Good News!

Live.

Meditate on Colossians 4:4-6 today.

5) God sent him to bless you

Read. Acts 3:20-26 Message

"For the time being he must remain out of sight in heaven until everything is restored to order again just the way God, through the preaching of his holy prophets of old, said it would be. Moses, for instance, said, *'Your God will raise up for you a prophet just like me from your family. Listen to every word he speaks to you. Every last living soul who refuses to listen to that prophet will be wiped out from the people.'* All the prophets from Samuel on down said the same thing, said most emphatically that these days would come. These prophets, along with the covenant God made with your ancestors, are your family tree. God's covenant-word to Abraham provides the text: *'By your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed.'* But you are first in line: God, having raised up his Son, sent him to bless you as you turn, one by one, from your evil ways."

Think.

- What does Peter's speech to the crowd say about the place and importance of the Old Testament both in following Jesus and in sharing him with others?
- What steps are you taking to become better acquainted with the Old Testament?
- When would you say quoting the Bible might not be the best thing to do when sharing Jesus with others?
- What is the best experience you have personally had in sharing Jesus with someone? What was the worst?
- Where in the area of evangelism would you most like to grow? Why?

Pray.

Lord, thank you for including me in the salvation story stretching back to Moses and beyond. Empower me to live out my part in the story "to the max foeva."

Live. Live boldly today!