



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 10 The Wonder of it all!
By Pastor Jody May 10/16/2022**

Acts 3:1-10 ESV

The Lame Beggar Healed

3 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. **2** And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. **3** Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. **4** And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." **5** And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. **6** But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" **7** And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. **8** And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. **9** And all the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

[INTRODUCTION – This week it will come before the reading of scripture]

The Wonder of it all! This sermon is aptly named, *The Wonder of it All* because this event is described from an earlier verse. Please look back for one second and you will see where we are getting that title that from:

Luke 2:43 ESV

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many **wonders** and **signs** were being done through the apostles.

The speaking in various tongues was the first miracle in the book of Acts, first part of chap. 2, but this was **the first miracle performed by an Apostle** in the book of Acts. This event is one of those day-by-day activities that we read about in 2:42-47 that was causing **AWE**, because along with the fellowship of the believers there was the accompanying of signs. **The Wonders/Signs are Miracles, something that cannot be explained naturally.** These first century miracles were only performed by Apostles, a person that had traveled with



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Christ, that had been taught by Christ, saw the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:21), was commissioned by Christ (Mark 3:13-19), and was empowered by the Christ for the sole purpose to bring forth the new bride of Christ (2 Cor 12:12): the **CHURCH**.

I bring that up today because there are those today that claim to be an Apostle ([Bill Johnson from Bethel Church](#))¹, that claim to be faith healers, and even claim to speak for God, BUT Jesus 'The Christ' warned us Himself, of these men:

Matthew 24:24 ESV

For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

People have always in Jesus' name have sought to lure people away from God. And some even do some strange things that defy understanding as the Apostle John pointed out would happen in the last days and he gives the reason why they can do them:

Revelation 16:14 ESV

For they are **demonic spirits, performing signs**, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.

What we see in Acts though are miracles that were controlled by the HS, sent by Christ for the sole purpose to bring Wonder to the people so that the **sign of the Miracle would point to the resurrected Christ, Jesus of Nazareth**. That was a very specific purpose, for a specific time, in a specific part of the world. The reason that "men desired and directed" miracles do not happen today is because we have something the first century church did not have - **the Bible**. It is the job of scripture now, not signs/miracles, to reveal who Christ is. The **greatest of all miracles** you are actually witnesses to it- **the regeneration of a soul**, which happens when God calls the elect to believe.

¹ <https://www.redding.com/story/news/2019/12/17/bethel-family-seeks-bring-daughter-back-life-through-prayer-song-and-praise/2676273001/>



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Does God still heal, absolutely I have seen it, is there still need for supernatural deliverance, I have seen that too, but in the way in which was being done here in Acts, **NO**. I have also heard pastors tell me from behind the charismatic veil that healings and many other so-called signs of the spirit are fake. Be careful what you watch, what you hear, and what you give money to because you may be supporting, according to Rev. 16, the work of the devil...

The other thing that makes me very skeptical about believing in modern day healers, and the such, is because there is a specific formula in the scripture that accompanies signs/miracles. Today we are going to look at this formula for you are going to see it repeated in the book of Acts.

[READ SCRIPTURE / PRAY]

[ILLUSTRATION]

How many of you are the type of people that when you travel, if there is a tourist stop or a cultural landmark nearby, your going stop?

In my young life my parents were those type of people that they wanted to experience the tourist memorials. I have seen things like the **Southernmost Point Buoy** in Key West, the **Fort** in St. Augustine, **Silver Springs** in mid Fl., the original **Miami Seaquarium** home of Flipper, the once mighty **Orange Bowl**, the curious **Coral Castle** in Homestead, and even now the infamous **Disney World**. My parents loved to do the tourist thing when I was a kid, because they would take pictures, because along with pictures comes memories of that outing. There is something special in that, and it can even become more powerful when other people share a memory they have of that place when they see that pic.

Perhaps you have met someone from your hometown like I just did recently. There is something special when you look at a person who with the same eyes has seen something you have seen and has experienced the things you have experienced. It is as if those memories come to life for a moment.



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As a nation we all can experience a little bit of this unity when we memorialize events, as in the terrorist attacks of 911. If you are under 20 in here you weren't even alive, but for those of us old enough to remember you remember where you were when you first heard, when you first turned on the tv, and maybe in that moment when you saw the 2nd plane hit the towers. That is a shared event with millions of other Americans that in some way unites us because it caused in all of us a sense of strange wonder, as if we couldn't believe what we were seeing.

This healing that we see in scripture today would have been something like this, people saw this miracle as recorded by Luke's eye-witness accounts. He has recorded their shared experiences and emotional responses like a polaroid moment for all to share, let's expound on this shared group experience.

This miracle like all miracles is a sign of God's Grace, as in it demonstrates **what only God can give in which He gives unconditionally**. God's Grace, when it happens in these miracles in Acts, are always witnessed by a group of people from both inside and outside the church for it affects everyone. The author Luke has taken a snapshot of these events by which the church can read together and remember these events. The church then shares the stories of these events with the lost and lets the Spirit build **wonder** as they share. So, what God does is He sets up some pretty incredible events witnessed by multiple people, both saved and unsaved, so that people could share in a sense of wonder all pointing to Jesus' credibility as a resurrected Savior because they are all done in His name.

So, I have three things that we can see about God's Miraculous Grace today, and I think these are things you will see over and over again throughout Acts:

- The Unexpectedness of the Miracle – Demonstrates God's Sovereignty.
- The Instantaneousness of the Miracle – Demonstrates God's Supernatural Power.
- The Completeness of the Miracle – Demonstrates God's Sufficiency.

These are all characteristics of God's GRACE!



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Demonstrations of God's Grace always produces Glory....

[The Scene]

1. The **Unexpectedness** of the Miracle – Demonstrates God's **Sovereignty**.

3 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. **2** And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. **3** Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. **4** And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, **"Look at us."** **5** And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

The whole scene we see here is a set up by God to bring glory to Himself. That's what God does, He sovereignly devises points in history to bring blind people into the recognition that He is real, that all of creation points to Him, and that He is active in all aspects of it. That btw is what brings every converted person to an awakening, is the realization that the God of the universe is personally involved in your life, bringing you to Him, through the work of the Son, because He loves you! That is what you are seeing here.

In this opening scene we are witnessing the daily life of the Apostles and new believers from 2:42-47, this is a recording of their daily routine. Peter and John are going to be our main characters for the next few chapters as leaders of the new church. They are going up to the temple on the mount at a specific time, the ninth hour or 3pm for prayer.

There are 3 times a day (Ps 55:17) where-by prayers would be offered 9am, 12pm, and 3pm but at 3 pm this is the show, whereby the priests would make public displays of the daily sacrifice. This is the Memorial Spot in all of Palestine, it is The Tourist attraction if you were a visiting Jew from out of town, this is where you go to make memories.

The lowly, lame beggar sat against the temple's most grandiose entrance, the **Beautiful Gate**. Jewish historian Josephus notes that this gate was greater and more valuable than the other gates that were 'only' covered with silver and gold. The



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gate was 'adorned after a most costly manner', having 'much richer and thicker plates of silver and gold' upon it. The Beautiful Gate was fifty cubits (25 m or 95 ft tall) tall, twenty cubits (15 m or 57 ft) taller than the other gates. **Opening the gate required twenty men.** The gate was made of Corinthian brass, imported from a great distance to Jerusalem. But, even though men could create such a beautiful thing, no man could improve the beggar's condition.²

It is on this grandiose path that not just one beggar could be found but multiple, for this was your greatest chance of being seen and experiencing the greatest amount of pity. You see walking into the temple through this entrance portrays the holiness of God while passing by those that would remind you of how sin separates man from God. You see the belief back then (Lk 13:1-5) as Jesus combatted that ideology Himself, was that if you were struck ill or born deformed it was because of sin in the family. These beggars could never enter into the temple being unclean, they were pitied because they appeared to be the punishment for the family, and of course it made you feel better about yourself as you walked by because at least you knew you were better than them.

So, the boys stop specifically at this beggar, a man who had been lame for 40 years (4:22) since birth, this man would have seen Jesus come into the temple multiple times, the disciples would have seen this man multiple times, he would have been there during the last Passover during the Cross, and would be aware of the news that Jesus was reported to be alive, probably almost everyone in Jerusalem knew who this man was, he was a fixture at the temple.

Perhaps while walking by the boys remembered a lesson they had learned from Jesus a short time ago - **John 11:4** - "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." This day is the last time he will ever be passed by, it will be the last time he is to be pitied, it is the last time he will call out for alms, for the HS tells the boys to stop, turn and look down, I have an appointment with this man.

² Wong, J.-M. (2010). [*Opening up Acts*](#) (p. 35). Leominster: Day One Publications.



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In that moment the Apostles make eye contact with the beggar, and the beggar as we see has no idea what is about to happen, because all appointments with God are never made considering our agenda. All divine appointments of God are conceived before time to bring about His glory, and reveal His divine love.

Christians usually have a similar story, it is not that they find Jesus, but that **Jesus finds them**, that is what produces faith. We all have the same story as this man. We were destitute believing that we deserve no better than what this life had to offer. BUT GOD HAS DIFFERENT PLANS.

Here's something you may need to think about this morning. **You may be in a place you don't like**: around people that don't care for you, living a life that is unfulfilling, being looked down on by others, never being invited to fun things, never winning in the games people enjoy, experiencing physical pains others don't, never having enough to get ahead in life, unable to find love as others do, and all of that though is **done for your best interest**. What if I told you that your uneasiness is the divine orchestration of God, to prepare your heart to receive Him, to prepare those around you to witness, so that HE may bring people to wonder as you experience a love that will never leave you!

It is a hard thing to hear, but what we don't see is this man getting everything he ever wanted but what we see is that he received what he needed the most; **new heart that could worship Jesus**. His legs, although that was the sign, were given back to him so they could be used to take the glory of Christ into the world.

The unexpectedness of this miracle demonstrates the complete sovereignty of God AND the working of God in your life, does the same. It is at this point that we see what separates a true Apostle from the fake ones, what separates a true miracle than those performed by the world.

[The Sign]

2. The **Instantaneousness** of the Miracle – Demonstrates God's **Supernatural Power**.



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⁶But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" ⁷And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

40 years of a paralytic life, gone instantly.

Peter by declaration of his words states first and foremost that: what you think will make you better, what this world has to offer you, I am not going to offer you. Stop right there, **that's a good polaroid moment**, when your prayers are filled with what you think will make it better, or when the world screams give me what I want and it will be better, remember this scene.

This past week I saw an interview with a homeless man from San Francisco, who was describing to a reporter the dangers of heightened crime and drug abuse in his town. He claimed that if you would just give these people a home to feel safe it will do away with all the crime in San Fran. The world wants to give handouts, the oppressed think they want handouts, but God is into giving hand ups.

Peter says (v.6), "**what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!**" Peter can't give riches, what he has though is the right to use Jesus' name to bring glory to God, to give birth to the church. So, Peter does what all Christians can do, he stoops down and **offers a hand up**, he extends to this man his belief that Jesus can heal Him.

The man embraces that hand, he has heard of this name and the power in it, and God through faith instantly recreates new limbs. This is the straightening of bones, the growth of muscle tissue, the revitalization of ligaments, the straightening of limbs in a matter of seconds; it is the power of creation. And to add proof to the supernatural even before everyone's eyes, the man upon standing, leaps in the air. He then walks into the grounds on his own power, the emblem of his uncleanness has been wiped away, and goes to show himself to the priests.



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Man are they going be in for a shock. As I told you last week Jesus tied His miracles into His ability to forgive sins, no one but God can do that, that's what made Him so controversial. In Luke 5:17-26 (just write that down to read later we don't have time to turn there right now) Jesus heals a paralytic, much like this man in our story, whereby he tells the man, "**Man, your sins are forgiven you.**" (15:20). The point is instantaneous of the miracle shows the supernatural work of the Christ. The man we put faith in if HE chooses to exercise it has the power to do the impossible.

The priests were about to be confronted by a ghost of their past because JESUS was very much alive, and was still granting Grace to whom He wants.

Church family, what is our role in all of this, as it was with Peter, and as it was with this paralytic man Jesus healed, whose friends lowered him through a hole in a roof, **what are we doing to deliver our friends unto Christ?** The flip side of that coin is are we doing something that keeps people from getting to Christ?

Do we have people that we pass everyday, people that we know, that need the help of God in their lives, are we stooping down to help them up?

- Let's take the time to find out where the hurting are.
- Let's take time to discover what about their lives is painful.
- Let's take the time with people to share the gospel.
- Let's take the time to tell them how Jesus has saved us.
- Let's take the time to discover how not just to give physical aide.

Jesus's miracle, for it may have been Peter to offer but it was the plan and power of Jesus to heal that man, was instant showing His supernatural power. Perhaps the most important lesson here is to learn that **we can't change anyone only Christ can**, but let's do our part and take the time to be His **handup** for those that need it.

3. The **Completeness** of the Miracle – Demonstrates God's **Sufficiency**.



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⁹And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with **wonder** and **amazement** at what had happened to him.

As we close this story out today, we want to look at this last mark of God's Grace in the giving of this miracle.

To wrap up this event, God puts a final touch on this, that He of course has set up from the beginning. All the people, all those that came for the show and spectacle of the temple at the 3pm time slot, the sacrifice for the burnt offering, the corporate prayer time were going to be a witness. This man walks in, the show stops, and everyone gasps and stares, v.10 the wonder and amazement, and the polaroid picture is taken and recorded by Luke.

The man is the walking and living demonstration that a sacrifice can actually heal, restore, and redeem!

- In front of the priests with a live animal ready to be slain, the man shows the sacrifice given at Passover in Christ was fully sufficient.
- In front of the bloodstained altar where more blood was to be spilled, the man showed it was no longer necessary, Jesus' blood covered his sins once and for all!
- In front of the temple proper where the Sanhedrin would flex its' power, the man demonstrates that Jesus had the power to forgive sins, for Jesus was God in the flesh.
- In front of the spectators who were standing looking at a weak presentation of man's effort to get to God, the man stood and showed a living example of how **God gets to man!**
- In front of the Roman guards who thought peace was brought by might established by the cross, the man showed that true peace was brought by the man who loved through the cross!

The demonstration of this sign and miracle is a complete work because it showed that Jesus is **FULLY SUFFICIENT to Save!**

Friends Let me ask you, would you be willing to give God 40 years if it meant that you could walk in front of those who looked down on you to demonstrate



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the might of a living God. 40 years seems to be a magic number to God, 40 years a people wandered in the wilderness, 40 years Moses played the shepherd, 40 years a united Israel was ruled by kings. The Bible likes 40 days as well, I wonder how many of us would be ok with 40 days of testing to show the world that Jesus is worth it?

Right now, in some of our lives we are looking past at what our trials are; times of testing, times of preparation and times of training so that we too can get up and walk in front of those that doubted God, and so you can tell them that Jesus is enough! He is sufficient for you! Then when you get that you can use Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Next week we are going to look at the sermon Peter preaches on the back end of this miracle and see how He uses the Sign to give the message of Jesus! Let's pray right now together and ask though for God to help us endure our trials, and to help us be conscious of how we can lend people a hand to get to Jesus, and to be available for the HS when He has divine appointments to keep.

[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that is sovereign overall and ensures that no act is wasted.

Go in the name of the Son, that demonstrates to the world that He is sufficient for the Salvation of all he sets out to save.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that raises up the dead to give a testimony to a living Savior, share Christ's story this week to whomever the Spirit leads you to.