

Pentecost 16
Acts 3:1-10
September 20, 2009

This miracle is all about Jesus. Every miracle is all about Jesus. The whole Bible is all about Jesus. All the world's history is all about Jesus.

Why? Because God wants to rescue everyone from sin and death. God aims to forgive them and to give them eternal life. Jesus is God's way of doing that. There is no other way to forgiveness and life, except Jesus.

That people would learn of Jesus was Peter's and John's chief concern. Jesus is what Peter and John had for giving. Jesus is what they gave to this man.

Let's lean from these verses of God's Word that we also

Have Jesus to Give.

This crippled man was laid at a gate called 'Beautiful' everyday. The gate led into the great temple courtyards where Israel worshipped. He was placed at this place of very heavy pedestrian traffic with the hope that some folks would toss a piece of silver or copper coinage his way. The gold coin given to him surely was rare, but so exciting when it did happen.

This event happened a very short time after Jesus had died on the cross, risen from the dead that first Easter Sunday and ascended visibly and gloriously into heaven. It wasn't long at all after the Holy Spirit had been given to Jesus' disciples, equipping them to proclaim Jesus' Good News of forgiveness beginning at Jerusalem but eventually reaching the ends of the earth.

This was still at Jerusalem. About three and a half years earlier, Scripture tells us that Jesus gave the Apostles "authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness." With the coming of the Holy Spirit to them on that great Pentecost, Jesus' promise to them that the Holy Spirit would enable them to remember everything Jesus ever said and would lead them into all truth was granted too.

Never were there miracles in numbers as there were in the years of Jesus' public ministry and in the early years of the Apostles as they carried the Gospel of Jesus to the world beginning at Jerusalem. For all the miracles Jesus had done, some of them in the temple courtyards themselves, this man had not been among the happy recipients.

A little later on we were told he was 40 at the time. He had been born crippled. That means he had never taken a step his whole life. This was no psychological ailment. Never had his feet, ankles, legs even held him up.

Peter and John looked straight at the man. They requested that he look at them. The man figured this signaled that Peter and John were going to give him something, maybe something significant, since generally there really isn't much eye contact between beggar and givers.

Peter told him they had no money to give him, but what they had, they were going to give to him. The Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ (the Messiah) of Nazareth, walk." Peter reached down, took the man by his right hand and gave him a little boost. The man was on his feet. It felt like it had never felt before. There was strength. And the man put one foot in front of the other and then that foot in front of the other. He was walking. In fact, it seemed so easy, like he had been doing it all his life! Then he got excited. As the three of them went into the temple courtyards, he started also to leap, to jump. And as he walked and leaped along, he kept thanking and praising God loudly.

This is properly called a miracle. It was complete; it was immediate! Lots of people's attention came to this man. The people were amazed, astounded! They knew this man. Remember, they had seen him lying near this gate every day for a long time. Maybe some of them had even given him some of that financial help now and then.

Jesus did this miracle, not Peter and John. Jesus did this miracle through Peter and John. This is clear because Peter clearly said, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, walk." The power and authority was from Jesus.

It was the Jesus this man has to have heard a lot about. Everyone was buzzing about Jesus in the days leading up to Jesus' death. He may very well have seen Jesus or even heard Him. Jesus did spend part of the week before he died on the cross in those temple courtyards teaching, even doing some miracles. The children, in these temple courts, had been shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

In fulfillment of Isaiah 35 – heard this morning – this miracle and all the other miracles of Jesus, let everyone know that Jesus had come from heaven to redeem, to ransom the world from its sin, guilt and deserved eternal punishment of death in hell. Hell is eternal separation from God's grace and salvation.

To the dry desert, the desolate wilderness of the human heart, soul, and life had come the life-giving water of God's grace, forgiveness and life. And there was joy, shouts of joy, leaping cripples, a redeemed people.

Dear people of God, you have Jesus Christ of Nazareth, complete with His forgiveness, new life and everlasting salvation. Heaven is most certainly yours. In Baptism, you have been joined to Christ's death and to His resurrection. By faith, you will continue in Jesus' forgiveness and salvation.

This world is still filled with people who know nothing or next to nothing about Jesus or His forgiveness, or His eternal, joyous, glorious life. The most important thing you have is Jesus, and , yes, you may even have some money and goods – all from God, by the

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way—let us use our money and goods to help carry to people that most important thing we have, that thing our world so needs, forgiveness and eternal life in Christ Jesus. We have Jesus. We must keep giving Him. Amen.