



## "REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

### "RIDING THROUGH" THE BOOK OF ACTS- LESSON 3

In yesterday's lesson, we read about the birth of the early church. We saw many new believers added to the church after Peter's first sermon, which was powerfully anointed by the Holy Spirit! This week, we will look at the first time God uses Peter to heal a lame man. Peter and John definitely encountered a "divine appointment" on their way to the temple to pray.

Before you begin, ask the Lord to prepare your heart to receive all He has for you this week. Remember, a Bible study is not only to learn Bible truths, but to learn how to apply them to your own life. As you study, always have a listening ear, expecting God to speak to you.

#### First Day

1. Read Acts 3 through 4:1-4. What is the main point from verses 1-10? What is the main point of verses 11-26? (What is the text saying?) List any words that are unfamiliar to you, then find their meaning.
2. Reread Acts 3:1-8. Describe the lame man. How long had he been lame? How old was he? Read Acts 4:22.
3. Why do you think he chose to beg in front of the temple?

I'm sure that the apostles were very busy men. The church was a thriving one, growing very rapidly. There were many people to minister to, needs to be met, and new believers to disciple. It is interesting to see that Peter and John don't use their "busyness" as an excuse for not stopping to meet a need that God put before them. Getting to their prayer meeting on time didn't take priority over this lame man who

needed help. They saw this change in their schedule as a "divine interruption" prepared for them by God. How often do we hurry past those who God places in our life to minister to? Have you ever ignored someone that maybe God put in your life because you were just "too busy"?

4. Read the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37. Name each character in the story and describe him using one or two words.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, notice that the priest **"saw"** the need and **"passed"** by. The Levite **"came and looked"** then **"passed."** The Samaritan **"saw," "had compassion,"** and **"went."** In Luke 10:37, Jesus tells us to **"Go and do the same."**

5. Are you meeting the needs of those God places in your life?
6. Does that mean that you're supposed to help everyone you meet? Why or why not? (Explain how seeking God, establishing priorities, and having the ability to meet the needs all play a part in determining what you are supposed to do.)

7. Describe the miracle:
  - a. What did the lame man ask for? (verse 3)
  - b. How did Peter respond? (verse 6)
  - c. Then what happened? (verses 7-8)

**\*\*** Notice the description Luke gives in verse 7 of the actual healing process. Being a doctor, he is very detailed in medical issues.

The beggar thought he needed money, but the Lord knew better. The Holy Spirit revealed to Peter the man's real need. So often, we think we know what we need, but God knows much better than we do.

8. One of the names of God is Jehovah-Jireh. What does this name mean? Read Genesis 22:14 to find out.
9. How does God meet our needs? Read Philippians 4:19 and 1 Timothy 6:6-10.
10. Do you ever get confused knowing which things are actual needs and which things are only wants? Make a list of the things in your life that you think you "need." Then make a list of things that you've been asking the Lord for. After you make your list, go back over it and ask God to help you discern between the true needs and the desires. It helps to ask yourself questions like: Do I really need this? Will this glorify God? Why do I want it?

Just because you're praying for something that you may not need doesn't mean that God doesn't want you to have it. We can pray and ask God for all we desire, as long as we are truly seeking His will for us, and we're ready to accept whatever that will is. We need to learn to be content with whatever He gives us, knowing that He has our best in mind (Philippians 4:11).

11. How does reading God's Word daily help us to keep this all in perspective? Read Hebrews 4:12.

This ends our lesson for today. I can't wait until tomorrow when we look at the response of the lame man after he's been healed. I smile every time I think about it. (Don't jump ahead!) Spend some time meditating on the faithfulness of God in providing our needs. He is faithful, even when we aren't. (2 Timothy 2:13) Amen!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."  
Acts 3:19

## Second Day

**Review this week's memory verse.**

Today we will begin by looking at the response of the lame man after he was healed. Is your heart ready?

1. Read Acts 3:1-8 again.
2. What was the man's response? (verse 8)

What a beautiful picture this creates in our mind. This man was so thankful and filled with joy that he couldn't contain himself!

3. What about you? What do you do when God does a miracle in your life? What about when He answers a particular prayer? How do you respond? Do you take time to praise and thank Him, or do you just continue on with your day?
4. Think about today. Have you thanked Him? Read Hebrews 13:15. What are we supposed to do?

As a parent, we know the importance of teaching our children how to be thankful to others, but especially to the Lord. Does the King of the Universe deserve any less from us, one of His kids?

5. Give some practical ways to teach your children how to be thankful. Can you share them with the group?

Yesterday we looked at the difference between our needs and our wants. What about the needs of others? The lame man had become a beggar. There are many beggars in your life. The beggars are not necessarily street people asking for money, but those people who are begging for your love and affection, your time, your friendship, or just a listening ear. What do you do when you see a beggar? **Do you try to avoid them?** Do you stay far away so that you don't even have to see the need? In

Acts 3:4, Peter and John "**fixed**" their eyes on the lame man. The word "**fixed**" means to "**look intensely.**" In the story of the Good Samaritan, remember that he had "compassion" on the man. I believe that Peter and John also had compassion in their eyes. I call this having "**Jesus eyes.**"

6. What does the word "**compassion**" mean?
  
7. Jesus is our best example of compassion. Read the following Scriptures and briefly explain how Jesus not only **had** compassion, but **showed** compassion on others:
  - a. Matthew 9:35-38
  
  - b. Matthew 20:29-34
  
  - c. Mark 8:1-9
  
  - d. Luke 7:11-15
  
8. Later in their epistles, Peter and John wrote about compassion. What did they say? Read 1 Peter 3:8 and 1 John 3:16-18.
  
9. How much compassion does God have for us? Read Lamentations 3:22-23.
  
10. Do you show compassion to those around you? (Having it is one thing, showing it is another.) How can you be more like Jesus in this area?

Many times we don't help those around us because we think we have nothing to offer. We need to realize that we not only have Jesus Christ, who is Hope, but God has also given us talents and gifts to be used to minister to others. Our gifts are to be used to edify the church, not to keep for ourselves. We need to be willing to do anything He asks us to do.

This ends our lesson for today. Let's spend some time thanking Him for what He's done in our life. Why not try some leaping and praising God? Doesn't He deserve it?

### Third Day

**Review the memory verse.**

When we read this story of the lame man in Acts 3, we often overlook the faith Peter must have had to even reach out his hand to this man. Think about it. Peter had never healed anyone before. What could have been going through his mind ... "What if this man doesn't get up? What do I do then?" It's crucial that we remember that Peter was human like you and I, and probably felt just like we would. Don't make the apostles out to be super human, or god-like. If we do, we won't learn all we can from their examples. They give us hope that we can do all things through Christ Jesus our Lord, who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).

1. Read Acts 3:1-12.
2. Describe how Peter might have felt as he reached out his hand to the lame man. How would you feel?

**It wasn't Peter's great faith that healed the man, it was Peter's faith in a great God!!!!**

3. What was the name of the Gate that the lame man was laying in front of?

This Gate was said to have been made of "Corinthian bronze wrought with such rich ornamentation that it far exceeded in value gates plated with silver and set with gold. Herod had made it one of the wonders of the world." **(John Phillips)**

The lame man is a great picture of us before we receive Jesus. We are spiritually born lame (Romans 5:12-21, 3:23, 3:12) and unable to save ourselves (Ephesians 2:8). We are outside of the temple, separated from God. The only one who could heal this man was God Himself, who is the only one who can save us from our sins. Coming to Jesus is like lying in front of the Gate Beautiful, for He is truly the Beautiful One (Psalm 27:4, 90:17). Only at the foot of the cross can we find forgiveness and healing and be allowed inside His holy temple. The lame man went from "rags to riches."

4. Explain how a person goes from "rags to riches" after they become born again. If you can, list any Scriptures that you use for your answer.

5. How often did the lame man go to the gate? (Acts 3:2)

After we're saved, we still need to find ourselves at the Gate Beautiful, or the feet of Jesus. He not only forgives us when we first accept Him, we can come to Him daily for forgiveness, comfort, healing, mercy, and compassion. Wow! His love is incredible!

6. Is there something today that you need to take to Jesus? Maybe some pain that you're holding on to? Maybe you've sinned and you haven't asked for His forgiveness yet. Are you sick and you desire to be healed? Take whatever it is to Him today! If it is sin, your fellowship is broken with the Lord until you confess and repent of it. Don't let anything come between you and your God.

7. What did the man do to Peter and John in Acts 3:11?

\*\*The word "held" in verse 11 means to "cling to." \*\*

8. What was the people's response to all this? (Verse 10)

\*\* Solomon's porch was the corridor on the east side of the temple. \*\*

In verse 12, Peter asks them why they were marveling. After all, they should have known their history. They should know that God is a God of miracles ... hadn't they seen many of them?

9. Did Peter take credit for this miracle? (Did he begin a "healing" ministry?)

10. In whose name and authority did Peter heal? (Acts 3:6)

11. Count how many times the name of Jesus is mentioned in this chapter. Include the phrase "in His Name." List any other names that are given for Jesus.
12. Whom did Peter obviously want all the credit and attention given to?
13. Do your acts of service point others to Christ or to yourself? Do you take credit for the ministry that God does through you?

Let's end right here. Tomorrow we will look at Peter's second sermon. Meditate on Jesus, our Beautiful Savior. Wasn't it wonderful when God told you to "Rise up and walk"?

### **Fourth Day**

**Review your memory verse.**

Today we will be reading Peter's second sermon. We can tell that Peter knows his Scriptures well. Knowing God's Word is extremely important, especially in evangelism. How well do you know your God?

1. Read Acts 3:12-26 and Acts 4:1-4.
2. What do you think are some of the key points in this sermon? What is his main point?

Notice that Peter uses this miracle as an open door to evangelize to the Jews. Spreading the Good News of the Gospel is on every page in the Book of Acts. Peter doesn't have the healed man share his testimony or set up speaking schedules for him. Peter simply grabs the opportunity to share about Jesus and uses the healing as an evidence of the truth.

3. Whom was Peter talking to? (verse 12)
4. Why does Peter refer to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? (verse 13)



5. What sin does Peter remind them that they're guilty of? (verses 13-15)

Before Peter could tell them about their need to repent, they needed to know what their sin was. People need to know that they're sinners before they see their need of a Savior. Repentance from sin should be a key factor in your evangelism.

**\*\* The word "holy" in verse 14 means "to be set apart."\*\***

6. How was Jesus "set apart"?

The term "**prince**" can be translated "**author**" or "**originator**." Isn't it ironic that they killed the Prince of Life, the one who created life and gave His life so that we could have life? Could there be a greater crime?

7. Who was the murderer Peter was referring to in verse 14? Read John 18:40 and Luke 23:18-21.

8. Where does our faith come from? (Acts 3:16)

The healing definitely came from God, but so does the faith to believe. You can't drum up enough faith to believe something. Faith is a gift from God.

Peter reminds them again that although God predetermined the death of Jesus, they were responsible. (Acts 3:17-18)

9. Did they understand what they were doing? (verse 17) Do you think Peter was giving them a chance to repent in this verse?

The word "**repent**" means a change of direction. It involves a change of thinking which results in a change of heart. John Courson gives some interesting examples of what repentance is **not**:

**Remorse** says, I feel bad about what I did, but that's my weakness, so I'll probably do it again.

**Regret** says, I feel bad about what I did because I got caught.

**Resolve** says, I feel bad about what I did, but I'll try harder next time.

Acts 3:19 refers both to Israel as a nation, and people as individuals. As a nation, Peter was calling them to repentance for denying Jesus Christ as the Messiah and crucifying Him. The **"times of refreshing"** are spoken of in Deuteronomy 30, Joel 2, and Zechariah 12. For many years, the prophets spoke of a time of refreshing when the Kingdom would be established in Israel at the return of Jesus Christ. They would be refreshed if they repented and turned their hearts toward Him.

The time of restoration referred to in verse 21 speaks about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, when Israel is restored to its destined status. It will fulfill God's covenant with Abraham concerning his descendants.

Personally, we are also refreshed when we come before the Lord and repent. Verse 19 says that our sins will be blotted out. That means to **"wipe away," "to wash,"** or **"to smear completely."** God wants to take away our sins. He does this by the blood of Jesus, after our act of repentance (1 John 1:9).

10. What else does God **"blot out"**? Read Colossians 2:14, Revelation 7:17, 21:4, and Isaiah 44:22.

11. What won't He remove us from? Read Revelation 3:5.

12. What else does He do to our sins when we repent? Read Isaiah 38:17, 1:18, 43:25-26, and Psalm 103:12.

13. Do you feel far from God? Isaiah 59:2 says that our iniquities have separated us from our God. Is there any unconfessed sin in your life? Read 1 John 1:9, repent from whatever it is, and be refreshed in the Lord!

Let's end here for today. As you close in prayer, why not refer to Jesus as the Holy and Just One, the Prince of Life, or another name for Him. It helps to remind us of who exactly our God is.

### Fifth Day

Can you write out your verse by memory?

1. Read Acts 3:22-26 and Acts 4:1-4 again.

Peter puts a lot of emphasis on the prophets in verses 22-26. Basically, Peter is reminding them that it was their own prophets who foretold the coming of Jesus.

2. Why did God choose Israel to be "His chosen people"? Read Deuteronomy 7:6-9.

3. What was God's covenant with Abraham? Read Genesis 12:1-3.

4. Was it conditional?

Jesus came to the world through the Jewish nation. The Gospel message was to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile (Romans 1:16; 2:9). In Acts 3:26 Peter again refers to them as a nation (you first), and as an individual (every one of you).

5. What were the two responses of the people in Acts 4:1-4?

6. Why were the Sadducees mad? Read Acts 23:6-8.

What a difference there is between the man who was healed and the religious men. The beggar learned firsthand about the power of God and welcomed healing, but the truth of the Gospel was too much for the religious leaders.

**Let's do a little review:**

7. What did the story of the lame man mean to you?

8. What do you need to change in your life as a result of this week's study?

9. How do you plan to make that change?

10. Name something new that you learned about God.

God has given us even more "**Reasons to Rejoice**" this week. He reminded us that we have so much to be thankful for. He exhorted us to be ready to minister to others. But most of all, He forgives us for all of our sins. Yahoo! Let's go and do some more leaping, shall we?