

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 22nd May 2022
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: New beginnings
Title: Beggar healed
Passage: Acts 3
Aim: I want the congregation to see the power of Jesus in the miracle, the command of Jesus in the challenge and warning and the blessing of Jesus in the promises.
Outline: **Miracle and name**
Challenge and promise
Warning and blessing

We are much more aware today than would have been the case in the 1st century, of **disabled people...**

That's **fantastic** isn't it...?

There must be **toilets** with **access** for the **disabled everywhere...**

our schools have **lifts** so that students in wheelchairs can get to a higher **floor...//**

And in our **social welfare system** we provide **pensions** and other means of support for those who through their **disabilities** are not able to **work...** maybe not **enough...** but more than **used** to be the **case. //**

And then in **latter** years – there's been the **NDIS** – though – with more **controversy and red tape** than we would have **liked... ///**

But there was none of that in **Jerusalem** in the 1st century.

We don't even know this guy's name... but we **do** know his age and that he had **never walked. /**

And we know his **occupation. /**

He was a **beggar.**

His **only** means of **support.**

Fortunately had some mates who each afternoon would **carry** him down to the temple – no **wheelchairs** **then** – and **plonk** him down outside one of the **entrances** to the temple courts just before the **afternoon prayers.**

Good **move!!**

Good **timing...** **best** potential for gaining some **sympathy** from **temple-going believers...**

hard to pass by!

(Imagine someone outside **your church building** on a Sunday morning!)

So – such a fascinating and wonderful account from the earliest days of the new church....

I have three **twinned** themes from this passage for you...

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1. A **miracle** and a **name**
2. A **challenge** and a **promise**
3. A **warning** and a **blessing**

1. A MIRACLE AND A NAME

Susan and I sat in a **refurbished bar** one Friday afternoon overlooking the Queen St mall in **Brisbane**

It's **fascinating** to see people **coming and going...**

People on their way home from **work...**

Couples holding hands...

School kids revelling in **Friday afternoon** with the anticipation of the **weekend ahead**

And lots of people around us enjoying an **early drink** or **dinner** for **Friday night**.

I saw a **couple** of different men at varying times in **wheelchairs**.

One with great **power** wheeling his chair up the **hill by hand**

Another one – with a motorised chair – **negotiating** through the **crowds**

And I thought – what if **Peter** and **John** – very **key** early church **leaders** – what if they were here...? //

What if one of these people in the Queen st mall was suddenly able to walk again – what would be their reaction – let alone the reaction of the crowd!

imagine would be like for someone who had never **walked** before, what it to **find** their **legs...!**?

Peter had wanted to engage with him – v4 – '**look at us**'

The man was keen – he was expecting Peter and John had some **money** for him.

But **no**, Peter had something **far more valuable** that **afternoon**.

This **particular** afternoon this man would remember for the **rest of his life**.

"Silver or **gold** I do **not** have, but what I **have** I **give** you. In the name of **Jesus Christ** of **Nazareth**, **walk**"

Imagine what those around who heard Peter say this: they're are thinking – is this guy for real? //

But Peter helps him **up!**

As he gets up v7 – the man's **ankles** become **strong**.

And he walks with them into the **temple courts** – and now he's **walking** and **jumping** and **praising God!**

How **brilliant** is this!! // Complete and utter miracle.

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When people recognised him – “hang on – that’s that guy who is always begging at the temple gate in the afternoons.. that’s **him** – see him **now...**”

...they’re all filled v9 – with **wonder** and **amazement!**

We would say – **they were blown away!**

And wouldn’t **you** be if you were there!? ///

Do you **believe** this? Could it have **happened?** //

If you live in a universe where you think nothing out of the ordinary – nothing super natural can **ever** happen – then you will have **trouble** here... and you’ll be working to come up with some **other** explanation.

But if your world view **allows** for the extraordinary – the **supernatural** – the **unexpected...** then you’ll accept that this **happened** just as we **read it..**

The **explanation?**

It’s the **work** of **God** – a **miracle**

our first twinned theme? – a **miracle** and a **name**

... Peter made it absolutely clear when he gave the command – v6 – *what I have I give you... in the **name** of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth...** WALK*

In the **name** of **Jesus**.

In the **power** of **Jesus**.

Through **Jesus**, **because** of **Jesus...**

Not in **MY** name or **my** power... //

If you do something in someone’s **name** – pick up a parcel from the **post office** or **sign** for something at the **door** – it’s as if **they have done** it...

This man **walked**, through the **power** of **Jesus**.

We cannot separate the **miracle** from the **name...**

And there is a little **audio visual here...**

Jesus is in the business of making **sick people / whole**

Of **restoring** things to how they **should be**

Here’s a glimpse of **two things...** //

...of what **Jesus does** in the life of believers **spiritually** – he **restores spiritually broken people...** //

...and it is also a glimpse of what he will do when he returns **literally...** in the **new heavens and new earth to come** – everyone will be restored - **no one** will be **sick** or **sad** or **disabled** or even **die!!** //

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Well this great miracle sparks some **fuss** as you would imagine... so we look at our next **twinned theme...**

2. A CHALLENGE AND A PROMISE

You can imagine the **interest** – the **fascination** – the **curiosity** - can't you?

I remember walking around near circular quay in Sydney a few years back, when this contortionist was climbing into a box about this **big...**

It was absolutely **astonishing...** I kept on thinking – this can't work - **surely...**

And then **little by little** – every last bit of **her** was in the **box** and the door **closed...** //

Well – this wasn't a **miracle** – but it was pretty **amazing** and drew a great **crowd** of people who loved the **spectacle...**

As the lady climbed out we **clapped** and **cheered** – and she asked for **money** in her **bowl..>**! // – but it was clear all the **glory** went to **her...**! //

Well I imagine that this disabled man now **up** and **about walking** and **leaping** drew a **similar crowd** – similar **curiosity...**!

But let's look at what **happened...** /at what **Peter** had to **say:**

*...v12 men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our **own** power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You **disowned** that **Holy and Righteous One** and asked that a **murderer** be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the death. We are witnesses of this. By **faith** in the **name of Jesus**, this man whom you see and know was made **strong**. It is **Jesus' name** and the faith that comes through **him** that has given this complete **healing** as you can all **see**.*

Peter says – no no no – it's not about **me...** I've not **done this!** /

It's all about **Jesus...** it's in **Jesus'** name – that's I said when I **told** the man to **walk**.

Yes that same Jesus **you disowned**.

That same Jesus you **killed!!**

That same Jesus God **raised!**

That same Jesus we **all saw alive again...**

HE gave this man this healing!

And this healing you've seen today – is a demonstration to you that Jesus is indeed **ALIVE!!**

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So what's the **challenge** and the **promise** Peter then **gives**?

He's just given them a **reality check**.

They killed the **author of life**...

Do you see what he's **saying** to them?

You killed our **Maker**... you did away with the **Creator**..>!

So here's the **challenge**...

v19 – **repent**, and **turn to God**.

That's the challenge...

Maybe **there's** a reality check needed for some **here** today

That is... you've not accorded God his rightful place as **Lord** – as leader – of your lives...

You've (as it were) done **away** with him as **God**...

And the challenge for you today is also – to **repent** and **turn to God**

To stop living **without** him; to stop leaving him on the **back burner** or **side line**... and put him as **first** – as **central**...

And **here's** the promise...

v19 – *that your **sins may be wiped out**, that times of **refreshing** may come from **Lord**...*

what an **amazing** and **precious promise**!

That when **anyone** turns **back** to God... (**first time** – or **again!**)...

...sins are **wiped out**... on the **basis** of Jesus' **death**... **taken** – **utterly** and **completely** – **gone**...

And times of **refreshing** will come from the **Lord**... ///

People are in **need** of **refreshing**...

Weighed down by all sorts of worries... **financial stress**, **family sadness**, **sickness**, **loss**....

Weighed down sometimes by the implications of their **foolishness** or the **results** of their **irresponsibility**...

But by turning **back** to **God**...

...there can be **assurance** of **sins forgiven**

... and the glorious **reality** of times of **refreshment**. /

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Third twinned theme

So – a miracle and a name; a challenge and a promise; third...

3. A warning and a blessing

Peter wants to put the **ministry** of Jesus and the **healing** of this **man** in a **larger context**.

He wants people to see the **big picture**. ///

Ever stood up really close to a **tapestry**?

All you see is different **threads** of varying colours **woven** in and **out**... and you can't really make much **sense** of it...

But then when you stand **back** and see the **tiny square inch** you were looking at in the context of the **whole** – when you see the **big picture** – you understand what was **happening** in **your small corner**

Peter says – look – the **coming** of Jesus is all of a **piece** – all in **line** with all the **prophets** from of **old**.

– **this whole Jesus story** – has not occurred in some way that is **distinct** and **separate** from your **historic faith**!

In fact your hero **Moses** spoke of the one who was to come... and here was his **warning**: – v23- *anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people...*

Peter **warned** the people – **listen** to Jesus – the risen Jesus is the one who **pulled off** this **miracle** /// **sit up** and **take notice**.

There are **consequences** if you keep on **ignoring** and **pushing him** to one **side**!

It may be a while since you pulled out the **Bible** you've had for a long time...

...but I want to encourage you to **listen** to Jesus... by reading one of the gospels... //

You may not have read it since **school** or **Sunday school**. You may need an **updated** version – but to listen **again** to Jesus will be **life giving** and **life changing**! //

Warning and blessing

...the **blessing**?

v26 – *when God raised up his servant [Jesus] he sent him to you to **bless** you by **turning** each of you from your **wicked ways**.*

That's not the usual way we **think** of **blessing**...

but the **blessing** is a **rescue** – **release** from **unhealthy** things in our lives which **trap** and **control** us...

there are **plenty** of people today who just can't shake **off** their old **ways** and bad **habits** and rebellious **behaviours**... and they need **rescuing**...!! (Bourke)

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...and what a **blessing** when they are **rescued**...!!

To be rescued from something high profile – like **drug addiction** – or maybe from the futility of power **hungry careerism**... is **liberating**....

But it's also liberating to be rescued from **selfishness**... from being consumed with **anger**, or **greed**

From **arrogance**. From crippling **pride**. //

Remember the **miracle** with which the chapter **begins**?

Jesus – is in the business of **restoring** people back to **wholeness**...!

I don't know what **you** need rescuing from today... but I **do** know **God** is the person to **do** it...

And my prayer is that as we work towards sharing Jesus with people across central and western NSW, there may be **more** and **more** people...who turn **back** to God; find their sin **wiped out** and find **great** and **beautiful** times of **refreshing** from the **Lord**.

...who **listen** to Jesus in a **new** and **fresh way** - and as a **result** – find themselves **rescued** from all **sorts** of **things** that have them **trapped** and **smothered** and **controlled** them – **released** from those – to **discover** all the **joy** of **knowing God**.

Please pray with me that that might be the case

...and if it is YOU that needs rescuing today – come back to the Lord today – say a simple 'sorry'... and you'll find rescue and refreshment.