

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 08.23.2020

IN THE NAME OF JESUS! – ACTS 3:1-10

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Ray shared with us from Acts 3 this weekend. "The Lord works through those Faithful In Prayer!" With Peter and John you have contrasting personalities. Peter the "Doer" and John the "Dreamer." For Peter everything is Action, what are we going to do! John was a Dreamer. I can imagine Peter irritated with John, and it could well be John was irritated with Peter because Dreamers like Peace and Quiet. Contrasting personalities, but Christ is the common meeting ground for all men. Though there are contrasting personalities, still there is that beautiful UNITY in Christ. The very fact that Peter and John were going into the Temple to pray indicates they were men of prayer! They are no longer competing with one another for 'who is the greatest?' but are at last faithfully working together to build the Church! In Acts 3 is the 1st recorded miracle through the Believers, the Church. This was more than a Miracle. It was a Sign Jesus was alive from the dead and He was now working through His followers. His followers were now His Instruments, His Ambassadors, His Representatives, His Messengers, His Witnesses. The hour of prayer - The day starts at 6 in the morning, so this was 3 in the afternoon. As the smoke of the sacrifices was ascending into heaven, it would be the hour of prayer as people stood and praised God and prayed. (Note that Jesus was on the cross at 9, at noon darkness fell, and at 3 he died) Daniel prayed 3 times a day, 9, 12, and 3 in the afternoon. The one thing Jesus wants people to know is that He is now working through His followers, and through those who are faithful in prayer, and those who look and see the desperate need of the suffering. Let's get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What stood out or spoke to you most from Pastor Ray's message this weekend?
2. What is your attitude toward the words "luck" and "chance meeting"?
3. When has a "chance" encounter changed your life?

As a follower of Christ, I hesitate to call the encounters I have with people mere "chance" meetings. These unplanned intersections can be "divine appointments"—opportunities that can change the direction of a life. In Acts 3, Peter and John took advantage of just such an unplanned meeting to do something incredible for God.

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 3:1-4

1. How does this passage demonstrate that individuals matter to God?
2. Put yourself in the place of the beggar. What do you think your life would have been like?
3. Why was this man in need of hope?

Peter and John chose a busy intersection in Jerusalem. Three o'clock in the afternoon was one of the times designated daily for prayer; it was also the time for one of the two daily sacrifices. Therefore, it was a busy time at

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the temple with large crowds coming to pray and offer sacrifices. Peter and John likely chose this crowded time and place as a forum to share the gospel. Before they started, Peter and John saw a disabled man begging from those who passed. This was similar to scenes we might see in urban America. I say we might see, because so many of us choose not to see. We walk on, avoiding eye contact.

4. What do Peter and John's actions toward the lame man say about their priorities?
5. How can we get better at noticing the opportunities God gives us to love others?

Thanks to the willingness of Peter and John to turn a divine interruption into an unstoppable opportunity, this man's life was about to change. Forever.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 3:5-8

1. What did Peter offer the lame man?
2. How was what Peter gave to the man much better than silver or gold?
3. Think back over your life. Can you remember a time when someone shared hope with you? What was happening in your life at that time? How did you respond?

Peter and John didn't rationalize the way many people do when accosted by panhandlers: "I don't have any money." "Someone else will help." "He'll always be here begging." "His relatives should provide for him." "He should get a job." Instead, Peter and John saw someone in need and viewed his need as an opportunity God had placed in their path.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 3:9-10

1. What was the lame man's first response when he was healed? How did he give glory to God?

The crowd responded with awe and astonishment. And why not? The man had been lame since birth. When a man has been unable to stand or walk for "over 40 years" (4:22), he just doesn't suddenly get better. So when the crowd saw this man standing, walking, and even leaping and praising God, it rightly got their attention!

If you read the rest of Acts 3, you'll see Peter grabbed this opportunity to talk about Jesus to all those who had come to the temple to worship. One opportunity to talk to one man about Jesus led to another opportunity. As a result, the number of the men alone who believed swelled to about 5,000 (see 4:4). It's the ripple effect: one opportunity leads to another. You never know the power of one seemingly small encounter with a random person. Even when we feel inadequate, God has a way of multiplying encounters with others—we just have to be obedient.

2. What are some of the things keeping you from sharing your hope with others right now?
3. Is there room in your schedule to stop and meet people in the midst of their need like Peter and John did?
4. What is the result when we share hope with others?
5. Share of a time when you were obedient to the Holy Spirit's prompting and He blessed a "chance encounter" with another person.

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

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Look for those who are LAME in your life or family. How many years had this man been sitting there begging? Over 40 years? Everyone knew this man, who was unable to work, w/out family, poor, desperate, never accepted. Peter exercised his Faith and declared in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth for him to do the impossible! That's faith! Then he extended his right hand and took hold of the man's hand and lifted him up in faith. Lend a hand! Peter was involved in the miracle. At this moment I believe Peter received the gift of faith described in 1 Cor. 12:9 – a supernatural ability to trust God in a particular situation.

1. Note that Peter and John were not on a missions trip; they were traveling to a place they regularly attended. How, then, are you relying on the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you in your day-to-day routine and encounters with others?
2. How will you respond to the call to obey when the Holy Spirit prompts you to help or share with someone?
3. How are you going to make sure you can see others' need for hope? What needs to change about your schedule to make that happen?

PRAYER - Close in prayer, thanking God that He cares about the whole person—physical and spiritual. Pray for any specific healing needs your group may have. Pray that God would impress upon you and your group members' hearts to get involved in the needs of others. Look for the lame man! Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a spirit of bravery and obedience to respond to His promptings, wherever you are! Encourage your group to join Pr. Ray in praying at 9, 12 and 3pm.

" Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
(Phil. 2:9-11)