The Power of the Living Christ

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One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. 4 Peter looked intently 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 or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,-stand 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 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (Acts 3:1-10)

1. 2018 VBS

Last week was one of my happiest moments in 2018. I would like to share one of the great things that happened at VBS. Friday night one of children was crying standing next to his dad. We did not know what happened to him. I learned that he was crying because VBS ended on Friday. He wanted us to continue so that he could come back the following night. There is no question that children experienced the power and love of the living Christ at VBS.

2. Peter Heals a Lame Beggar

Today's scripture Acts 3:1 and the following tell us that there is a man who experienced the power of the living Christ. We do not know his name, but he was crippled from birth. People would carry him every day to the Beautiful gate of the Jerusalem Temple so that he could beg from those going into the temple. One day at three o'clock in the afternoon, Peter and John go into the temple through the Beautiful Gate to pray. The crippled man asks for money to them.

Peter and John look straight at him and say, "***Look at us***." The man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. But Peter

says, "***I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk***" (Acts 3:6). When Peter takes him by the right hand, his feet and ankles become strong and he jumps to his feet and begins to walk. The crippled man does not expect anything other than money from them. But Peter and John know that the man needs his legs more than the money. The man enters the temple and praises God for his healing. People in the temple are filled with wonder and amazement at what happened to the beggar.

3. Do Miracles Happen in Our Life?

When we read the Bible, we notice that there are many miraculous stories in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The question is, "Do we believe that miracles can happen in our life?" Some people say that they have had miraculous experiences in their lives. They do not doubt that miracles happen even today. On the other hand, some people say that the events that we think are miracles are coincidences that beat all probabilities. They think that miracles do not happen.

I believe that miracles do happen. For me 2018 VBS is a miracle. Two years ago, I was impressed by David and Barbara Klotzbach. They made the children excited in the opening with a skit. Last year, Cheryl Kmetz and David MalColmson joined Barbara and did a super job. I was not sure who would do the opening this year. I learned that Sharon Kantzer would join us with a puppet show. Sharon and Cheryl touched the hearts of children through the puppets. Other people participated in VBS through their financial contribution. We collected more money than we need and had more children and helpers than last year. 2018 VBS was a huge success. God brought us a miracle to our church. Praise the Lord!

4. The Purpose of Healing

We pray for healing and miracles. We are thankful for God's answers to our prayers. But sometimes we focus on healing or miracles too much. In the story of Acts 3, maybe the most important point is that the crippled man experiences the love of the living Jesus through his physical healing. His healing is just an outward sign of the love of the Lord. According to Acts 4:22, the crippled man was 40 years old. For the past 40 years, every day this man wondered why he could not walk like other people. He must have been trying to get the answer to his question. He might think that God did not care about him. He might feel that God abandoned him.

But as soon as Peter and John see this man, they see him with the eyes of the Lord. Many people just gave him money and had no interest in his physical and mental challenges. However, Peter and John are full of compassion and tell him to stand up and walk. They believed that Jesus would raise him up and make him walk. As they believed, Jesus rescued the crippled man.

5. Rescued by Jesus

This year's VBS theme is "**Shipwrecked: Rescued by Jesus**." The children learned that Jesus rescues them when they are in all kinds of trouble: when they are lonely, worry, struggle, feel weak and powerless, Jesus would rescue them. Today's scripture Acts 3 is the 5th day's Bible story at VBS. VBS children learned that Jesus rescues them always with the mighty power of God who raised Jesus from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20). Do we believe that the Lord rescues us always?

There is a mom who has an autistic daughter. She asked a question many times like this. "God, why did you give me a child with a special need?" Do you know what God's answer was? "It is because I couldn't find any woman who can take care of her better than you do." She has been chosen by God to show God's love to the autistic girl. Although she has had many difficult days, she is grateful to God for His unfailing love for her daughter.

6. Conclusion

We often say that we need more money than we have. However, today's scripture tells us that we have something more precious than money. Peter says, "***Look at us. I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk****."* We have the living Christ in our hearts.

Our VBS children experienced the power and love of Jesus through our VBS teachers. Do we believe that God wants us to be his channel for others to experience the power and love of the living Christ?

7. Application

We came this world with empty hands, but now we have so much that we can offer to others. Remember that Jesus is in our hearts always. There are children, young people, and adults around us who want to experience the love and power of our Lord. Jesus asks us to be his channel of his power and love. Are we ready to say to someone to look at us and help him or her stand up and walk with Jesus? Amen. Let us pray.