

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

June 16, 2019

A New Gaze

ACTS: The Journey Continues

Acts 3:1-10

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

3 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, ^[a] 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:

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

In this post-Pentecost time of the disciples' ministry, we now see them traveling with a particular code and practice of noticing others. As Peter and John approach the temple for afternoon prayer, they come upon a lame man who has made a daily practice of lying at the temple gate asking for alms. Instead of giving him alms, Peter looks intently at him and declares him to stand up and walk in the name of Jesus. The man walks, leaps, and praises God, and is immediately recognized by all in the temple.

This healing act of Peter's is the first of its kind described in the book of Acts. The man has been excluded from society and overlooked on a daily basis. Luke makes a point of Peter's eye contact with the man. Conferring dignity and acknowledging the humanity of others, as Peter does, requires making a point of noticing. ***Why do you think is it so difficult for us to know how to best care for the homeless?*** In verse seven, we see that the power to heal the man was from Christ, though the hand offered was Peter's. ***How can we learn from Peter's interaction with this man? How does this encourage you to find ways you can participate in God's work of restoration and healing?***

This passages teaches us that the work of the witnesses is to see. The world seduces us with an artificial urgency and belief that it is better to keep busy than rest. When we nurture our relationship with God, we begin to notice the world through God's eyes and see how His spirit is at work in our daily lives. ***How are we in danger of losing our way and our joy when we fall into the world's urgency?*** The Daily Examen is just one way to pay attention to God. ***How can you use the slower summer rhythm to nurture your relationship with God and pay more attention to your neighbors?***

Heavenly Father, help us not to miss the divine appointments you have for us. Help us to practice your life-giving rest that sets us free to live and serve. We pray for eyes that come awake, and that we will be your witnesses who pay attention and follow where you lead. Amen.