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What Do You Have To Give?

ACTS 3:1-10

Introduction

1. I think most if not all of us enjoy a story with a good ending.
2. You just heard such a story in our Scripture reading this morning.
3. The physician, Luke, records it for us in the third chapter of the book of Acts, which is his account of the growth of the early church.
4. It is a powerful story about a lame man who sat at one of the gates leading to the temple in Jerusalem and begged alms on a daily basis.
5. As I read the story in preparation for today's sermon, my mind flooded with a host of questions.
6. We know that because Luke was not present for many of the things he recorded, he had to depend upon eyewitness accounts (Luke 1:2).
7. So, one of the many questions I asked myself was, "Who shared this story with Luke?"
 - a. Peter?
 - b. John?
 - c. The lame man himself?
8. The truth is, you and I will never know the answer to that question this side of our eternal reward.
9. This morning I want to invite you to look closely at what Luke records for us:
 - a. Let's try to see each detail from the viewpoint of Peter, John and especially the lame man himself.
 - b. I hope that we will marvel at what our Lord brought about through His servant Peter, as did those who were present that day.

- c. I also hope that it will prompt us to realize just how much each of us has to offer in service to our God.

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I. Peter's Gift To A Lame Man

A. PETER AND JOHN'S ENCOUNTER WITH A LAME MAN

1. Luke tells us that two of Jesus' apostles, Peter and John, "were going up to the temple at the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1).
 - a. This would have been 3:00 p.m.
 - b. It was "the hour of prayer" — this was the public prayer service which accompanied the evening sacrifice each day.
2. Luke also tells us about a particular man (he doesn't give us his name).
3. This man, who according to Acts 4:22 is over forty years old, has been lame since his birth.
 - a. His parents never experienced the joy of watching him take his first steps as a child.
 - b. As a young boy, he never had the opportunity to run and play with his friends.
4. Because he was lame and could not move himself, he was in the process of being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful where he would be set down so that he could beg alms (v. 2).
5. So many questions come to my mind as I think about this man's situation:
 - a. Was he still living with his mother and father, or were they even alive?
 - b. If they were not alive, was he living with a sibling or one his own?
 - c. How many years had he been doing this?
 - d. Luke says this was done "every day." Good weather and bad?
 - e. How early was he brought there? When was he carried home?
 - f. Did anyone help take care of his physical needs while he was at the

gate?

6. What we do know is that every day he begged alms (something such as money or food) in order to meet his needs.
 - a. How many people looked the other way as they walked by?
 - b. How many pretended not to hear him?
 - c. How many used another gate in order to avoid him?
 - d. How many simply said, "No," to his requests?
7. We only read of one other man in Scripture who was laid at a gate (Luke 16:20) — Luke records his story as well:
 - a. His name was Lazarus.
 - b. He was laid at the gate of a certain rich man, where he hoped to be fed by the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.
 - c. Dogs would come and lick the sores which covered his body (Luke 16:21).

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B. PETER'S COMMANDS, ACTION AND THE RESULT

1. When the lame man saw Peter and John, he began asking them "to receive alms" (v. 3).
2. The two apostles looked straight at him and Peter said, "Look at us!" (v. 4).
3. No doubt, he thought, "they are about to give me something."
4. However, Peter began by saying, "I have no silver and gold" (v. 6) — neither he nor John had any money with them on this occasion.
5. How many times had the lame man heard these words since he first started coming to the temple to beg.
6. It is these next words of Peter that we need to focus our attention upon: "but what I do have I give to you" (v. 6).
7. It was then that Peter did two things:

- a. He gave the man a command.
 - b. He acted on that command.
8. First, the command: “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth— walk!”
- a. Peter did not say, “In the name of Jesus, son of Joseph of Nazareth, or Jesus, son of Mary, walk!”
 - b. Instead, he said “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth — walk!”
 - 1) This name represents His divine authority and continuing power to grant the blessings of salvation.
 - 2) It is the name which belongs to Him as a result of his resurrection and glorification — He is both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).
 - a) In his first sermon, on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, “let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).
 - b) It was also on that day that Peter had said to the crowd, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).
9. Peter then acted on that command: He seized the lame man by his right hand and raised him up.
- a. Have you ever tried to lift someone who has no strength in their legs to help you?
 - b. If so, you know that one hand isn’t enough to help them up.
 - c. No, it usually takes both of your arms and all your strength to lift them.
10. What happened? Luke tells us.
- a. “Immediately his feet and ankles were strengthened” (v. 7).
 - b. The legs which had never carried his body weight were suddenly strong enough for him to “leap” and stand upright (v. 8).

- c. He began to do something which he had never done in his entire life — he walked.
11. To be honest, he did more than walk. As he entered the temple with Peter and John, he was “walking and leaping and praising God” (v. 8).

Slide 4**C. THE PEOPLE’S RESPONSE**

1. Imagine that you were there on that day and had seen this lame man on numerous occasions.
2. It would have been impossible for you, as it was for everyone else, not to notice him “walking and praising God” (v. 9).
3. You, like the others who frequented the temple, would have recognized him as the one who used to sit at this same gate every day and beg alms.
4. And you, too, would have been “filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him” (v. 10).

[This is definitely a powerful story with a good ending, but if we leave it there, we miss some very important lessons. Through this account, I pray that God may help us to see that which we have to give.]

Slide 5**II. May God Help Us To See That Which We Have To Give****A. PHYSICALLY** — “work of service” (Ephesians 4:12)

1. Like Peter, there are those of us who may say, “I have no silver and gold,” but what I do have I give to you.”
2. As many of us have learned from our inventories we have life skills and life experiences which God can use to accomplish His purposes.
3. God is able to take us where we are at and, if we are willing, use us to accomplish great things in His kingdom.
5. Many years ago when I was preaching in Hickman County, I met a dear

Christian sister and her husband.

- a. She was blind.
 - b. She had fought a battle with cancer which resulted in her having a colostomy procedure.
 - c. Some years later after her husband died she had heart surgery.
 - d. In spite of all this she lived in her own house by herself, cooking her own meals and taking care of her own physical needs.
 - e. Though her daughter-in-law purchased her groceries, this lady put them away on her own.
 - f. She listened to the Bible on cassette and never missed a church service as long as her daughter-in-law picked her up and brought her.
 - g. She often baked brownies and provided them for different church functions.
 - h. Our young people loved to go to her house at Christmas because she always had the best homemade cookies.
 - i. She was a very humble lady who took away everyone else's excuses.
6. One of our own members here, though confined to a wheelchair, comes to our building almost every day in order to work in our distribution center.
 7. Others of you are working diligently sorting, organizing, preparing and serving meals, helping people get back into their homes.
 8. Through all of this we are getting the opportunity to help our neighbors and meet new friends.
 9. May God open doors of opportunity and hearts so that we can accomplish even more good.
 10. Eric has a ministry list with more than 50 ministries not including the various missions we support.
 11. Please know there is something which each of us can do, and God is able to do great things through you if you will ask Him to do so.

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B. SPIRITUALLY — “building up of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12b).

1. Ultimately, it is the message of salvation which we seek to communicate not only to those here at home but also to souls around the world.
2. Peter used the opportunity afforded him because of the miracle involving the healing of the lame man to tell those in the temple about salvation in Jesus.
3. He told them that they had “put to death the Prince of life,” but God had raised Him from the dead (Acts 3:15).
4. He let them know that it was on the basis of faith in the name of Jesus that the lame man now stood before them in “perfect health” (v. 16).
5. His invitation to them was to “repent and return, so that [their] sins [might] be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing [might] come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).
6. This is also what you and I seek to offer those in our community.
7. Please realize that serving as an elder, deacon or someone who either preaches or teaches God’s Word is not all your or I have to give.
8. We have a member who helps take care of the laundry at one of our local nursing homes.
9. She uses the opportunities God affords her each week to read His Word to a number of the residents.
10. Others of you can strike up a conversation with almost anyone. Try and use that skill with which God has blessed you to invite people to worship.
11. A number of you ladies write some of the most encouraging notes.
 - a. I know, because I have been a recipient of a host of them.
 - b. Please continue to use that talent to encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ.
12. Many of you are powerful in your prayers.
 - a. Please keep praying for all of our workers, our elders, our deacons, and Kyle and myself along with all our families.
 - b. May God help each of us to be faithful servants in His kingdom.

Conclusion

1. I know in my heart that all of you love the Lord, and with God's blessing we will all continue our journey toward that beautiful city of God.
2. However, our work here isn't done yet, no matter how old we may be.
3. Let's all keep pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
4. Remember, "we're marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God."

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5. If you are here today and are not a Christian, let me leave you with these words from Peter, "repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).