

# No Ordinary Day

Acts 3:1-11 NIV

Following a general description of the daily operation of the community of believers at the end of chapter 2, Luke now tells Theophilus of an event on a certain day.

How much time has passed from the coming of the Holy Spirit; that which looked like flames or tongues of fire coming to rest on the 12, to this event on this particular day, we are not told. We can suppose and hope that the evangelistic work of the apostles and the believers went unopposed to this point.

Acts 3 begins with Peter and John making their way to the Temple for the 3 o'clock prayer time. Having no official church building during this early period of the church was a plus. Believers met in the temple area and synagogues where potential audiences would be, as well as in their own homes.

Going to the temple to pray was not a burden of Old Testament Law, but liberty in Christ to participate in a Jewish ritual that was favorable to the spread of the apostles teaching. The ready-made audience that Peter and John would find in the temple on this particular hour was going to have a disruption in their ordinary day.

<sup>1</sup> One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at

three in the afternoon. <sup>2</sup> Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. <sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. <sup>4</sup> Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" <sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

<sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." <sup>7</sup> Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. <sup>9</sup> When all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup> they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (Acts 3:1-11)

The first thing that I see and want to call to your attention is that two of the disciples/apostles were together. It brings to my mind that Jesus sent his disciples out into the cities and towns in pairs on two different occasions. I don't want to make too much of this, like this is a law of

evangelism or something, because we see later in Acts Philip working alone, but I think it is worth mentioning.

Today, in our busy lives, it's hard to get two people going in the same direction at the same time with the same goal. And it may not have been any easier in Jesus day. People are people, whatever the generation. We get busy with our own agendas and forget that we have been bought with a great price, and we are not our own.

On this particular day, Peter and John had not forgotten who was boss. And, as a result, this was not going to be an ordinary day.

A beggar, a man cripple from birth, of whom we learn in Acts 4:22 that he is past 40 years of age; a man who has to rely on others to get him to his only means of livelihood, is on his way to the gate called Beautiful about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Is he a late sleeper? Or is this his regular time? Is this the heaviest traffic hour into the temple; people getting off work or maybe women finished with most of their daily chores, or has he had to wait until someone was available to assist him?

Just another day begging for this fella. Look on the bright side. At least he

was by this beautiful gate. If it was a slow day begging, or if he became discouraged, he could think about all the money spent to make this gate so beautiful. After all, he was better off than Lazarus who was laid at the rich man's gate, hoping for a few scraps from his table. Or blind men who begged along major roadways, subject to bandits, wild animals, and adverse weather.

"There are Peter and John!" Did he know who these two were? Possibly. If he begged at this gate every day, he would have been there on the day the 'sound like a mighty wind' came. He may have heard some of the preaching and remembered the men doing it.

But, even if he had heard this 'Good News,' would he have considered that it was for him? After all, he was a cripple, begging alms for support. He may have believed that God was punishing him or his family by his infirmity.

So many walked by every day like he wasn't even there. No coins from them; not even a look or a kind word.

"Look at us!" said Peter. This was different. He gave these two his full attention, expecting something.

Think about this man's situation for a moment. The Temple supposedly represented the dwelling place of God. Even though Solomon said "...will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you.

**How much less this temple I have built!"**  
**(1 Kings 8:27)**

But, I bet some then believed that somehow God lived in the Temple, just like some think that somehow the church building is the church.

The Temple was supposedly the very House of God - the home of God's presence - and yet here this cripple man who sat most of his life - camped at its gates - and he was still a cripple.

Day after day, how many hundreds passed by him doing their religious duty, but could offer him nothing at the house of God but a few copper coins.

Peter said "I don't have any money," but the man was about to get something. He was about to find out where God really lived, and it was going to change his ordinary day into an extraordinary day.

When the man reached for the hand extended to him to help him to his feet, was it Peter's hand or God's hand?

The correct answer is both. Jesus sacrifice made it possible for God to live in man. Holy Spirit power healed the man when he took the hand that reached down to help him up - and he jumped to his feet, praising God.

He expected something, but in his wildest dreams...but doesn't God's word

say that he can do more than we ask or think?

This man could have been an example of one of the topics that was discussed on Wednesday night: **"Does God really care about me?"**

Setting by the gate Beautiful day after day, begging for a living, do you think possibly that this question crossed his mind? Looking at this gate, he may have believed the lie of the enemy: "God cares more about this building than he cares about you."

When our world comes crashing in around us, and the Devil begins to whisper in our ear, we question, "God! Where are you? Why is this happening to me?"

Our temporary situation; our brief inconvenience would be like a bump in the road compared to this man who sat day after day, depending on the charity of worshipers.

Have you ever heard a waiter or waitress say that church groups are the worst tippers? Should we assume that this man had a reasonable income?

**"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."**

All the coins that this man had ever collected totaled could not begin to compare to what he received. He

expected something from Peter and John, but I don't think he ever expected to walk.

How many of you have lived long enough to know that God rarely answers prayer in the way we expect?

Sometimes, the problem is that his children stop expecting anything at all from God. We wake up in the morning expecting just another ordinary day.

On Sunday, we come to church ready for just another Sunday service. We'll sing some hymns and choruses, pray, take communion, and providing that preacher does the right thing we'll be out for lunch by 12.00pm.

Nothing is sadder than getting up in the morning or going to church when you aren't expecting anything to happen - and worst still when you are positively sure that nothing is going to happen!

As bad as his situation seemed, this cripple man managed to get to the temple every day. He could have said, "Forget it. I'm staying in bed today. Just leave me alone." But he didn't. And God did what he loves to do – bless people through people!

The beggar would have been considered by most an irritant, harassing people on the way to worship. But Peter and John saw him differently. The untouchable needed to be touched, encouraged and lifted up. And God

changed an ordinary day into an extraordinary day.

Let me encourage you to read all of Acts 3 this week. Read it several times. And as you do, remember where God dwells today. He comes to live in those who diligently seek him. He doesn't dwell in buildings made by human hands. He dwells in human temples made by his hands.

His desire is to bless those temples more than they can imagine. Now I am not naïve enough to believe or expect to live a mountaintop existence every day. But I certainly expect God to be with me as I travel between mountaintops.

Isn't that what David writes in Psalm 23?

***4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)***

Also, as you read Acts 3, remember that God loves to bless people through people. He wants to work through us to bless others.

I have heard the church described as 'poor beggars trying to help other poor beggars find a meal.'

If we can spiritualize this cripple beggar's situation, all mankind is just like

him. Due to sin, all are cripple beggars in need of taking hold of the hand reaching down to lift them up.

Remember that someone helped you see your need of taking hold of the hand reaching down to you. And you can help someone see their need.

I know that our lives get busy. But think about all the modern gadgets that we have that make our lives so much easier that Peter and John didn't have. They were busy; maybe busier than we are – but not too busy. They remembered who was in charge. They remembered who went through a very dark valley for them. His name is Jesus.

When we remember where God lives, and that he blesses people through people; people who know that they have been bought with a great price, and who are not their own, people ready to be God's hands and feet...

And when we do, we can expect at any time to be a participant, just like Peter and John, in changing someone's ordinary day into an extraordinary day.