

- **Question: As a person of Faith in Christ, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM GOD? Almost sounds wrong.. like the opposite of JFK's famous statement... "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country"... The question isn't what I expect from God, but what God expects from me!! AND YET..**
- **In Ephesians chapter 1- Paul praying for church- for what we would receive from God.**

Ephesians 1:17-19

- **.... That we would know God's incomparably great power FOR US. STRONG WORDS. What do they mean?**
 - **We may think about power of God in the world, creator, sustainer...**
 - **But if God's power is at work in the world, AND in the church, which is the focus of Paul's prayer, that means it will be at work through PEOPLE. SO... what about power of God in your life?**
- **You may honestly think "I believe, but I have no idea what that means, I don't feel like I experience power of God... maybe just words, or for select few..." I'VE felt that way! BUT then we see ending of Paul's next big prayer in Ephesians chapter three...**

Ephesians 3:20-21

- **IN ACTS, major recurring event- theme- is the power of God displayed through miracles- signs and wonders that JESUS does through the Holy Spirit working in APOSTLES**
- **FOR LUKE, aren't just historic events- tho they are that. They did happen!**
- **BUT MORE than the event themselves, these miracles are TEMPORAL, PHYSICAL ACTIONS by God that point to, and teach us, ETERNAL AND DEEPER REALITY ABOUT GOD- and his continuing purpose and work in the lives of people.**
- **SO, we begin PART 2 of journey through ACTS, which we are titling "WHAT ONLY GOD CAN DO", because this is what we will see. HERE we will see**
 - **the community of faith continue to grow in Jerusalem,**
 - **The onset of persecution**
 - **God working miraculously thru apostles**
 - **Several key speeches by Peter,**
 - **Holy Spirit working through apostles to navigate challenges of leading diverse community now numbering over 5000 people, and growing rapidly.**

- **THIS NEXT STEP** in life of Jerusalem community of faith beings in Acts 3, when Peter and John meet a man crippled from birth, begging at the gates of the temple...
- **READ ACTS 3:1-10**
- **Before we push into this, take a minute to look at the ancient city of Jerusalem, and the temple where these events happened. LETS CHECK IT OUT.**

MAP VIDEO

- **Remember from last week- new community had VERY strong sense of identity within itself. Met together, people of prayer, shared life and possessions, faith in Christ.**
- **KEY POINT! With this strong internal identity, they did NOT isolate themselves from the surrounding community. In fact, quite the opposite.**
 - **Tendency in protestant/evangelical culture/history for churches to turn inward, isolate themselves from the ‘winful world’ around them. People are welcome to come to them, but as a church rarely go to the people. ATTRACTIVE, rather than MISSIONAL**
- **NOT THE CASE FOR JERUSALEM CHURCH. As Jews living in Jerusalem, they practiced their faith in full view of the surrounding community- what people saw WAS ATTRACTIVE! But these new believers also engaged their community with the message and hope of Christ, which is EXACTLY what happens in our story today.**
- **PETER AND JOHN going to Temple at time of afternoon prayer. Normal thing to do, they are carrying on normal life... when they came upon a scene ALSO very normal- a person begging at the outer Temple Gate- A gate called ‘beautiful’**
- **LET’S TALK ABOUT THIS MAN, wish we knew his name, because his is a powerful story.**
- **LAME FROM BIRTH. Some congenital birth defect, ALWAYS BEEN WITH HIM. He has never known anything different.**
- **This made him DEPENDENT UPON OTHERS. On people who carried him to his spot, and people who would give him money.**
- **HE IS DESTITUTE. He is a beggar. NOT just materially, but SPIRITUALLY. The O.C. Levitical law prevented a person crippled, especially with birth defect, from entering the temple. He was UNCLEAN.**

- **THUS, THIS MAN WAS**
 - *Physically crippled*
 - *Likely emotionally crippled*
 - *Financially destitute*
 - *Social outcast*
 - *Separated from God*
- **ALL OF THIS WAS MAGNIFIED** by where he daily sat and begged. In front of incredible beauty of the temple gate. Extra biblical historical sources tell us these gates were clad in silver and gold, and the ancient historian Josephus describes this particular gate as being larger and more heavily adorned than the others.
- **Think of it!** For a healthy Jew, these gates represented the majesty of drawing near to the presence of God... to **OUR MAN**, the gates were barriers separating him from the God whose presence he could never enter.
- **AND SO**, there he is. Sense that he is in his routine, repeating his request for money and likely not expecting much.
- **PETER AND JOHN** approach him. He sees them, repeats his line, doesn't really look at them
- **THIS IS SUBTLE**, but important. The man isn't looking at Peter and John, but **THEY** are looking at him. The spirit prompts P&J to **TAKE THE INITIATIVE...** Peter says, **LOOK AT US!**
- **Man** looks at them, expecting to receive something. **MONEY. THIS IS KEY!**
- **What this man expects**, what he is asking for, is something to help him **COPE-enough** to get him through the day.
- **HE IS NOT EXPECTING** a change in his life. Just something to help him continue/ survive/ in the brokenness of his life. **WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN** was immeasurable more than what he could ask or imagine.

Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you.

- **Common phrase**, meant 'lot of money'... **IRONY HERE IS HUGE.** The gates looming above them... represented the separation of God from the people inherent in the OC sacrificial system.. coated with silver and gold.
- *I'm reading in JUST A BIT*, but I can hear Peter saying... **SILVER AND GOLD-** this entire system around you that is adorned with silver and gold- It's not

what I have, and IT'S NOT WHAT YOU NEED. There is nothing here with the power to bring you anything you truly need!

- *BUT, what I DO HAVE- what is NOW AVAILABLE TO YOU- is immeasurable more valuable than the temporary worth of this physical silver and gold. WHAT I HAVE, THIS I GIVE TO YOU... IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH, WALK!*
- *Luke tells us that Peter reached down and took him by the hand- this itself was breaking a social taboo- helped him up, and instantly he became strong.*
- *THIS WASN'T a 'renewal' of his strength, this was something he had never known! His entire life and identity had been bound up in his weakness, and now, for the first time, he could STAND.*
- *THINK WHAT JUST CHANGED FOR HIM!*
- *FREED FROM INFIRMITY. In physical world, this was his underlying, greatest need. But this wasn't all he received, it was just the beginning.*
- *FREED FROM DEPENDENCE UPON OTHERS.*
 - *Before, his life was limited to what was given to him by other people- they were his source of life, an unreliable source at that.*
 - *NOW, he has a new source of life, person of Jesus.*
 - *With his dependence for life now centered in CHRIST, for first time, no longer bound to his dependence upon others.*
- *FREED FROM SOCIAL STIGMA- but more, the stigma of his soul. The emotional brokenness, even deadness, that comes from being looked down upon- being LESS THAN in the eyes of people- maybe in his own eyes. BUT NOW, he has been declared WORTHY and WHOLE by GOD HIMSELF.... AND MOST IMPORTANTLY*
- *He has been SET FREE FROM SEPARATION FROM GOD.*

He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

- *He walked with Peter and John into the Temple Courts, FOR THE FIRST TIME. The beautiful gates of silver and gold NO LONGER stood as a barrier between him and the presence of God.*

- **NOT JUST BECAUSE** he would now be acceptable under the OC law, and thus could enter the temple courts. **NO-** he was now free to come into the presence of God because through the DBR of Jesus, the OC temple sacrificial system had been replaced by the **NEW COVENANT** sacrifice of Christ's blood..
- **NOW, IN THE NEW COVENANT... IN THIS NEW AGE** that is breaking out all around them, the presence of God is **NOT** housed in the temple, but in the very hearts and spirits of believers!
- **CAN'T MISS THIS.** For this man, the **POWER OF GOD** and **PROMISE OF JESUS** has transformed him from being an outcast **EXCLUDED FROM TEMPLE**, to **BEING THE TEMPLE**, as the spirit of God, the holy spirit, now dwelled in his heart through his faith in God.
- **I WONDER IF**, years later, as Paul's letters began to circulate through the church, he came to read Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth... what we call **1 COR 6...**

¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price.

- **He must have thought... YES, YES I DO KNOW THAT.**
 - **TWO RESPONSES** to this event.
 - **HIS.** Walking, jumping. Another word is **LEAPING...** he was exultant, gushing. We see this word one other place in NT, and it's **JOHN 4:13-14...** story of Samaritan woman, where Jesus said.. (Nasb)
- “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”*
- **The word is SPRINGING. WELLING UP. LEAPING.** This man, who for his whole life had been begging for something that never satisfied, had to be replaced every day, had now received what only Jesus could give him. And just has this gift **SPRINGS UP** to eternal life, so he couldn't help but **SPRING UP** in his praise and gratitude to God.
 - **RESPONSE** of people who saw him- filled with wonder and amazement. They recognized who he was- no confusion about his identity... they recognized the transformation that had happened.
 - **YOU SEE**, he had started that day begging for just enough to cope.

- **WHAT HE RECEIVED... what Jesus gave him through Peter, WAS A NEW LIFE. THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT THIS MIRACLE REPRESENTS.**
- **Silver and Gold would have met his needs as a crippled man. WHAT JESUS DID WAS SET HIM FREE FROM THE BONDAGE OF HIS NEEDS. This is what salvation does!**
- **BRING THIS TO YOU AND ME, because this man's story is our story.**
- **He was born with physical defect.**
 - **We are born with spiritual birth defect. spiritually dead and enslaved to sin.**
- **His life was about coping. Getting by with no expectation of actual change to underlying need/condition of his life**
 - **Easy for us just to COPE, not to expect or look for how God is working to bring us to actual freedom and transformation**
- **He was dependent upon others- his source of life was other people**
 - **We may not be physical crippled, but human condition to make other people our source- their approval, opinions, judgments... We find ourselves dependent on people/ things/ circumstances that are unreliable and unworthy to be our source of life, leaving us insecure, without peace, prone to anxiety**
- **BUT THEN... though Peter, JESUS MET THIS MAN WHERE HE WAS, bringing him healing, freedom, and a new life.**
 - **BY FAITH IN CHRIST, we too have been spiritually healed, given freedom from bondage of our own weakness and sin, and given NEW CREATION LIFE**
- **IN CHRIST, we no longer have to just COPE and be bound and identified by our coping mechanisms! RARELY is this just a 'snap'... but rather a journey of faith and trust, as God leads us into a life dependent upon HIM, for which he created us to know and experience.**
- **AND SO, IN CHRIST, we are set free from life depending on other people and circumstances as our source of life. It is a beautiful IRONY that the ONLY WAY to be truly free and independent is to live in dependence upon CHRIST as our source of life.**

- **IN CHRIST, THE BARRIER SEPARATING US FROM GOD HAS BEEN REMOVED.. We are no longer outcasts to be looked down upon, we are CHILDREN OF THE LIVING GOD.**
- **HEAR! Through his Death and Resurrection, Jesus declares that YOU were worth the cost, he bought you at the price of his own life- and now YOU have become the TEMPLE- the dwelling place of God!**
- **AND NOW, BECAUSE OF THIS... THERE IS A NEW GATE CALLED BEAUTIFUL- a gate through which people may see the goodness and presence of God, and that gate is YOU.**
- **FULL CIRCLE... church... what is the power of God in your life? When God calls to you, what do you expect? Just enough to get by, to cope, or the POWER of God to bring you life itself?**
- **HEAR... this isn't magical thinking- just believe and everything will be fixed and fine.**
- **Life can be HARD, and there are times the Christian walk IS one step of faith at a time, as God provides the grace for today, and calls us to trust him with tomorrow.**
- **BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE. Christ didn't come to earth, live die, rise again, and ascend to the father in victory and total triumph over death JUST SO THAT THROUGH FAITH IN HIM WE COULD COPE.**
- **This life of faith in Christ IS A JOURNEY. BUT IT IS A JOURNEY INTO FREEDOM.**
- **INTO HOPE, PEACE, NEW LIFE... a life created for community, and that will increasingly be marked by sincerity and GLADNESS OF HEART.**
- **And friend, if you have not come to believe and trust Christ as your source of life, you are still that crippled man, sitting at the gate. CHRIST'S INVITATION IS FOR YOU**
 - **To believe that He really is God's son, God's provision for redemption and life for mankind, for YOU**
 - **Believe that Jesus really did die on that cross, and God really did raise him from the dead**
 - **Confess, with all of who you are, that JESUS IS LORD, and then turn your life to him.**

- ***YOU WILL BE SAVED. Not into religion... but into LIFE- complete forgiveness, freedom, hope... and God gives you this new life by giving you himself, as he comes to take up residence in you through his spirit.***
- ***IF YOU realize that you DO BELIEVE THIS, reach out to another believer.. pastor... me... and take the next step into this new life that has been given to you by God.***