

Acts 3 Walking and leaping.

AC 3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon. ² 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. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

AC 3:6 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." ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ 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.

AC 3:11 While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

AC 3:17 "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. ²¹ He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. ²² For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. ²³ Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'

AC 3:24 "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. ²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' ²⁶ When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

1. Similar to Jesus miracle of Mark Chapter 2.

Why? **Jesus handed the miracle making business over to the disciples.** He was no longer physically present, it was now their responsibility. Actually he handed over the disciple making to the disciples. Miracles were just a tool in that process.

It is part of the disciple making process. **Jesus disciplined those guys and they disciplined others, who disciplined others who disciplined others and eventually it gets down to us.** Discipleship is our responsibility. Care of people is our responsibility. Note **Matthew 28:19-20**

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

It says make disciples – not converts or Baptists or whatever.. Those things are tools in making disciples.

If we take the bible to be God's word, we must take this verse seriously. I have said in the past that discipleship starts from the first contact that we have with people. For parents, discipling your kids starts at birth. For most of us, discipling and the use of discipleship principles starts at our first contact with people.

Now it isn't scary. **Discipling is just helping people to follow Jesus.** Sure there are programs which help people who are just starting out on a relationship with Jesus but it goes further than that. People need to continue the discipleship process. No matter how old, or how long they have been Christians. **Discipleship is our responsibility.** There are no exemptions here. We are commanded to. Sorry if you don't want to – but hey it is a command, - just do it – Make disciples.

This means we have the miracle making process at our finger tips. The miracles that we facilitate – are changed lives – just like way back then.

2. But why did this particular miracle happen??

To get peoples attention so they could hear about Jesus.

AC 3:11 While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.

They could understand that Jesus works miracles and changes lives *even if He is not physically present.*

This is one of the best sermon illustrations ever. Imagine the impact you could have with this type of sermon illustration each week. Or every time I preached, we would have people hanging out of the windows to watch.

The idea of sermon illustrations is to make the story of Jesus digestible. To make a clearer understanding.

But notice the Sermon is much the same as the one preached in Chapter 2. Turn to Jesus. Let's have a listen.

Acts 3:12-19 (ESV)

¹² And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?"

¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

¹⁶ And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.

¹⁸ But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,

One of the best ways to introduce conversation about Jesus is by commenting on what is on TV. A few years ago there was a movie called Bedazzled. About the devil (played by Liz Hurley) and this guy she wanted to sell his soul to her. It was theologically all wrong, but it could be a starting point. I remember when it came out Christians got angry about it. But I also remember people asking questions about what the devil is like and it became a teaching tool. It certainly could be something to talk about.

Even the news, what do you think about different issues. We see that at the moment, people are talking about how we should react to things like refugees, violence, Islam, and actually most of the commentary is about how the media thinks Christians should react. We need to be gently in the conversation talking about Jesus reaction to those issues.

3. **Sermon illustrations have changed but the message that changes life doesn't.** It is the message Paul preached, it is the message that Charles Spurgeon preached, it is the message that Billy Graham preached, it is the same message that our missionaries we support take to the people and it is what I believe can make the difference in people lives. Still today.

When I worked for Youth For Christ's their motto was and still is "geared to the times and anchored to the rock."

The concept that I was taught when I did my training with them was be contemporary, be up to date and make the bible make sense today but make sure what you say about the bible is right. We used whatever was around to talk to kids about Jesus. Movies, music, sport etc. Whatever.

And hey it is just what Jesus did. Look at his parables. They are all about some teaching but using what was around. Sheep, trees, buildings etc.

Use what people see, or identify with.

Get the message to them however.

Romans 10:13-14

13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

RO 10:14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Thing is, they have got to hear.

Note that in Acts 2:21 that same statement of "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" is stated. It is not a through away comment, it is a biblical soterological principle. It is the principle of salvation.

So what would be your introduction if you had to present Jesus to people. If you had to do the talk, if you had to say something about Jesus to a friend?

Would you use a miracle or would he give you a specific bunch of words to say or like in most of the book of Acts, do you just talk about Jesus.

Think about it.

This is mission. Wherever we are whenever it happens **true christian mission is telling people about Jesus.**

We confuse mission, and outreach and evangelism. We tend to think that mission is overseas, outreach is to street people and evangelism is the programs we run to get people to church.

Our mission in life is to tell people about Jesus,
our mission as a church is to tell people about Jesus and disciple them to know him,

You see mission is a lifestyle. Missionaries are people who live a life of mission, a life of ministry. If we are truly Christian we live that life.

Notice that after Jesus ascension the disciples did live that life. Their whole existence is to tell people about Jesus. Has anything changed. It shouldn't have but it has. The passion isn't there like it used to be.

4. All the disciples did was take hold of the opportunities that arose. They preached after miracles, in gaol, in front of judges and leaders. Actually they used every opportunity to talk about Jesus. The times are different. We now take every opportunity to talk about TV or sport or whatever. I think it sometimes shows where our priorities are.

What opportunities are there for us?????

The message is turn to Jesus