

## Acts 3-4

### Learning

#### Engaging Chapter 3-4 (some content you can use to prep and/or use as a group)

- **Recap:** Continue the first section of Acts (1:1-6:7) where **the Church is established in Jerusalem**
- **Scripture** - Prayer for Guidance, then read Acts 3:1-4:22 (5 minutes)
- **Context:** Notice the parallels between this healing story and Jesus healing the paralytic in Luke 5:17-26. Compare also to Paul's prayer for healing of a lame man in Acts 14:8-18. The miracles show the continuity of what Jesus "continued to do" through the Holy Spirit and willing participants.
- **Interesting Words:** When Luke says Peter is "filled with the Holy Spirit" (4:8) he is emphasizing continuity with the same way God had worked through the prophets in times past. He does this over a dozen times in Luke-Acts. Do we see ourselves in line with this same tradition today?
- **Culture:** Realize those lame from birth could not fully participate in temple worship, healing them physically meant far more than mobility, it was restoration to the life of the community (Lev. 21:17-20; 2 Sam. 5:8). Interesting that Peter's defiant lines in 4:19-20 is almost identical to what Socrates said in his trial as recorded by Plato. This could be Luke's way of speaking to his Greco-Roman audience and highlighting how this Jesus movement is revealing philosophical truths and the political powers want to stop it (see quote below)!
- **Themes:** The Holy Spirit has come upon the fledgling church community. It is important to observe the way Luke now starts to weave between gospel preaching and stories of real life. Some of these stories will be miraculous and others will highlight normal-conflicts the church had to navigate. Luke (unique amongst historians of this era) includes this direct speech (preaching) as essential for moving the events forward!
- **Quote for expanding the discussion:**

Luke is suggesting that Christianity is an equally noble philosophy and that the truth about it must come out. It must be borne in mind that when Luke was writing, the early Christians had no temples, no priests, and no animal sacrifices. Rather, they met in homes. To a person like Theophilus, Christianity would have appeared not as a formal public religion but as some sort of religious philosophy, something which could be discussed over a Greco-Roman meal. Under these circumstances it was apt to portray early Christians like the most noble Greek philosopher and martyr of all, especially since some would give their lives for their beliefs, as Socrates did."

#### Dialogue Questions (some example questions for this content above)

- What strikes you about the healing story? (Add some context from above if needed)
- What is the Gospel according to Peter in his preaching? How does he supplement his earlier message? What are the key points and why are these important for his Jewish listeners?
- What stands out about their questioning before the authorities?

#### Implication Questions (some example questions/challenges that engage real life now)

- Give some context and read the quote. Does anything in this challenge you in our cultural context?
- *Meditate* on Peter's bold response to the man in 3:6 and Peter's response to the religious leaders in 4:19-20. Take a minute to pause, pray, and reflect on these statements. What do they say about Peter? When did he become this way? In what ways does Peter's example challenge you?
- *Reflect* together on Peter's final words "what we have seen and heard" (4:20). What of your faith in Jesus falls in the category of being seen and heard. Give space for people to reflect or write this out. Invite people to share their miracle testimonies and the normal everyday ways they have seen and heard the Gospel in their lives!
- *Respond:* Give space to lay hands on anyone who has a prayer need! Invite people to share encouragement or prophetic words.
- **During the Week:** Be reading Acts 1:1-6:

## Scriptures

### The Lame Beggar Healed

[Act 3:1](#) One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.

[Act 3:2](#) Now a man who was lame 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.

[Act 3:3](#) When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.

[Act 3:4](#) Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!"

[Act 3:5](#) So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

[Act 3:6](#) Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

[Act 3:7](#) Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.

[Act 3:8](#) He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

[Act 3:9](#) When all the people saw him walking and praising God,

[Act 3:10](#) 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.

### Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico

[Act 3:11](#) While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.

[Act 3:12](#) When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, 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?"

[Act 3:13](#) 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.

[Act 3:14](#) You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

[Act 3:15](#) You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

[Act 3:16](#) 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 completely healed him, as you can all see.

[Act 3:17](#) "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.

[Act 3:18](#) But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.

[Act 3:19](#) Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

[Act 3:20](#) and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.

[Act 3:21](#) Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

[Act 3:22](#) 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.

[Act 3:23](#) Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.'

[Act 3:24](#) "Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days.

[Act 3:25](#) 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.'

[Act 3:26](#) When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

### Peter and John Before the Council

[Act 4:1](#) The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people.

[Act 4:2](#) They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

[Act 4:3](#) They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.

[Act 4:4](#) But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

[Act 4:5](#) The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem.

[Act 4:6](#) Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family.

[Act 4:7](#) They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

[Act 4:8](#) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

[Act 4:9](#) If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed,

[Act 4:10](#) then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

[Act 4:11](#) Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'

[Act 4:12](#) Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

[Act 4:13](#) When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

[Act 4:14](#) But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.

[Act 4:15](#) So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together.

[Act 4:16](#) "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it.

[Act 4:17](#) But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

[Act 4:18](#) Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

[Act 4:19](#) But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!

[Act 4:20](#) As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

[Act 4:21](#) After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

[Act 4:22](#) For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.