



Acts: God in Action through Us

Introduction to Acts 3:1-4:22

This study covers a longer than usual section in the book of Acts. And yet this narrative is all one event: a miraculous healing is an occasion for proclaiming the gospel, which leads to imprisonment, which leads to

another occasion for proclaiming the gospel. As the gospel is preached, many believe and are saved. Yet others are stirred to resistance and persecution.

If you have you ever experienced resistance or persecution as a Christian, how did/do you respond?

1. Read Acts 3:1-10. Which details here seem significant in the flow of this narrative?
2. Read Acts 3:11-26. The most remarkable feature of Peter's second sermon is that it is all about Jesus. He directs the crowd's attention away from the healed cripple and away from the apostles who healed him. What vital points does Peter make about Jesus?
3. The proclamation of the gospel of Jesus brings with it a call to respond. (i) What response does Peter call for? (ii) [optional] What does Peter imply are the consequences of not responding to the gospel? (iii) What did repentance look like for you when you first believed? What about now?

The healing of the crippled beggar receives more attention than any other healing in the book of Acts. That's deliberate, because this healing provides us with a picture of what happens when someone turns to Jesus. The chapter opens with the beggar outside the temple, ceremonially unclean. Following his healing, the beggar enters the temple, praising God. A person who was unacceptable is now made acceptable. Now he can enter the intimacy of God's presence for the first time in his life-- and all by the power of Jesus' name. It is a miracle that symbolises the gospel. And so Peter urges the crowd to turn their lives over to Jesus before its too late.

Peter and John's conviction of the importance of Jesus also shines out of their confrontation with the Jewish leaders in Acts 4. This confrontation must have been very scary for them. They are in the very spot where Jesus stood not much more than two months before. They are standing in the same trial room where Peter had been in the courtyard below, denying he even knew Jesus! They stand before the same men who condemned Jesus to torture and death.

4. Read Acts 4:1-22. Why are Peter and John arrested? Why are they let go? Peter and John show remarkable courage in this confrontation-- note especially v18-20. How do account for this?
5. Acts 4:12 insists that salvation is only found in Jesus Christ (see also John 14:6). Why is Jesus alone able to save those who call on his name? What are the implications of this truth for you?

Pray together in response to what you have learned from this study.