

Women's Bible Study

A TWO-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH
THE STORY OF GOD

Week 2 | Unleashed through the Church | Acts 3:1-6:7

1. THE LAME MAN AND THE CROWD: Read Acts 3. This is the account of the first of many miraculous signs and wonders performed by the apostles.
 - a. In this culture, a beggar was a person of very low status. He would never look directly at those who were entering the temple. And it would be typical for a Jew not to look directly at a beggar but simply to place the alms in his hand and move on. Verse 4 uses the word “Look” twice. Why do you think eye contact was so important in this encounter?
 - b. What did the lame man expect from Peter and John? What did he receive? How did he respond? What was the reaction of the people in the area?
 - c. Peter seemed ready for all the attention this incident would receive. He immediately turned the attention away from the healed man, and from himself and onto Jesus. Acts 3:12-26 recounts his comments to the Jewish people who gathered around. What did Peter want people to understand:
 - ...about who Jesus is and what scripture predicted about Him?
 - ...about their own responsibility for what happened to Jesus?
 - ...about how healing came to the lame man?
 - d. Peter calls on his audience to “repent and turn to God.” What would it look like for this crowd of Jews to do that? (3:22-23,26)
 - e. Personal Reflection: Perhaps, like the lame man, you have prayed fervently for some good thing you wanted, and instead God provided something far better. As we consider the wisdom of God, how might we change the way we pray?”

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2. THE SANHEDRIN: Peter and John are arrested and brought before the rulers of the Temple in Jerusalem (the Sanhedrin) twice in a short span of time. Read Acts 4:1-22, and 5:12-42.
- Miraculous healings precede both incidents, but why were the apostles really arrested? (4:2, 5:17, 5:28)
 - In both cases the apostles were ordered to stop teaching in the name of Jesus. What was their response? (4:18-20, 5:27-29)
 - Why were Peter and John so determined to teach about Jesus? (4:12)
 - What did the Temple rulers notice about the apostles that astonished them? (4:13)
 - A teacher named Gamaliel addressed the Sanhedrin during the second hearing. What advice did he give? What does this demonstrate about God's influence even in situations where He is being opposed?
 - At the first hearing, the apostles were threatened and released; on the second occasion they were flogged and released. Afterward they joined the other believers for prayer. What is remarkable about their prayers? (4:29, 5:41)
 - Personal Reflection: If you had been jailed, threatened, and beaten unjustly what would you be praying for? How does the example of the early Church challenge you?

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3. GROWTH AND GIVING IN THE CHURCH: Read Acts 4:23-5:16. In this early stage of the formation of the church, God often demonstrates His goodness and His character by dramatic supernatural acts. The healing of the lame man at the Temple is an example. On another occasion, a supernatural act of judgment demonstrates God's character of holiness and the fact that the Holy Spirit cannot be deceived. The issue of reverence and integrity within the community of believers was demonstrated to be so important that it was a matter of life or death.
- a. How do Acts 2:42-47 and 4:31-35 describe the daily life of the young Church?

 - b. What did Jesus say would be a "sign" to the world of who his disciples were? (John 13:35)

 - c. Were the new believers required to sell property or give large sums of money to the church? (see 5:4)

 - d. What was wrong with what Ananias and Sapphira did? What do you think motivated them?

 - e. Personal Reflection: In what ways do you pretend to be more "spiritual" than you really are? What lesson do you take from this account?

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