



Sermon Text: Acts 3:1-4:4

Sermon Date: September 17, 2017

On Sunday we entered a new section of Acts, a section marked by rising opposition. Both internal and external difficulties threaten the unity, purity and growth of the church at Jerusalem. The seemingly idyllic situation of the early church is shattered when Peter and John are arrested. We saw **FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR A FAITHFUL WITNESS IN A FALLEN WORLD.**

PRINCIPLE #1—SEE THE NEED (3:1-8)

Entering the temple for evening prayers, Peter and John are asked for alms by a crippled man. Instead of ignoring him, the apostles see his need, not for a few spare coins, but for true healing found only in Christ. With daring faith, Peter lifted the man to his feet and he was instantly healed—from lame one moment to leaping the next. We too must see the needs around us, and show compassion on the hurting. As John Piper counsels, we must care about all suffering, but especially eternal suffering.

PRINCIPLE #2—SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY (3:9-11)

Once the crowd recognized that the man leaping and praising God was none other than the lame beggar who was laid daily at the Beautiful Gate, they ran to see how this had happened. This mighty miracle interrupted the normal flow of daily life and captured the crowd's attention. Seeing the opportunity of a gathered crowd, Peter seizes the moment to share the gospel. We too must seize the opportunity to point people to Jesus. All around us are moments when eternal reality disrupts a person's daily life and punctures his worldview. We must be on the lookout for those moments so that we can share the truth of Jesus Christ.

PRINCIPLE #3—SHARE THE GOSPEL (3:12-26)

Peter then sets out to share the gospel. He tells the crowd that it is in Jesus' name—by His authority—that the man was healed. He stresses that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, calling the crowd to repent and place their trust in Him. In his speech, we see two important aspects of the gospel message.

1. **The gospel message is a warning.** Peter warns the crowd of the consequences of rejecting Christ. He forces them to own the sinfulness of their actions. Jesus is the one the Prophets spoke about. As Moses warned, *“And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.”* Peter wants the people to see that their rejection of Christ means that God will destroy them.
2. **The gospel message is a promise.** In the gloom of their guilt, Peter holds out the promise of forgiveness. He promises pardon to everyone who repents—*“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out...”*

When we share the gospel, we must follow Peter's example by warning of the consequences of sin AND sharing the promise of forgiveness to all who repent.

PRINCIPLE #4—SUBMIT TO SUFFERING (4:1-4)

For healing a lame man in Jesus' name, Peter and John are arrested and threatened. A faithful witness in a fallen world will awaken opposition. Pastor Justin called us to cast off a triumphant “theology of glory”—creating a picture of God that reflects humanity's own expectations of what God should be like—and to embrace a “theology of the cross.” The Cross isn't just an example of God's action, but the pattern for how God acts in the life of His people. As Carl Trueman says, “Suffering and weakness are not just the way in which Christ triumphs and conquers; they are the way in which we are to triumph and conquer too. In other words, if suffering and weakness are the ways God works in Christ, it is to be expected that these are the ways he will work in those who seek to follow Christ.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Why is it hard to see the needs of those around us and seize the opportunity to share Christ?
3. In what ways do you find yourself living according to a “theology of glory” instead of a “theology of the cross”?