



“The Miracle at the Beautiful Gate”

Acts 3:1-26

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22:30

It's been a while since I've had the privilege to be up here. And I've also been out of town for a bit, and I see some people I haven't even met yet. So let me just start by saying hi. I'm Dave. I'm one of the pastors here at RockCC and I have a question for you. I don't know why they're laughing. Here's the question. Do you ever wonder what God is doing in your life? In the ups and downs, twists and turns, in the mundane days you go through? Do you ever wish God would give you a little more information about his plans for you? In God's perfect wisdom, he has chosen not to tell us everything, but he has been sure to tell us the most important things.

23:38

Like in our passage today, God will tell Us, through the Apostle Peter, the most important thing we need to know in life and in death. We're going to see. We're going to see a really cool miracle for one man, followed by an even greater miracle for you and me. Let's pray together. Father, with so many things to distract us, we pray now, please, for focus this morning. Help us clear away less important thoughts from our minds so we can hear your words clearly. It's in the name of Jesus. We ask this. Amen. If you'll please turn to Acts, chapter 3. If you'd like to use the Bible in the chair in front of you, we'll be starting on page 1116. Page 1116. Last week we finished chapter 2. That covered one of the greatest days in history.

24:47

It was the day the church was born. On the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came down from heaven and he filled the disciples of Jesus. And what happened? Remember what happened. They instantly began to proclaim the mighty works of God in every known language of their time. They all could speak fluently in languages they had no idea how to speak until the Holy Spirit touched them. Peter preached a masterpiece of a sermon that resulted in about 3,000 people putting their faith in Jesus. And then chapter 2 ended by telling us that the Lord continued to add more and more people to his brand new church every day. And now let's see what happened next. Okay, Chapter 3, verse 1. You're going to love chapter 3. And now Peter and John were going to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

25:58

In chapter 2, we saw that the first Christians, the first Jewish Christians held church in their homes, but they still went to the Temple together. And the temple in Jerusalem had three daily times for prayer. There was the third hour, which would be 9am, the sixth hour, which is 3pm, and then the ninth hour, which is 3pm and as it neared 3pm, Peter and John headed to the temple to pray. Verse 1 is important because it helps us understand that this was just an ordinary, typical, routine day in the life of Peter and John, and also a routine day in the life of a man we're going to meet right now. Verse 2.

26:53

And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the Temple. This poor man had been born with a severe disability. He was unable to stand or walk. When we get to chapter 4, we're going to learn that he was more than 40 years old, he had to rely on others to carry him to the temple every day. But he did not come to pray. He came to ask for alms or money. Historians say the beautiful gate was a work of art, and lots of poor people came there to ask for alms from the crowds that came and went through that gate. Let's read on verses 3 to 5.

27:44

Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, look at us. And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. When Peter and John heard the man call out for alms, they stopped. And they both looked down at the, at the crippled man sitting on the hard ground by the beautiful gate. And it seems in the text, it seems like the man must have looked away from them because maybe he was calling out to other people because Peter needed to get his attention. So Peter said, look at us. And immediately, of course, the man gave Peter and John his undivided attention because he expected money from them, money that he desperately needed. Let's read verses 6 to 8.

28:48

But Peter said, I have no silver and gold, but what I do have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up. And immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. Can you picture this in your mind? This crippled man probably reached his right hand, it talks about. Probably reached his right hand out expecting a coin or two. And what did Peter say? Peter said, I don't have any money for you. That certainly was not what the poor beggar wanted to hear.

29:39

Does this make you think of the times when you ask God for something you think you really need, but the Lord says, no, I don't have that for you. Do you ever feel discouraged and maybe even a little angry when God says no to the things you think you need? But as we see in this passage and as we see in the whole Bible, and as we see about a million times in our life, if we're paying attention when God says no to us, it's because he has something better for us. Even. Even if we can't understand that at the time, this disabled man, all he wanted was just enough money to get through the day. But God was about to change his whole life.

30:43

With the Lord, we should expect the unexpected at any time, because God has a plan for your Life and my life. And his plan includes doing surprising things on routine days. Peter was being guided by the Holy Spirit. So Peter did something onlookers would have been horrified to see him do. Think about it. Peter took the right man's hand and pulled that man up onto his crippled feet. Except they weren't crippled anymore. Wait. What just happened?

For over 40 years, that man's feet had been useless. He had to be carried everywhere he went. But when Peter pulled him up from the ground, he did not rise weakly, painfully, with a cry, and then crumble back down to the ground like you'd expect. No, he leapt to his feet. He jumped up with joy because his feeble feet had instantly become strong.

31:54

For the first time in his life, he could walk into the temple. Except he didn't just walk, did he? He praised God, and he jumped around like a kid in a bounce house. Now we have to remember who wrote the Book of Acts. It was Dr. Luke. And as a physician, Luke made sure to give us his clinical notes to confirm that the man had been lame since birth. But in this moment of time, his feet and ankles were made strong immediately. Immediately there was no pain, no atrophy, no weakness, stiffness, and not even a limp. If you've ever sprained your ankle or had a foot injury, as many or all of you have, you know how long it takes to heal. You hobble around for days or weeks or months.

32:57

But this guy, this man, when he stood for the first time in his life, he didn't even need to get his balance like toddlers do when they stand for the first time, he could immediately jump around like an energetic kangaroo, as if there was no indication that he had ever been lame at all. No indication whatsoever that he had ever been lame. And let's all think about this. Are you ready? This is going to twist your mind just a little bit. Let's think about this. Our passage tells us this man had been carried to the Beautiful Gate daily. The wording suggests that this was a regular routine for the man. It had probably been going on for years. Jesus came to the temple on a number of occasions during his earthly ministry. So Jesus would have seen the crippled man at the beautiful gate.

34:00

But Jesus didn't heal him. And Peter and John came to the temple maybe three times a day. And they had always walked right past him. Until this day at 3pm the miracle at the Beautiful Gate is a perfect example of how God's mysterious timing. God's timing is part of his mysterious plan for our lives. Don't we get anxious and maybe confused sometimes when God doesn't answer our prayers, how and when we want him to. Why did God wait more than 40 years to heal that guy at the gate? Why did he wait till this ordinary day at three o' clock in the afternoon? The short answer is God waited until the time was right. God always does. God always does. God always does what's right at the right time. Always. Maybe. Maybe you and I should just rest.

35:10

Rest in the fact that God always knows exactly what he's doing at all times, even when we can't figure him out. Might take a little stress off our lives. Let's read on verses 9 to 11. And all the people saw him, the lame man, walking and praising God and recognized him as the one who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them at the portico or porch called Solomon's. Everybody in the temple recognized that guy from the beautiful gate because they saw him every day after day, week after week, month after month. They saw him every day asking for alms.

36:00

Except they had never seen him on his feet before, showing off his dance moves. He was clinging to Peter and John not because he needed assistance to walk, but because he was just bear hugging them with overwhelming gratitude to God. And suddenly Peter and John and that man were surrounded by a big crowd, a huge crowd, oohing and ahing with the excitement about this amazing miracle they saw. And how did Peter respond? Thank you for asking. Let's look at verse 12 to see what Peter said. And when Peter saw it, when Peter

saw this big crowd gathering around him, 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?

36:57

Peter is going to give the people another great convicting sermon here, like he did in chapter 2. And did you notice? Did you notice? Peter started with a question. Wasn't he clever? Peter asked the people, why are you looking at John and I? Why are you looking at us as if we have any special power or holiness to heal this man? Instead of wanting a pat on the back for the miracle, Peter wanted to open the people's blind eyes so they could see their wickedness. Let's read on what he said next. Verse 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. Peter's audience was thrilled about the miracle.

38:01

But Peter really wiped the smiles right off their faces, didn't he? Peter knew this was not a time for celebration. This was a time for conviction. Peter referred to Jesus as God's servant. Did you see that? God's servant or personal representative. This is an unusual title for Jesus in the New Testament, but it's more familiar in the Old Testament as a name for the Messiah. The prophet Isaiah said the Messiah would come as the servant or representative of the Lord. So Peter said, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and our fathers, the faithful and true God we worship in this temple. That God, your God, sent Jesus to you as the long awaited Messiah. And what did you do? You turned him over to the pagan Romans for a mock trial and execution.

39:04

Remember, Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor that presided over Jesus' trial. If you go back and read the accounts in the Gospels, you'll see that Pilate declared Jesus was innocent six times. Six times Pilate said he's innocent and wanted to release him. But the people demanded that Jesus be crucified. Let's read on verses 14 to 15. Peter said, but you denied the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. And you killed the author of life whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. Peter went on to say, you guys made the worst trade in the history of the world. You traded Jesus, the holy and righteous one, for Barabbas, a convicted murderer. Instead of wanting the author of life, you all wanted a taker of life.

40:09

Jesus is rightly called the author of life because Scripture tells us Jesus created all things in heaven and on earth. Jesus gave the people life, but they killed him. Peter also boldly declared that Jesus did not stay in the tomb because God raised him from the dead. And Peter and John were eyewitnesses to the resurrection. Verse 16. Peter's getting down to it here. Peter says, and his name by faith in his, in Jesus 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. Peter said, you know, you guys know this man has been crippled his whole life. But faith in Jesus' name has completely healed him right in front of your eyes.

41:08

In Peter's day, a person's name meant much more than just what you call them. A person's name represented their power, their authority. In verse 6, remember when Peter spoke to the lame man on the ground for the very first time, he said, in the name or in the power and authority of Jesus of Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And here in verse 16, Peter declared that the crippled man was given perfect health. Not in the name or power of Peter or John, but in the name or in the power of Jesus, the risen Lord. Remember also what the

people did when they first saw that miracle. Remember what they do? They all ran. They all ran to see it. They all ran to gather around the apostles and the man.

41:56

And the first words out of Peter's mouth were in verse 12, why do you stare at us as though by our own power or godliness we have made him walk? And here in verse 16, Peter told the people not to even marvel at the faith he had. Because the faith to heal the man did not come from Peter. The faith came through or from Jesus, just like the power to heal the man came from or through Jesus. The miracle at the beautiful gate was exactly what Peter said it was. It was not about Peter and John at all. It was all about Jesus. Same is true for you and me, isn't it? It's no different. None of us, absolutely none of us can do the work God calls us to do with our own strength and efforts on our own we're going to fail.

43:04

It's not even a chance. We're not going to fail on our own. We're going to fail. Remember what Jesus said. Jesus said, without him, we can do nothing. When the Lord gives us work to do, we need to rely on Him. We need to rely on his strength and his power. And he will accomplish through us everything he wants to accomplish. It's all about Jesus. It's never about us. Let's read on. 17 and 18. And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets that His Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Peter told his fellow countrymen that they and their leaders were clueless about the purpose for the Christ, purpose for the Messiah they all wanted. You remember this. We've seen it a number of times.

44:04

They all wanted a political savior, someone to rescue them from Rome. But when Jesus came as their spiritual savior to rescue them from sin and death, they weren't interested. So they abused him and killed him. Does this mean that the people's response to Jesus messed up God's plan of salvation through Jesus? No, of course not. Their blindness and wickedness actually fulfilled everything that God said would happen. In the ugliness of the people's treatment of Jesus, we see the beauty of God's power and sovereignty. God reigns and he never vacates his throne. Not ever. God is in charge of history. God is in charge of the present, and God is in charge of the future. God always accomplishes his plans right on schedule. And nothing can stop him and nothing can even hinder or distract him.

45:18

Peter told the people they and their leaders were guilty of being the clueless killers of the Son of God. How could God ever forgive them for their sin? How could God ever forgive you and me for the clueless and sinful things we do? Peter did not leave them. And Peter did not leave us in despair. He had the best possible news for every sinner on earth. And here it comes. I hope you're ready. Verse 19, my absolute favorite. Repent, therefore and turn back that your sins may be blotted out. Repent and turn back. That means to make a radical change of direction. Turn a 180. It means to see that you're heading in the wrong direction. So you turn around and you come to Jesus forgiveness. And it gets better. Repent, therefore and turn back that your sins may be blotted out.

46:36

That phrase blotted out was a very common phrase in Peter's day. You know what it meant? It meant to wipe ink off of a document. So it was like the ink was never there. When you blotted out the ink, it was like it was never, ever there. Remember, Remember the crippled man? He was healed so completely, there was no sign he had ever been crippled at all, right? When God forgives your sins through Jesus, your sins are wiped away so completely, it's like they never existed. Healing, healing that one man, that one lame man was a really cool miracle. Maybe my favorite in the Bible. It was a really cool miracle. But erasing all of

our sins, past, present and future, that's the greatest miracle in the world. How many sins have you committed in your lifetime?

47:40

Do you want me to wait for you so you can add them up? How many more sins will you commit in the future? If you're like me, it's a very big number. But God removes all of your sins from his sight forever. So. So when Satan comes around to try to make you feel guilty for the sins that God has already wiped away, you can say this. You can say, yeah, devil, I'm a sinner, but I'm in Christ. I am a completely forgiven sinner. So buzz off. Take your guilt and go away. Don't need it. Let's read verses 19 to 21. Repent, therefore, and turn back that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, that He may send you the Christ appointed for you.

48:41

Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Here's God's whole plan of salvation in a nutshell. In the past, Jesus came to suffer and die to pay the terrible penalty we deserve for our sins. That was in the past. In the present, when we repent and we put our faith in Jesus, all our sins are blotted out. All our sins are erased and taken away forever so we can have peace and joy with the Lord. As Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Not to rest, but to rule. To rule with all power and authority in the world, in our church and in our lives. In the future Jesus will return to earth. When? When is he coming back?

49:45

Would you like to know? Peter just told us. Exactly when do you see it? Jesus will return at precisely the right time, when it's time to restore all things. Jesus will return on the day, the hour and the second that God has already written down on his calendar to make all things right. That's when Jesus will return. And just like that lame man was suddenly healed on an ordinary day, Jesus will suddenly return on an ordinary day, like maybe today or tomorrow. When Jesus comes back, he will not come as a suffering servant, but as the King of kings and Lord of lords, to establish his kingdom on earth forever. And what will his kingdom be like? It'll be heaven on earth. There will be no more sin, evil, pain, worry, fear.

50:51

There will be no more death, disappointment, fatigue, traffic, bad weather and bad food. Everything will be restored to perfection, including us. Right on schedule. Eternal life is your miraculous reward when you repent and trust in Jesus. But what happens? What happens if you do not repent and trust in Jesus? Peter addressed this too. Let's Read on. Verses 22 and 23. Peter said. Moses said, lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people. Peter quoted what Moses said in Deuteronomy, chapter 18. Moses was revered by the people of Israel as their greatest prophet.

51:55

And when Moses said God would raise up a prophet like him, Moses was talking about The Messiah. Peter wanted the people to remember Moses warning. Here was the warning. When the Messiah. When Jesus comes, the people need to listen to him and they need to do what he says. Because anyone and everyone that does not will be destroyed. So there we have it. There we have it. This is what every person in this room and in the world needs to know. Absolutely every one of you and everyone listening and everyone in the world needs to know what God just told us. If you repent of your sins and put your faith in Jesus, God will completely forgive you. And you will spend eternity in the blessed presence of the Lord where every day will be the best day of your life forever.

53:01

That is what the Bible calls Heaven. If you do not repent of your sins and trust in Jesus, you will not be forgiven. You will be destroyed as the penalty for your sins. You will spend eternity without the blessed presence of God where every day will be your worst nightmare forever. The nightmare will never, ever end for you. This is what the Bible calls hell. There is no greater decision you will make in your entire lifetime than to repent and turn to Jesus.

53:50

If.

53:52

If the reward of heaven hasn't drawn you to Jesus, please let the fear of hell scare you to Jesus. Let's finish Peter's sermon. Verses 24 to 26 and all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and those who came after him also proclaimed. These days you are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your father, saying to Abraham, and in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. God, having raised up his servants, sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness. Jesus came to the people of Israel first to fulfill God's messianic covenant with Abraham and also with David. Jesus came to people of Israel first to show them their wickedness and offer them the forgiveness of God. The forgiveness and salvation of God.

54:59

Then Jesus brought that salvation and forgiveness to all the families of the earth. This means to all the Gentiles or non-Jewish people of the world that turn and trust in him. Did the crowd around Peter and John listen and did they put their faith in Jesus? You need to come back next week. Yeah, come back next week to find out. Or you can go home and read it. Chapter 4. What can you take away from Acts Chapter 3? Well, to keep it simple, here are three big things. First, your journey through life on earth is not easy. Clear, smooth and straight. Is it? Life on earth is a maze. It's a tangle of twists and turns, ups and downs with a fair number of ruts, broken bridges, detours, rough roads, u-turns and dead ends.

56:06

Or at least that's how it looks to us. But that's not how it looks to God. God has a plan for your life that is crystal clear to him at all times. So even when. Please hear this part. Even when things look out of control to you can trust and know that God knows exactly what he's doing in your life every second. And he's in charge. God is in charge and he always will be. Every day. Especially on those hard days. You can say, I don't know. I don't know what's going on, Lord, but you do. So I'm going to trust you. I'm going to trust you. Instead of living with fear and confusion, you can live with peace and confidence in your almighty sovereign God. Second takeaway comes as a question. You ready? Here's the question.

57:14

Have you repented of your sins and have you asked Jesus to save you? If your answer is no, you do not need to leave here stumbling with the crippling weight, guilt and penalty of your sins. You can repent and turn to Jesus right now and all your sins will be wiped away. No matter what you've done in your life, there is complete forgiveness for you in Jesus. Here's the third and final takeaway. If you are a follower of Jesus, you can rejoice. You can rejoice because all your sins, past, present and future have been blotted out. And you have the blessing and presence of God in your life every day. And you can look forward to heaven. And that's the best retirement plan in the universe. Your best days are not behind you. They are all ahead of you.

58:26

Death isn't the end of your life. It's the start of the best days of your life. Forever. Like the

children's song I used to sing. I don't know if we sing this song anymore. But if you're saved and you know it, then your life should surely show it. How can you and I show that we're saved? Well, we can do what the lame man did. We can go through life praising God and leaping for joy. Our prayer team is going to be here at the end of the service if you would like prayer. If you would like to confess your sins and come to Christ, they'd be happy to pray with you. They'd be happy to pray with you for anything going on in your life. We also have a very convenient prayer wall just out that door to your right.

59:10

There's a wall and there's even paper and you can write a prayer request. Your penmanship can be pretty lousy and you don't have to sign it and people will be praying for you. Let's pray together. Oh, Father, thank you. Thank you for the amazing miracle at the beautiful gate. Thank you for telling us what we need to know. Thank you for your perfect but mysterious plan for our lives. Help us to learn, to trust you because you are always faithful and you are always in control no matter what life looks like to us. Thank you for your love. Thank you for your mercy and grace that wipes away all our sins when we repent and trust in Jesus our Lord and Father, please open the eyes of that person here this morning that needs to repent and turn to you right now.

01:00:06

Let us all leave here praising you and leaping with joy. And it's in the name. It's in the power and authority of Jesus. We pray. Amen.