

SEVENTH DAY



BAPTIST®

This Week in the Word

Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Ps 119:89.



Faith in Jesus Study Scripture: Acts 3:11-23 Lesson 1, December 2nd, 2017.

Key Verse

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

Acts 3:16.

INTRODUCTION

Today we look at the faith of the Apostles as they seize the opportunities to witness under the power of the Holy Spirit.

We see clearly the power of the resurrected Christ working through the Apostles, men who were now totally committed to a lifestyle of witnessing, telling about their new, power filled and exciting relationship with their Saviour Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

We note how God sets up opportunities for His people to be a witness for Him and to testify about their relationship with Jesus Christ. Here we see the opportunity to witness in the normal activities of everyday life.

We must pay attention to the fact that as we go about our daily business, God provides the opportunities for Christians to show their God to those with whom we come into contact.

There should be a joy, a excitement, a thrill and a deep fulfillment in living the everyday, normal Christian life.

There is no life like it, for the Holy Spirit provides us with the special and extraordinary power and joy that comes from possessing Him. We do have pain, sorrow and sometimes fears, for we are all human beings, but in all that, we know that God is with us and will be walking with us, even when we are in *the valley of the shadow of death*.

We then fear no evil, for the presence of the Holy Spirit empowers and enables us to face everything that life can throw at us. We need to constantly remind ourselves of this and since we are forgetful of the many mercies of God and we do not constantly count our many blessings, we pray that the brethren will also remind us constantly, of the overarching love of the Father, the intercessory work of the Son who sits at the right hand of the Father, and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

Luke selects a particular miracle from the many wonders and signs done through the Apostles, likely done to show us what it means to live by faith in Christ and thus have a lifestyle of powerful witnessing under the power of the Spirit. Further, they made it apparent that the power by which they performed these miracles was not their own; that in every case they pointed the hearers to Christ as the source and the one to whom the glory belongs. The expression of faith in Jesus was not merely for the benefit of an individual, but was such that it would lead to an opportunity to present the gospel to unbelievers in such a way, that they could not deny the truth; and that salvation as well as healing would lead to the praise and glory of God.

It is to be noted that the story of the healing of the lame man provides the second occasion for a large crowd to gather and Peter preaches a second recorded sermon in Jerusalem. The miracle at Pentecost however and the message that followed, was very different from the miracle we look at today, the message that followed and the results.

First, we note that the healing of the lame was a fulfillment of the Messianic promise of healing the lame in Isaiah 35 and accordingly, Jesus did that miracle to authenticate who He was, His role and His work. So here we will expect that this is a miracle of authentication of the presence of Messiah working through the Apostles.

In fact, the healing of the lame seemed to have been so significant, that when the faith of John the Baptist wavered, and he seemed to doubt whether or not Jesus was Messiah, Jesus pointed to the healing of the lame as one of the evidences that He was in fact the Messiah. (See Matthew 11. Note also Matthew 21:14-16.)

We can see the work of the Spirit continuing to develop and we would expect to see the work of Satan in opposition mounting also.

Peter's message is different from that at Pentecost and testimony of the one who benefited from the miracle was dramatically new and refreshing. Some undoubtedly will find in this, some example and guide for their reaction to the work of the Spirit at the time of salvation and healing.

Now we will look at a real, tangible expression of faith in Christ which led to witnessing under the Spirit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Day of Pentecost had come. The Holy Spirit, the comforter, the Paraclete, had come as promised by Jesus. Peter and the Apostles had delivered heart wrenching testimony with such power and conviction, that it led to three thousand souls being saved.

The Scripture tells us that *many wonders and signs* were performed by the Apostles (Acts 2:43). Of all the miracles that they performed, Luke moved by the Holy Spirit, recorded in some detail the healing of this lame man.

The Jewish day was divided into twelve equal parts, of which there were three occasions during the day for public prayer; the 3rd, 6th and 9th hour that is approximately 9 a.m., 12 noon and 3 p.m.

It was the ninth hour (3 p.m.) and traditionally the hour of prayer and it was for this reason that Peter and John were going to the Temple which we recall was ruled by the enemies of Christ and His followers. These enemies of Christ still wanted to stamp out any traces of Jesus. These incredibly brave Apostles however still went to the Temple as part of their daily routine (Acts 2:46). In Luke 24:53, it is said that the Apostles were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. The Apostles clearly saw no problem in continuing their Jewish custom of prayer at certain times of today. Some however like to avoid these facts in their urge to forsake everything Jewish. But note that for them this was a normal, everyday activity. Their unshakable faith in Jesus, and with His Great Commission ringing in their ears their lifestyle always opened the door for witnessing.

Here was a man who was a cripple from birth, over forty years according to Acts 4: 22. Evidently unable walk he was carried to the temple everyday to beg alms. Luke takes the time to record these details to establish the greatness and incontestable nature of this miracle.

This man was evidently well known to be a cripple by those frequenting the Temple and this was established by his many years of begging at the most trafficked of the Temple gates.

There was no welfare system in that day; the poor were heavily dependent on the charity of those in better circumstances. Thus, it was important that the sick and destitute be where they would be most exposed to people. Hence, it was customary to place them at the gates of rich men Luke 16:20; and they also sat by the highway to beg where many persons would pass, (Mark 10:46; Luke 18:35;

John 9:1-8). The entrance to the Temple would be a favourable place for begging; for many people would pass there every day and for the purposes of religion, one would more inclined to give alms to the needy. In fact, it is speculated that Jesus Himself would have passed by this beggar on several occasions and postponed helping him, leaving that task to the Apostles.

There are different opinions concerning the gate called *Beautiful*, where the lame man was placed. Regardless of which one may subscribe to, the one thing we can note is that its appearance was magnificent. The Jewish historian Josephus tells us this gate was seventy-five feet high with huge double doors and made of Corinthian brass, adorned with larger plates of silver and gold than the other nine gates.

We must remember that the presence of this lame beggar at this the busiest gate of the Temple, shows the tragic state of the Jewish system existing then. The Law of Moses made all kinds of special provisions for support of the poor and this lame beggar should never have had to resort to this kind of begging, especially at the gate of the Temple. The presence of this man is a clear picture of the desperate spiritual condition of Israel, for it shows that though they were at the Temple, they were far from obeying God

We should be aware that when we disobey the Commandments of God, we are an embarrassment to Him and He will allow the different kinds of embarrassments to position themselves right at the place of worship, so that there will be a testimony against our hypocrisy. No wonder judgment will begin at the House of God.

Note that there is no indication that Peter and John were going to the Temple for a healing ceremony. They were on their 'normal' everyday business, but since they were filled with the Spirit, they were sensitive to people around them and looked on every situation as one designed for them to get involved and testify of Christ. In fact, when we look at this, we realize that there is no such thing as a normal day as the world sees it, for the Spirit is doing things of eternal consequence in normal daily activity.

But it is also clear that God has His time to do what He wants and until that time comes, things will always go on as usual. When God's plans slip into high gear and *the fullness of time* comes, the things that could never have happened before or at any other time will happen. The man was there at that time appointed by God and Peter and John were there at that time. The crowd God wanted to be there were also there at that appointed time.

As Peter and John are passing to enter the Temple, the crippled man asked them for some alms. There is no evidence that he was acquainted with them or knew who they were. He asked of them as he was accustomed to do of the multitude that entered the Temple. The lame man simply wanted some money, some support so that he could stay in exactly the condition that he was in, he was not looking forward to any radical change in the circumstances. However, it is likely Peter and John as well as all those that went to the temple, were well aware of this man's ailment.

It is not clear at all that the man had faith in any possibility that he would be healed. He might have had some faith that Jesus could have healed him if only he could get close to him, but if that was so, he probably would have had his hopes crushed when he heard that Jesus was taken to the Cross. It is therefore not clear that the man's faith was instrumental in his healing.

There was no prior discussion or lengthy deliberation between Peter and John, as to what they were going to do for this lame man; neither did they require a worship service to invoke the healing power. Rather it seems that Peter and John were suddenly moved by the Holy Spirit, their acting in unison confirmation of the will of the Holy Spirit.

Together they fixed their eyes on him and demanded his full attention – saying '*look on us*'. The intent was not to draw personal attention, but that he was not distracted when they revealed to him the ultimate source of his healing; thereby leaving no doubt in his mind. The lame man responded by giving his undivided attention expecting to receive something from them. It was customary for

those attending the temple to carry money to put into the temple treasury and or give to the poor; it is most likely then that he expected to receive money.

The action of the Apostles served an important purpose, for it aroused in the man a sense of expectation, something which always quickens faith. The man expected to receive what he thought was money and this expectation, though of imperfect faith, put him on the road on which everybody who expects to receive anything from God must be.

One writer makes this most important observation:

“It is not the church's business in this world to simply make the present condition more bearable; the task of the church is to release here on earth the redemptive work of God in Christ.”

This is not to say that the church is not to help and to be like the Good Samaritan. We are called to be first witnesses, to change a life, to offer what we have, the resources of Jesus.

That this man had such great expectation, really demonstrates the type of faith that we as believers should exercise. At any point of need Jesus must have our full attention so that when our need is met there is no doubt that He alone is the source and that He alone deserves the glory.

The apostle had no money for the treasury or for the lame man. Thus Peter declares ‘*silver and gold have I none...*’ but what I do have you are in far greater need of. God does not always give us what we think we need, but when we approach Him in faith and expectation, He is able to supply more than we can ask or think. What a wonderful God, He knows what we need.

This miracle presented Peter with another opportunity to preach Christ; as in Acts 2:14-44 we see here in Acts 3:11- 4:4 that many Jews believed on Christ and God received the glory. That promise was given to the disciples to authenticate their initial ministry. It is quite a stretch when people use the passage to claim that anyone, anywhere who believes the gospel should do everything that the disciples did. One should be careful not to have people manipulate scripture.

After telling the lame man to rise up and walk, Peter took him by his right hand and helped him to his feet. In doing so Peter shows his sincerity and also teaches us that when faith is being birthed in us we need the hand of one who can stabilize our faith. One writer says: -

“This may be employed as a beautiful illustration of the manner of God when he commands people to repent and believe. He does not leave them alone; he extends help, and aids their efforts.”

Peter was bold, for he trusted supernaturally that God would do things completely out of the ordinary. He was specifically prompted by the Spirit. Peter knew he had power to heal this man and that it was God's will for him to heal this man.

He acted in a most deliberate fashion in everything that he did and said. He looked intently at the man, instructed the man to look at him, told the man specifically that he had no money to give him but promised to give him something, then commanded the man to stand up and walk in the name of Jesus, the Nazarene, then grabbed him by the right hand and raised him up.

Now the irrefutable evidence to the gift of healing and the proof of this miraculous power comes in two parts; first was the instantaneous results. Immediately he received strength to his feet and ankle bones. Immediate verifiable results are a fundamental characteristic of the gift of healing. This healing made the man whole or completely well; this healing was immediate and was not a long drawn out process.

The response to genuine healing will be one of joy and giving praise to God. This once lame man was literally jumping for joy. Having never walked since the day he was born, over forty years, expecting only a few coins, he gets new legs and now exhibits uncontrollable joy.

Evidence of the miracle does not end there; for we note that he not only received strength to jump but he also walked. This in itself is a miracle – the art of walking is one achieved over a lengthy period of time and practice. Children learn slowly, but this man with the strength came the instant ability to walk without the clumsy, awkward stumbling stages that we all went through.

The jumping for joy turned to praise to God, a striking fulfillment of Isa. 35:6 “*The lame man shall leap as a hart*”. Notice that he did not stop to get directions as to how to behave from Peter and John, but without prompting or be taught what to do, he praises God.

We are told that the healed man would not let Peter and John go. The Greek here is very strong, meaning that he clung to them with great strength. That would have produced a great commotion and attracted a great crowd.

Note also that Peter and John had specifically disclosed the source of the healing power to be that of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 3:6), His praises to God – implied that he knew that Jesus is God. This could only come from direct revelation, in the same manner as it did to Peter. “*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*” Matt 16:17

One writer comments: - **“It was instinctive - the natural feeling of the heart. So a sinner. His first feelings, when he is converted, will be to ascribe the praise to God. While he may and will feel regard for the ministry by whose instrumentality he has received the blessing, yet his main expression of gratitude will be to God. And this he will do instinctively. He needs no prompter; he knows that no power of man is equal to the work of converting the soul, and will rejoice, and give all the praise to the God of grace.”**

The Holy Spirit knows how to move His people to accomplish His will. This miracle occurred in the most public place, the Temple at the hour of prayer would undoubtedly be extremely busy. The spectacle that this now overjoyed man caused, drew much attention – the Scripture says that, ‘*all the people saw him walking and praising God*’. All the people that frequented the temple at the hour of prayer not only saw him, but knew that this was the man that every day for forty years sat at the Beautiful Gate begging alms. Needless to say they were all amazed and filled with wonder at what had happened.

This was an undeniably genuine miracle – this man was known to be crippled since birth, it is therefore inconceivable that he for forty years was pretending and not found out. His reaction to the

miracle also points to its authenticity. And in addition to this, the people that witnessed this were not friends of the apostles, but even they were convinced and believed. One writer comments:-
“The people were convinced of the same thing. They saw the effects; they had known him well; they had had every opportunity to know that he was diseased, and they were now satisfied that he was restored. There was no possibility of deception in the case. It was not merely the friends of Jesus that saw this; not those who had an interest in the miracle, but those who had been his enemies, and who had just before been engaged in putting him to death.”

THE TEXT

Verse 11. The healed man held to Peter and John, that is he clung to them, stuck onto them; he would not let them go. Determined to remain with them and go where they went, he held on for dear life and refused to be separated from his benefactors.

All this excitement and curiosity soon drew a sizable crowd that surrounded Peter and John at the porch of Solomon in the temple.

Note the difference with the crowd at Pentecost, for there were no sceptics in this crowd. Peter and John were heroes to the man and to the crowd and they all actually thought much of the Apostles because of the healing of the lame man.

At Pentecost Peter had to correct one kind of misconception, namely, that they were drunk, but here the misconception was that they were too “divine”, too powerful. Peter now had to like he did at Pentecost quickly and flatly deny the prevalent ideas, not taking credit, but praising God and His Servant Jesus. Peter saw their amazement and astonishment and their sense of reverence and mistaken hero worship. They were ready to accept a false explanation of events.

Note some similarities and differences with the Pentecost sermon. Both events were manifestations of the Spirit, though different manifestations. Peter's first sermon was longer, more complete, had more specific instructions as to what men had to do to be saved. It dealt with the prophecies of Joel, and the focus was on the Day of the Lord. It spoke of judgment and then blessing secondarily. The listeners asked questions as to how to be saved and many were saved on Peter's instructions.

This sermon was interrupted by the arrest of the Apostles. The sermon went back to the early days of the patriarchs and the beginning of Israel. Its primary theme was blessing with judgment secondary. The emphasis was even more on the guilt of his audience for having rejected Jesus as Messiah.

Though we know many were saved, conversion occurred without Peter and John being there as was the case at Pentecost. Here both Apostles were in jail.

Verse 12. Having the attention of so many people, Peter grasped the opportunity, not to merely satisfy their curiosity, but to preach to them the gospel.

This was the ideal time to claim some notoriety for himself, to setup his own ministry and following; but Peter and John knew that it was not their ministry and not their power and therefore not their glory for the taking.

Peter without hesitation directs them to the source of their wonderment. He claims nothing for himself but directs them to Christ. Addressing the crowd ‘Ye men of Israel...’ you stare at us as if we did this in our own power, *‘why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we made this man walk?’* The Jews of all people should be acquainted with the nature and purpose of miracles, they should not have looked to men, but to God and enquired what was the meaning of this miracle.

When God works the miraculous in our lives, it is rarely for our sole benefit. God blesses us, in order that many others will be blessed.

The anointing and the boldness on the lives of the Apostles were certainly growing stronger. On the day of Pentecost Peter preached with power and boldness; Could this be the same Peter that recently denied Christ? At Pentecost three thousand people were saved, but after Peter preached on this occasion five thousand men came to Christ, mostly Jews.

Verse 13. Peter begins by showing these Jews the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Peter used this description that the Jews were intimately familiar with and one that stressed the covenant relationship; all prophets and declared the Messiah to be the servant of Jehovah. This title is used only four times in the New Testament, but is a title of the Messiah that is used frequently in the Old Testament.

Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, making Himself equal with the Father; this would-be blasphemy if it were not true and punishable by death. Jesus is however vindicated and proven to be who He claimed to be - the Son of God; for it is inconceivable that God would use a blasphemer to perform any miracle, especially one of this magnitude. Furthermore, the miracle was performed in His own name, meaning that it was by His own power that this miracle was performed. This he could only do if Jesus were truly God.

This being the case, Peter now recounts the facts of their treatment of the Messiah, with the crucifixion fresh in their minds, he displays the naked truth of their brutal injustice and the most heinous of crimes. Peter did not spare their feeling or pussyfoot around the truth, but delivered in a few verses an absolutely heart wrenching message. If this message did not move them to repentance, it would surely be the damnation of them all.

“...the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up...” After establishing who Jesus was, Peter reminds them that they renounced Jesus as their king and called for His execution before Pontius Pilate, who was convinced of Jesus’ innocence declaring it on six occasions (Lk 23:4,14,15,22; Jn 18:38, 19:4,6) and attempted several time to let Him go.

Verse 14. Pilate however, was weak and bent under the political manoeuvrings and demands of the Jews; demands that they would rather see a convicted murderer set free in the place of the Just and Holy One.

“The word “just” here denotes “innocent,” or “one who was free from crime.” It is properly used in reference to law, and denotes “one who stands upright in the view of the law, or who is not chargeable with crime.” In this sense, the Lord Jesus was not only personally innocent, but even before his judges he stood unconvinced of any crime. The crime charged on him at first was blasphemy Mat_26:65, and on this charge the Sanhedrin had condemned him without proof. But of this charge Pilate would not take cognizance, and hence, before him they charged him with sedition, Luk_23:2. Neither of these charges were made out, and of course, in the eye of the law, he was innocent and just. It greatly aggravated their crime that they demanded his death still, even after it was ascertained that they could prove nothing against him, thus showing that it was mere hatred and malice that led them to seek his death.”

Their action proved them to be exactly like the one they desired to be released; he was a murderer and so were they.

Peter was really stressing that Jesus was resurrected and was still alive and able to heal His people, those who came to Him by faith. The lame man was proof of Jesus' power and His willingness to heal physical, emotionally and spiritually. Jesus had done that when He was on earth and He now would continue to do healing.

Note also the series of facts that Peter brought to the crowd. We should remember that our faith is based on facts, the words, actions and promises of the *God of Abraham Isaac, and Jacob*.

Verse 15. *Prince of life* denotes one who is the leader, captain, head or chief of, and the originator of life. In Hebrews 2:10 Jesus is called the Captain of our salvation, He teaches the doctrine of life and salvation, and not only leads the way, but is the way to eternal life. In light of the resurrection this statement is most significant. One writer aptly comments:-

“The word rendered “prince” denotes properly “a military leader or commander.” Hence, in Heb_2:10, it is translated “captain:” “It became him ...to make the “Captain of their salvation” perfect through sufferings.” As a captain or commander leads on to victory and is said to obtain it, so the word comes to denote one who is the “cause,” the “author,” the “procurer,” etc. In this sense it is used, Act_5:31, “Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel,” etc. In Heb_12:2 it is properly rendered author, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” The word “author,” or “giver,” would express the meaning of the word here. It also implies that he has dominion over life; an idea, indeed, which is essentially connected with that of his being the author of it. The word “life” here is used in a large sense, as denoting “all manner of life.” In this sense it is used in reference to Christ in Joh_1:4, “In him was life.”

Peter now testifies that Jesus is alive and that they are indeed eyewitnesses of this fact. Actually before Jesus' ascension He appeared to many people, on one occasion to over five hundred.

Jesus is the prince of life and has life within Himself and life proceeds from Him. The average Jew attending the Temple would understand this concept of the immortality of God; they would also understand that one could not perform a miracle in the name of a dead deity – thus they would be compelled to accept the witness of Peter and John, as to the resurrection.

Verses 16-17. When the term ‘*In the name of...*’ is used it literally means ‘He’ that is when something is done in the name of Jesus, it is actually Jesus who accomplishes that act.

It was the faith that Peter and John had in Jesus that would facilitate this miraculous work. It is not the faith of the lame man, for nothing is even said of him having faith, and this is all the more reason for believing that God is working His purpose through this man’s condition; and by it He intends to heal the sick, save the lost and bring glory to His name.

“*Whom you see and know...*” this removes any doubt for the lame man was well known to them and therefore there was no question as to the authenticity of this miracle. Peter reaffirming that it was done in the power of the Lord Jesus.

The result was perfect soundness. This word denotes integrity of all his parts and freedom from defects, he was completely whole. This was accomplished in “your presence”; they all saw what happened. The willingness of the Apostles to have the man examined was conclusive proof that there was no deception on their part; they had complete confidence in Jesus.

Peter’s discourse or delivery of the Gospel goes on to Acts 3:26, producing absolutely phenomenal results as recorded in Acts 4:4.

Peter does however acknowledge that their action in part was due to ignorance, this was not an attempt to let them off the hook lightly; as he goes on to say that all these things are happening exactly as prophesied by all the prophets.

“But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.” Act 3:18

Their ignorance really demonstrated that their movement was away from the true word of God. In fact they had strayed so far as to become the main perpetrators of this act. Despite all this Peter simply tells them to repent and receive Jesus and they would be saved.

Some of the Temple authorities heard that Peter and John were preaching Christ crucified. So worried were they about the effect of the preaching, that they had them detained over night; but by this time, what the people had seen and heard was powerful and undeniable; five thousand people repented and accepted Christ that day.

It is interesting to note that the facts that Peter brought so strongly was designed to arouse feelings of great guilt.

Modern psychologists might not like that practice but it is a good one, for people cannot live with guilt, and when they are disturbed they become fearful and want to do something about it.

They have to make a choice, whether to try to escape the guilt and fear, and become hostile and resentful to the truth or whether they want to seize onto God and eradicate the guilt in the way that Peter described in verse 16.

Peter made it clear that God was willing to react to the bad behaviour of the people He loved. He was willing to graciously remove the guilt from them and restore them, removing their ignorant blindness.

Note how God reacts to the guilt of the human race. Peter points to a faith which lay hold on the grace of God. This faith is in the name of Jesus and in no other name.

Verses 18-21. As Peter examines the course of history he lays out the great principles on which God operates. Blind, ignorant, stumbling, but pompous humanity must repent for only God can deal with the problem of guilt by blotting out sin. He is the only one with the solution to sin. He is the only One that can give more than alms. He gives life.

The Spirit filled courageous Peter emphasized that Israel had been given the continuing witness of the prophets and now with the witness of the Messiah Son of God there was only one way out for them. They had to repent. Repentance is most appropriate for those who have rejected Christ.

When they repent and be converted their sins will be blotted out and literally a new Exodus, the root of the word "times of refreshing" is used to describe the experience of the first Exodus will occur.

In addition, this will be connected to the presence of, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their promised Messiah Deliverer who had come once, suffered and rejected by the nation as predicted by Scripture will return as promised. This fact had already been preached to them. One writer declares: **"Repent: times of refreshing. A new Exodus is going to come times of restitution; a new inheritance. They will have the kingdom restored to them. They will enter into the land, just as they entered into the land of Canaan, in special blessing. Some say 'Is this a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel? Why of course it is a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, and that kingdom is still offered to Israel today. The apostle Paul in Romans chapter 11 in verse 23 says these words**

"And they also" he's talking about Israel- "if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again".

There is only one thing that stands between the nation's entrance into its spiritual blessings as a nation, and that one thing is to reverse their attitude to the Lord Jesus Christ. When that happens, these magnificent blessings shall take place. Now the things that will happen are the things that the prophets have written about. If you want to know what the future is like, read the past, and the messages of the prophets".

CONCLUSION

Individual salvation rests only in Christ. Only He can cancel the power of sin. If men do not believe in Christ they will be lost. The world and the rebellious and unbelieving might consider that narrow thinking, but it is the narrowness of the Word of God. The Word teaches that the road to life is a narrow one.

Let us appeal to men to seek for restoration and blessing. We are to face them with the critical imperative of allowing God to turn them away from guilt and wickedness in the heart, to believe that God loves them and accepts them, making them His own, giving them the privilege to live as

His children. This privilege is available only men are brought to faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the Cross.

That is our task, to witness in the power of the Spirit at every moment of our supposedly normal everyday life. Let us not be distracted by the world or to worship simply for worshipping sake, ignoring the needs of those around us. We must not concentrate on ourselves and our needs, but we must witness in the power of the Spirit.

Everything we do must be turned toward telling people about Jesus Christ of Nazareth. If we do not we will be failures and we will be accordingly judged by God.

So brethren, everything that we do must be geared toward telling others about the salvation of God, and accordingly work with as directed by the Spirit to make them disciples of Jesus. We have not been saved just to enjoy ourselves, to worship, to meet and fellowship with others like ourselves. We must rescue the lame.

The Book of Acts highlights the life and ministry of the Apostles primarily after Jesus had ascended. It shows the awesome transformation of ordinary men, who once cowered with fear, to the dynamic and powerful demonstration of the Spirit.

Belief and faith with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives enabled them to do tremendous things for Christ and His kingdom.

So it can be with every believer; if we should overcome the obstacles of doubt and fear, in submission to God and by the power of the Holy Spirit, who can tell how we may be used and what we may accomplish for Christ. When it comes to signs and wonders do not be desirous of them; but simply follow God. The Scripture tells us that these signs will follow them that believe. We are never told to follow signs, for it will be the quickest slipperiest root to deception, especially in the end time apostasy.

Let us therefore yield ourselves completely to Christ and proclaim the gospel with boldness. For the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.