

stretch out the hand of God to them and as we do so allow God's power to change their lives forever?

- By healing this lame man Peter was showing that God was no longer exclusively in the Temple, but that God was walking around in side of Peter. The apostle Paul told the church in Corinth and reminds us today: *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?* - (1 Corinthians 3:16) Are we like the religious authorities of that time, so set in our ways that we cannot see God doing something new or some thing different?
- Finally by healing this man 'in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth' (Acts 3:6) Peter ignites a spark that will create a firestorm with the religious authorities. How dare Peter invoke the name of Jesus to heal this man! After all as far as the religious authorities were concerned Jesus was a crucified criminal.
- By invoking the name of Jesus, Peter was interfering with the safe lifestyle of the religious authorities! He was interfering with their cosy club. He was interfering with the way they had done things for the last 50 years or so. Unfortunately nothing has changed in 2,000 years many of us today are wedded to religion, doing things the way they have always been done rather than seeking where God is moving today.

#### 2.4 **MANY people who are amazed** - 'they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.' (Acts 3:10)

- No wonder that Peter's contemporaries were amazed. They had seen the lame man at the Beautiful Gate for many a year and yet here he is walking just like them.
- Peter then explains to the assembled crowd just as he had done on the day of Pentecost that it is God's power that enabled him to heal the lame man: *"Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.* (Acts 3:12,16,19)

#### 2.5 **Conclusion**

- A man lame from birth who has begged from people going up to the temple to pray is healed because Peter stops, recognises the power inside of him and steps out in faith to heal him. Will we do likewise?

#### 3. **Questions to consider at home**

- 3.1 Why had the lame man remained unhealed outside the temple gates for so long?
- 3.2 Why is the day of Pentecost important?
- 3.3 If God resides in Peter and John by the power of his Holy Spirit what does that mean for us? Why are we so slow to step out in faith?
- 3.4 A friend of yours is convinced that she has not been well recently because God is punishing her for things in her past. How would you respond?
- 3.5 Who are the equivalents of the crippled man? a) In Peasedown St John, Wellow, Foxcote and Shoscombe b) In the United Kingdom c) In the world. How should we minister to them?

Matthew Street 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024

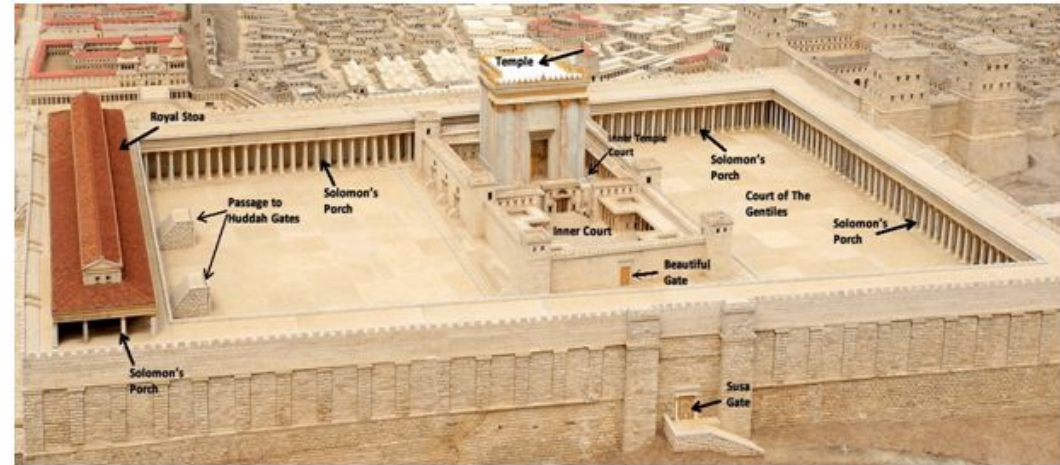


## The Parish of Peasedown St John

### Acts 3:1-12 & 16, 19 - A lame beggar is healed

#### Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.



#### 1. **Talk Passage** – Acts 3:1-12 & 16,19

**1** One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – at three in the afternoon. **2** Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. **3** When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. **4** Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, 'Look at us!' **5** So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

**6** Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.' **7** Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. **8** He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. **9** When all the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** they recognised him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

**11** While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. **12** When Peter saw this, he said to them: 'Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? **16** By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

**19** Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,



Peter heals a lame beggar at the Gate Beautiful

## 2. Talk Notes

### 2.1 Introduction

- In this passage we have:
  - ONE person who is seeking help,
  - TWO people who have found new power and
  - MANY people who are amazed

**2.2 ONE person who is seeking help**– *‘Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.’ (Acts 3:2)*

- Every day as people went up to pray in the Temple at three in the afternoon a man who had been lame all of his adult life was carried to the main temple gate called Beautiful, a gate that was inlaid with gold and precious stones, to beg from those going to pray.
- He wasn’t allowed inside the Temple to join with others in prayer, because the religious authorities of the day believed that people like him must be sinners (or perhaps his parents were) to be afflicted by such an infirmity - this was their punishment from God. The lame man was blemished - not fit for the house of God! Who do we exclude from the church and what are the reasons we use for excluding them?
- The Temple was supposedly the very house of God - the "home" of God’s presence - and yet here was this man, lame from birth brought every day to the gates of God’s temple, and he is still lame!
- For all their religious fervour, there would appear to be nothing that the religious authorities or those devout Jews coming to pray every day at three in the

afternoon could offer him! The best they could do was a few copper coins to ease their consciences as they passed by.

- So where is God in all of this? Was he punishing this lame man for either his personal sin or maybe because of some generational sin? Has God left the temple? And if God has left the temple where has he gone? Where do we think God is today? Where would we look for God?

**2.3 TWO people who have found new power** - *‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’ (Acts 3:6)*

- Peter and John know where God’s presence and power now resides. It resides in them personally. They knew this because they have just been baptised in the Holy Spirit. That is what happened on the day of Pentecost - *‘All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit’* - Acts 2:4 Do we believe that God resides in us by the power of his Holy Spirit?
- Peter knows that with God’s power now residing inside him he can indeed share with this lame man something that is more valuable than silver or gold.
- In his sermon on the mount Jesus said: *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.’ (Matthew 6:21)*
- What do we truly treasure? Is it our money, wealth and possessions? Or is it something else? Peter, John and the early disciples clearly treasure their relationship with God and community: *They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.’ (Acts 2:42-47)*
- Where is our treasure and our heart? Are we still wedded to this world, with its lure of money, wealth and possessions or do we really value relationship with God and community with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?
- As Jesus was concluding his final meal with his disciples he reminded them: *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12).* Peter wanted to demonstrate that ordinary folk like him, a fisherman, could do what Jesus did. If we believe that God resides in us, will that not encourage us, like Peter, to step out in faith and do the things that Jesus did, knowing that God will give us the power to do them?
- By healing this lame man Peter was sending a message that God was not punishing him for either his personal sin or some generational sin. Peter probably had the words of Jesus ringing in his ears when Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth: *‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. (John 9:3)*
- As Peter healed this lame man he was also demonstrating that no-one is excluded from God’s presence and power. Do we have a heart for the lost, for those on the margins of our society, are we prepared to stop and consider them and to maybe