

Living the Supernatural Life – Part V

¹One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon. ²Now a man crippled 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. ³When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵So the man gave them his attention, **expecting** to get something from them.

⁶Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, walk." ⁷Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and **praising God**. ⁹When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰they recognized 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.

1. In Acts 3 we see a fascinating display of how God's supernatural life and power is displayed in the lives of ordinary people. In case you don't think these are ordinary people, you only have to go back perhaps a mere two months in the lives of the disciples to see them broken and scattered.
 - a. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurs just 10 days after the ascension of Jesus and results in 3000 people coming to faith in Christ.
 - b. Acts chapter two concludes with the church witnessing many wonders and miraculous signs done by the apostles.
 - c. The church continues to meet in the "temple courts" and break bread in their homes together.
2. We don't know the exact day of this encounter in the temple courts, because the bible simply says, "one day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer."
 - a. But we know it was the practice of the early church to meet there. It is in this context that a "divine appointment" takes place with a man crippled from birth.
 - b. The passage says "he was being carried to the temple gate" which means that they probably passed by him as they were going toward the gate of the temple themselves.
 - c. Our passage says that when he "saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money."
 - d. **He wanted something.** But Peter and John didn't give him what he was asking for. The man only had faith and desire to perpetuate his current condition and situation. It was as if he was asking, "Help me survive in this world one more day."
 - i. But Peter and James saw something else. Peter asks the man to look at him.
 - ii. People who beg or ask for handouts are used to getting looks of scorn or impersonal giving. In fact, they find it somewhat hard to look you straight in the eyes because of their need and their shame.
 - iii. ⁵So the man gave them his attention, **expecting** to get something from them.
 - iv. The man gave them his attention. The Greek indicates that his expectation was for a "large gift" from Peter and John.
 1. Sadly, many of us haven't even come to the place in our walk with God where we really expect something from God. Yet this man shows simple faith, even if he was expecting the wrong thing.
 2. Too often we settle for much less than God wants to give us, and our low expectations often rob us of God's best. God cares more for you and I than we could ever know.
 3. And if we understood how much He cares for US, then WE WOULD DARE TO BELIEVE HE CARES ENOUGH FOR OTHERS to do miraculous wonders on their behalf so that they could come to know Him!
 4. This absence of the miraculous can be traced to God's people having too small of a view of God Himself!

- e. *⁶Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.**"*
 - i. Our church owns property, land, pews, nice carpet, lighting, and are able to meet our bills. But that isn't what God wants from us. That isn't what counts in the scheme of eternity.
 - 1. It is a tragedy to have silver and gold and not be able to say, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."
 - 2. The saddest thing of all is for the church that claims to belong to Jesus Christ to have money but no spiritual power.
 - 3. And who is the church? You and I! Do you have a nice nest egg but no spiritual power?
 - ii. Peter surprises the man by telling him that he doesn't have money to give. And then he tells the man "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."
 - iii. This man knows he can't walk, he has been crippled from birth. He continues to lay there, for the next few split seconds, probably wondering what all of this means.
 - iv. But then Peter DOES something inexplicable.
 - f. *⁷Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong*
 - i. Peter grabs the fellow by the right hand and pulls him to his feet.
 - ii. Whose faith was working here, the man or Peter's?
 - 1. I would say Peter had to exercise a whole bunch more faith than the paralytic did.
 - 2. The wonder of it all is that the man's feet and ankles became strong. They didn't just get their feeling back, they grew muscle instantaneously.
 - g. *⁸He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and **praising God.***
 - i. The result was a man restored. He didn't go home. He went into the temple courts (where praise was expected) and praised God! Jumping! Walking! That is pretty awesome!
3. Let me share just a few point:
- a. **God's power is displayed where His Presence is.**
 - i. The Temple was the place of God's Presence, yet the man never had see supernatural power over all of the years he laid at the gates to it.
 - ii. Where was His power at that time? In Peter and John, not in a building.
 - iii. What does Colossians 1:27 say - "CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY!"
 - iv. Where is the presence of Jesus? In YOU!
 - v. So where should the power of Jesus be? In you and me!
 - vi. Ephesians 3:20 says, "*Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.*"
 - 1. Did you see it? "By his might power at work WITHIN us, He is able to accomplish..."
 - 2. That is a lot different that God doing amazing stuff "out there" but rather, He is doing powerful stuff through me...infinitely more than I would ever DARE to ask or hope for?
 - b. **God's power is evidenced where there is expectant faith.**(v4)
 - i. What a person asks for isn't always what God gives.
 - ii. The man wanted money, Peter and John gave him something more valuable...healing and eternal life in Jesus Christ.
 - iii. **This is where the power of God shows up! Not just in the expectancy of the recipient but in the expectancy of the giver!**
 - iv. (ie., Laura and Jim last week ministering to a family in need of funds to stop foreclosure on their home).
 - c. **God's power is shown where His authority is claimed.**

- i. *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,*
 - ii. This is to speak in the authority of Jesus Christ, in His power, not our own.
 - iii. Dutch Sheets describes what this looks like: When you pray or lay hands on someone, you lay your hands upon them, but unseen to anyone are the hands of Jesus upon you, and His authority, power and healing are flowing into and through you.

4. Last Sunday, we heard Laura’s testimony of brokenness concerning people who come to our church to ask for money or assistance with their financial situation. I also shared that I had grown somewhat cynical and hardened toward people who come and ask for money from the church as if we were the Third National Bank of Relief.
 - a. As you might recall, Laura got a call from a family who were being foreclosed upon and they needed \$600 to stop the foreclosure. Practical (and unspiritual Pastor Bob) looked at the Benevolence fund and said, “nope, can’t help them.” But Laura felt the tug of the Holy Spirit and simply knew that God placed us here to make a difference, no matter how small.
 - b. So, she called the family back and asked them to meet with her and Jim on Sunday night. Laura and Jim had no idea what they could do. They even thought about doing a garage sale to raise money to help them. They wanted to see God meet this family’s need.
 - c. We prayed for Laura and Jim’s meeting with them, and many people prayed for the need of the family they were about to minister to. As they got ready to meet with them, they got a call from the family to tell them that the husband had just gotten a side job to clean out a house and would be paid \$1000 for it. (God had met their need).

5. In the middle of this situation we learned several key things:
 - a. **Every need you respond to is an opportunity for God to work supernaturally through you.**
 - b. **We don’t meet the need, God does.**
 - i. If it is up to us and our resources and our abilities, then we will pick and choose, and we will never allow the supernatural power of God to come to bear in our lives and the lives of others.
 - ii. It is important to recognize that we don’t have in our own resources what is needed to meet people’s needs.
 - iii. But we do possess the supernatural power of God who can do far beyond what we can ask or imagine through us!
 - c. **God will do exceedingly and abundantly through us, above all we can ask or think.**
 - d. **God loves through people not institutions.**
 - i. Churches are viewed by the world as institutions. But we know that the church is people. Our building is not the church. And so when a person comes to the church for help, we must avoid the temptation to represent ourselves as an institution.
 - ii. What amazed me about this entire process was the fact that Laura and Jim got personally involved in this couple’s life and were going to make personal sacrifices, if necessary, to help make a difference.
 1. Look at this from the perspective of the family in need. You have a need, and a couple (not an institution) offers to help, even offers to give the proceeds from their personal garage sale to help. How would that impact you? It becomes really, really hard to walk away unappreciative and without a sense of awe toward the people who just helped you.
 2. Had it been an institution giving you money...there is no face, no clear sacrifice, just a transaction.
 - iii. Governments don’t love, but people do.
 - iv. Institutions don’t love, but people do.
 - v. Churches don’t love, but its people do.

6. What is my challenge? To let God use you to minister to someone, personally.
 - a. If someone were to call the church with a need, would you be willing to be the face on the gift?

- b. Would you be willing to let the supernatural power of God work through you to minister to someone so that they might encounter our Living God?
- c. Are you willing to stand in the gap as the intercessor between a person's need and God's provision.
 - i. We stood in the gap for Cindy before her surgery, praying for her.
 - ii. Laura and Jim stood in the gap and offered to help meet a family's need.
 - iii. You may need us to do this for you right now.