

Bible Stories for Adults

Peter and John Heal a Lame Man

Acts 3

Opening

Gathering: Give examples of unexpected opportunities to be God's witness.

Today's Focus: Peter responded to an unexpected opportunity to witness and over 1000 became Christian.

Key Verses: *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And the Lord added to their number daily. Acts 2:42, 47*

Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him has given this complete healing. Acts 3:16

Opening Prayer

Lesson

A New Beginning (Acts 1)

What seemed to the disciples as a final ending but was really a new beginning?

John 16:5-7, 20-22 = Jesus was going away – would grieve at first, then have great joy

How did Jesus use the symbolic number 40 to point out that this was a new beginning?

Acts 1:3 = He appeared over 40 days before He ascended – 40 denotes new beginnings

What was this new beginning?

Luke 24:45-51 = Jesus left, but sent them power to be His witnesses

Did this new beginning start the moment Jesus ascended?

Acts 1:4-5 = No, they were to wait a few days for the Spirit to come upon them

How were they able to recognize when this new beginning started? = 10 days later

Acts 2:1-4 = Obvious to all of their senses - sound, sight, power, speech

A Powerful Jump-Start (Acts 2)

What was the purpose of this new beginning?

Matthew 28:19-20 = To make disciples of all nations

How many people were first charged with this commission?

Acts 1:15 = About 120 - Apostles, the 70 Galileans (Luke 10:1), others

How could such a small group handle the task of making disciples of all nations?

Acts 1:8 = They'd be given power; Progress from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to ...

How was this group given a great jump-start towards this objective?

Acts 2:5-11 = People from J, J, S & ends of earth witnessed this new beginning

How effective was this jump-start to a new beginning?

Acts 2:41 = About 3000 were added that day

How faithful did these new Christians remain since they lived away from the central church?

Romans 1:7-8, 11-12, 15 = Rome had a strong church although Paul hadn't been there yet

The Power to Grow (Acts 2:43)

Was the sending of the Holy Spirit only for the initial jump-start on Pentecost? = forever

John 14:16-17, 26 = No, *He lives with you and will be in you...teach you all things*

What about the special power that was shown on Pentecost? Was it only for that day?

Mark 16:17-20 = No, *the Lord worked with them and confirmed His word by the signs*

Were such miraculous signs really given to the church to help it grow?

Acts 2:43 = Yes, *many wonders and miraculous signs were done*

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Modus Operandi (Acts 2:42-47)

- Did the early Christians spend their time running around showing off their great new powers?
Acts 2:42 = No, they devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, communion and prayer
- How committed were they to this new beginning?
Acts 2:44-45 = They gave everything to it
- Did they do these things in hiding so they wouldn't be caught by the authorities?
Acts 2:46-47 = No, they taught in the open temple courts and grew daily

Jew to Gentile (Acts 3:1)

- Did the early Christians observe Jewish customs in the temple or did they just go there to teach?
Acts 3:1 = Kept Jewish customs - growth from Jews to Gentiles was gradual (Acts 1:8)
- What times of prayer did the Jews observe? = Earlier Jews prayed at noon instead of sunset (Ps 55:17)
Daniel 6:10 = 9 am (at morning sacrifice), 3 pm (evening sacrifice), 6 pm (sunset) in Jesus' day
- Was this progression from Jew to Gentile part of God's plan?
Romans 1:16 = Yes, salvation comes *first for the Jew, then for the Gentile*
- Why were the Jews first?
John 4:22 = *Salvation is from the Jews*
- What did Jesus mean that salvation is from the Jews?
Genesis 12:1-3 = God called the Jews to reveal Himself and His salvation to the world
- Does this mean that Jews are more important in Christ's family?
Galatians 3:28-29 = No, we are all blessed to be part of Christ's family

At the Temple (Acts 3:2-5)

- What common encounter did Peter and John have at the temple?
Acts 3:2-3 = Lame beggar asked them for money
- Beautiful Gate - Believed to be the Nicanor gate (named after its Alexandrian donor)
Main and largest gate; Made of expensive Corinthian bronze, looked like gold
Between Court of the Women and Court of Men; at top of 15 steps; took 20 men to close
- Why couldn't women, maimed or unclean pass through the gate?
Leviticus 21:16-18 = God prevented it to keep His temple pure - only the unblemished
- Those who could not work (blind, lame, etc.) sat on the steps begging from worshippers
Giving alms was an important and respectable part of the Jewish faith
- Did Peter and John try to ignore and/or avoid this beggar?
Acts 3:4 = No, they tried to get his focused attention
- Did this work or did the beggar ignore them afraid that they might reprimand or curse him?
Acts 3:5 = He *gave them his attention, expecting to get some money from them*

The Gift (Acts 3:6-7)

- Had Peter and John brought money from the church that they would give this man?
Acts 3:6 = No, they had no money, but gave what they had, the power of Jesus' name
- Was this just a cheap way out, or was it a real gift?
Acts 3:7 = It was a powerful gift, Instantly his feet and ankles became strong
- How could just the name of Jesus have that much power?
Matthew 28:18 = His name carries all of the authority in heaven and on earth
Philippians 2:9-11 = His name is above all names, at His name every knee should bow

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A New Beginning (Acts 3:8-10)

What did the beggar think of these cheapskates who only gave a name? = First time in temple
Acts 3:8 = He was thrilled, ran around the temple jumping and shouting and praising
Did the people think this was just an act? = Since it wasn't a festival, the people were locals
Acts 3:9-10 = No, They had seen him begging at the gate for years
How was the point of the man's new beginning made even stronger? = Crippled from birth
Acts 4:22 = He was over 40 years old (40 signifies new beginning)

Opportunity Knocks (Acts 3:11-12)

Did the beggar run home and tell everyone he knew what had happened?
Acts 3:11 = No, he *held on* to Peter and John, people came running
Solomon's Colonnade - Porch along east of temple's Court of the Gentiles
Believed to contain ruins from Solomon's temple
Had Peter planned to heal this man or to talk to a crowd when he came to pray?
Acts 3:12 = No, he saw the people and explained that it wasn't he that did this
How easily would the people accept Peter's disclaimer after he had healed this lame man?
Acts 4:13 = It was clear that they were unschooled and ordinary men
What did Peter later write that applied to his situation?
1 Peter 3:15 = Always be prepared to share your faith when given the opportunity

Jesus Who? (Acts 3:13-16)

How did Peter begin his introduction to this crowd of who was responsible for this miracle?
Acts 3:13a = The God you are here to worship has worked through His servant Jesus
How did he remind the crowd who this Jesus was? = He was in the temple, Jewish leaders around
Acts 3:13b-14 = He is the one you forced Pilate to crucify and traded for a murderer
So was this miracle done to give Peter a chance to tell the Jews they had done wrong?
Acts 3:15 = No, but to let him tell them how God had corrected their wrong
But how did Peter heal this man and what does God's servant Jesus have to do with it?
Acts 3:16 = It is the faith in Jesus that brought this power through His name
What might the Jews have remembered by Peter's talk?
Genesis 50:19-20 = Joseph's brothers sold him for evil, God intended it for good

What Should We Do? (Acts 3:17-21)

How did Peter address the remorse of the Jews who now realized they had killed God's servant?
Acts 3:17-18 = They didn't know what they were doing and God intended it this way
Since they didn't know what they were doing and it was God's plan, were they innocent?
Leviticus 5:17 = No, ignorance is not an excuse
What should they do now that they had committed the horrible sin of killing God's Messiah?
Acts 3:19-20 = *Repent, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out*
But the Christ had come and been killed. Why did Peter say "that He may send the Christ?"
Acts 3:21 = He will return in the fullness of God's time

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Past Promises (Acts 3:22-26)

How were they to know that Jesus was a part of God's plan?

Acts 3:22-24 = Moses and *all the prophets from Samuel on...have foretold these days*

Did the promises start with Moses?

Acts 3:25 = No, it started back with God's original covenant to Abraham

How was Jesus mentioned in that original covenant?

Genesis 22:18 = Jesus descended from Abraham to save all nations

But wasn't the Messiah sent for the Jews? What does it mean that He came for all nations?

Acts 3:26 = *He sent Him first to you, the Jew - the Jew first, then the Gentile*

The Result (Acts 4:1-4)

How did Peter finish his speech?

Acts 4:1 = He didn't; he was interrupted by priests, the temple ruler and the Sadducees

Why did they stop Peter? = Sadducees didn't believe in life after death, angels, etc..

Acts 4:2 = Because he was talking about Jesus' resurrection

What did they do to get Peter to be quiet? = Temple gates closed at 4:00

Acts 4:3 = Put Peter and John in jail until they could decide what to do in the morning

Had Peter's speech had any effect?

Acts 4:4 = Yes, up to another 2000 were added that day

So what should we remember from Peter's experience?

Colossians 4:5-6 = *Make the most of every opportunity; know how to answer*

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. How do I respond when I see people with needs?
(Acts 3:1-4; 10:31; Psalm 37:21; Proverbs 14:31; 18:23; 22:22-23; 28:27; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 14:7; Luke 11:5-13; 19:8; John 9:1-7; 1 Corinthians 13:3)
2. Am I more inclined to give money to a cause or to get personally involved?
(Acts 3:4-7; Judges 5:2; 1 Cor 16:15-16; 2 Cor 8:1-15; Philippians 4:10-20; Revelation 2:19)
3. When have I taken credit for something that was clearly the work of God?
(Acts 3:11-16; Romans 3:27-4:3; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 3:18-23; 4:7; 2 Corinthians 10:12-18; Galatians 6:14; James 4:13-17)
4. How have I given glory to God when He has accomplished His work through me?
(Acts 3:11-16; 4:18-21; 21:17-20a; Matthew 5:14-16; 9:6-8; 15:29-31; John 15:8; Luke 7:15-17; 13:13; 17:15-16; 23:47; Romans 4:18-21; 15:14-19; 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10)
5. When have I recognized and taken an opportunity to witness to Jesus in a common encounter?
(Acts 3:1-26; 4:18-20; 8:26-38; 17:16-23; 26:2, 27-29; Luke 24:15-27; Col 4:5-6; 1 Peter 3:15)