

**Introduction:** How do we apply the undeniable miracles in the Bible? We heard of the post-Pentecost healing of a man unable to walk from birth because Peter invoked Jesus' Name. Then, going back to six months before Holy Week, as many as touched Jesus' garments were made whole, saved in body, soul and spirit. \*\*\* Do such miracles occur today? If so, why has Joni Eareckson Tada been in a wheelchair fifty-seven years?! There is no easy answer. However, Joni has become known as one of the strongest advocates for people with any disabilities. She has written forty-eight books. Twice, she has been healed of cancer. When I asked my Gordon-Conwell group to recommend books on how Christians can handle suffering, the unanimous response was anything written by Joni Eareckson Tada. She would say her life is a miracle of God's grace and power. \*\*\* It is about perspective. Americans are too materialistic and self-focused to see God at work in the world or their lives. We can be blind to what God is doing in the world, how He works all things together for His good purpose; and, how He transforms people to do the impossible and be glorified in them (Romans 8:28-30). \*\*\* Before we look at our passages in detail, I will share a little about myself. I am uncomfortable doing this; but, my life is an example of a miracle many people might miss. \*\*\* If I had been born before 1895, I would have died thirty-two years ago. Before 1921 a diabetes diagnosis meant a maximum life-span of less than three years; and, those years would require a near starvation diet and decreasing energy. Then, a team of four men at the University of Toronto introduced insulin as a treatment. I have read the account of the process. It was difficult as these men had to overcome strong personality differences. Then, in the United States, two Christians: Eli Lilly and Elliot P. Joslin played an amazing role in treating American diabetics. Lilly hired the best industrial chemist and paid him second only to Babe Ruth. Then he gave away insulin to diabetics free for one year. He asked that the only words on his gravestone be, 'He tried to live his life to the glory of God'. Joslin was a strong Christian who, when speaking of insulin to reporters, compared it to The Spirit of God raising dead bones to life again (Ezekiel 37). Headlines in the *New York Times* and *Boston Globe* called insulin the 'resurrection drug'. Because of insulin, I have been given over thirty extra years of life to serve God. \*\*\* I was unsettled to think of God using medicine to extend my life. Then I heard Jack Hayford address this issue. He was a leader in the Four-Square Pentecostal denomination. He talked of friends who said modern medicine was of the devil. His answer: impossible! The devil has never done anything to heal God's people. He hates God's people; and, he seeks to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:9-10). All healing is of God. \*\*\* So, let us be free to pray with all our heart that God will do miracles for people we love. Then, let us trust He will do what is best for everyone, and wait to see what He does. He often surprises us in how He does 'exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think (Ephesians 3:14-21, KJV).

## **I. Entering the Temple at prayer time, Peter and John encounter a crippled man begging alms; he expects to take alms,**

**Peter says he has no coins; but, commands him to rise and walk in Jesus' Name.** (*Acts 3:1-7a*)

A. As Peter and John enter the Temple to pray, a man crippled from birth is lying in a gate to beg alms; and, seeing Peter and John, he is asking them to take alms. (*Acts 3:1-3*)

1. Peter and John were going up into the Temple about the hour of prayer – the ninth. (*Verse 1*)

**Mid-afternoon prayer:** Using sunrise (6:00 AM) as zero hour, this would be 3:00 PM, mid-afternoon.

2. And certain man, being crippled from his mother's womb, was being carried, whom they were laying day-by-day at the gate of the Temple being called 'Beautiful'. (*Verse 2*)

**Crippled man:** This man was crippled from birth. He needed people to carry him to the Temple gate called 'Beautiful', meaning at the appropriate time, seasonably ripe, or the bloom of youth.

**Asks for alms:** At this ironically named gate, the man was asking for alms: support for the needy given in mercy to them.

3. Who, having seen Peter and John being about to be going into the Temple, he was asking alms to take (from them). (*Verse 3*)

**Asks Peter and John:** It was nothing personal, he begged everyone that they might give him support.

B. Peter commands the man to look at them, and he expects to take alms, Peter says he has no precious coins, but in the Name of Jesus: rise and walk; and, Peter lifts him up. (*Acts 3:4-7a*)

1. Having looked at him, Peter with John, (Peter) said, 'Thou must look on us'. (*Verse 4*)

**Peter interacts with him:** Peter initiates a meaningful encounter with this man, expecting to introduce him to Jesus.

2. But, he was noticing them, expecting something from them to take. (*Verse 5*)

**He expects to take:** He expects that Peter and John will mercifully support him in his crippled state, just as many Jews who came to worship in the Temple had been doing all these years.

3. But Peter said, 'Silver and gold is not being to me; but, what I am having, this to thee I am giving: in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth: thou must be rising up and thou must be walking'. (*Verse 6*)

**No silver and gold:** Followers of Jesus gave all they possessed into the common purse of the family of believers (*Acts 2:44-45*). So, they did not go about with coins on their person.

**In The Name of Jesus:** But, Peter's gift is greater than any human medium of economic exchange. In The Name of The Savior of the world, he commands this man to rise up and walk, fully believing Jesus to act according to His Name! We must realize that to know Jesus as The One who makes people whole is of greater value than having all the gold and silver in the world!

4. Having taken him by the right hand, (Peter) raised him up. (*Verse 7a*)

**Peter lifts him:** Peter's faith in His resurrected Lord and Jesus' will for him, allowed the healing power of Jesus to flow through him and into the crippled man, whom he grabbed and lifted to his feet.

## **II. His crippled feet are immediately strengthened, the man is leaping in the Temple court, praising God so all knowing him are astonished; earlier, as many sick people were brought to Jesus, they were made whole.** (*Acts 3:7b-10; Mark 6:53-56*)

A. Immediately his feet were strengthened; and, leaping up, he enters the Temple: walking, leaping and praising God; and, those knowing him were filled with astonishment. (*Acts 3:7b-10*)

1. Immediately, the feet of him were strengthened and he was walking, and he entered with them into the Temple ... (*Verses 7b-8a*)

**Immediately feet strengthened:** The healing was instantaneous. God made his feet strong and he was able to walk.

**Walk into Temple:** Because of the power of Jesus' Name to heal, he walked with Peter and John from the gate, across the court and to the Temple.

2. ... walking and leaping and praising God! (*Verse 8b*)

**Physical praise:** He was so excited at his feet and legs being healed that with every step he was leaping in the air; and, with his mouth he was praising God as he entered His presence in the Temple.

*Healing leads to physical praise in God's presence*

3. And they saw him, all the people, walking and praising God. (*Verse 9*)

**People collectively see:** He was so exuberant about what God did for him, that all the people who were in the Temple court saw him, as one person, praising God with his body and his mouth. When Jesus heals, people can't help but take notice

**Jesus' power to heal overwhelms people**

**Application:** May we all have our spiritual eyes opened to see the miracles God is doing in the midst of our lives as we live in this world. And, may we too praise God for His amazing presence with us!

*Healing leads to physical praise in God's presence*

4. But, they were knowing him, that he was indeed the one who was being the one sitting for alms at the 'Beautiful' gate of the Temple. (*Verses 10a-b*)

**People knowing him:** Apparently, he had been such a fixture at the gate, for such a long time, that everyone knew him and how his condition had reduced him to begging everyone to show him mercy.

5. They were filled with astonishment and displacement at that which had happened to him. (*Verse 10c*)

**Astonished:** These are the 'appropriate' superlatives used whenever God does something so amazing that people are overcome with wonder and astonishment over what God can do; so much so, that they are beside themselves, having an 'out of body' experience, brought on by witnessing God's power!

**Jesus' power to heal overwhelms people**

B. Earlier, Jesus and the apostles landed at Genessaret; immediately people from the whole region brought sick on beds, beseeching Jesus; as many as took hold of Him were being made whole. (*Mark 6:53-56*)

1. Having gone over (the water), they came to the land into Gennesaret, and they were anchored (there). (*Verse 53*)

**Genessaret:** Gennesaret was a village on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, also known as Lake Gennesaret, which means 'harp'. It was just south of Capernaum, meaning 'village of comfort'.

2. They having come out from the ship, at once (many) having known Him, ... (*Verse 54*)

**Immediately know Jesus:** As soon as Jesus and His disciples got out of the boat, many people in the village immediately knew Him.

3. ... they ran around that whole region; and, they began (for) those having sickness, on beds to carry, (to) where they were hearing that He is being. (*Verse 55*)

**Carry many sick:** Those who had seen Jesus arrive and recognized Him, went throughout the whole region telling others the news. The result was many people were carrying people whom they knew had sickness to where Jesus is!

4. And wherever He entered into villages or into cities or into countries, in the marketplaces they were laying those being sick and they were beseeching Him ... (*Verses 56a-b*)

**From everywhere – beseeching:** People were bringing sick people they knew and laying them before Jesus in the biggest public gathering places and strongly imploring Jesus to heal them.

5. ... so that the edge of His garment, they may take hold; and, as many as took hold of Him, they were being made whole. (*Verses 56c-d*)

**Take hold of His garment:** Sick people were taking hold of the edge of His garment in faith that He would heal them. They had the same faith as the woman who was bleeding for twelve years had when she sought to touch Jesus (Mark 5:25-34).

**Make whole – saved:** 'Made whole' also means 'salvation'. Peter and John fulfilled Jesus' Upper Room prophecy that they would be doing greater things than Him (John 14:12-14).

**Application:** Let us take more joy in being made whole in spirit and soul than in only getting what we may selfishly desire. Salvation works inside-out! When we know we are made right with God spiritually by the miracle of new birth IN Jesus, we will experience God's overwhelming love, joy and peace. There is no more overwhelming miracle than a living spirit and a healed soul.

**Jesus' power to heal overwhelms people**

**Conclusion:** Entering the Temple for afternoon prayer, Peter and John meet a man crippled from birth who was begging alms. Peter says he has no coins, but commands him to rise and walk in Jesus' Name. At once his feet are strengthened and he leaps in the Temple courts praising God, to the astonishment of those knowing him. This is a 'greater thing' than when as many sick people who were brought to Jesus and touched Him were made whole.

**Jesus' power to heal overwhelms people**