

# BELOVED BEGGARS AT THE GATE BEAUTIFUL!

(Acts 3:1-10)

## I. WELCOME / TEXT / PRAYER

A. Welcome

B. Today's Text:

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. <sup>2</sup> And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, was being carried along, *for* day by day his friends would lay him down at the temple gate (the gate called "Beautiful") so he could beg alms from the people going into the temple. <sup>3</sup> Now when he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he began to ask *them* for a gift. <sup>4</sup> But Peter (along with John) fixed his eyes on him and said, "Look at us!" <sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his *full* attention, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup> But Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have, I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and <sup>3</sup> walk." <sup>7</sup> Then, taking him by the right hand, Peter lifted *him* up; and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> So with a leap he stood up and *began* to walk; and he entered the temple with Peter and John, walking and leaping and praising God! <sup>9</sup> Now all the people noticed him walking and praising God; <sup>10</sup> moreover, they recognized that this was the man who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple begging for alms. So they were filled with amazement and wonder over what had happened to him.

C. Opening Prayer

## II. INTRODUCTION

A. Matthew 7:13-14: The Spirit Bade Me STOP!

<sup>13</sup> "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who are entering through it. <sup>14</sup> How narrow *is* the gate and difficult the way that leads to life; and *how* few are those who find it!

<sup>22</sup> Now Jesus was going through city after city, and village after village, teaching and making *his* way towards Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup> Then a certain man asked him, "Lord, are *only* a few going to be saved?" So he said to them *all*, <sup>24</sup> "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will try to enter, but not be able to do so." – Luke 13

B. What I saw: The Meaning for Seekers (of Salvation)

- Seeking (groping for) truth and personal spiritual experience
- Seeing: Person and Work of Christ
- Entering: Repentance, Faith, First Love in the Spirit

C. What I saw: The Meaning for Saints

- As we began, so we must continue!
- The Wide way is LAW
- The Narrow Way is Grace: An insatiable appetite for, and commitment to, hearing his Voice and Walking in his Power and Presence

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly portrayed as crucified? <sup>2</sup>This one thing I would learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the *doing the* works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? <sup>3</sup>Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now perfecting yourselves by the flesh? <sup>4</sup>Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain? – Gal. 3

<sup>6</sup>Therefore, just as you have received Christ Jesus as <sup>1</sup>Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith just as you were taught *it, always* overflowing with thanksgiving. – Col. 2

“But I have this against you: You have left your first love!” – Rev. 2

D: What I saw: A Great Picture of this!

- Acts 3:1-10: the story of the lame beggar healed at the Gate Beautiful!

### III. FIVE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED AT THE GATE BEAUTIFUL

#### A. Spiritually, we are lame from our mother’s womb

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. <sup>2</sup> And a certain man, lame from his mother’s womb, was being carried along . . .

- Note: The relation of the physical to the spiritual (HSL)

And Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things that you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>*The blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised to life and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* <sup>6</sup> And blessed is the man who takes no offense because of Me.” – Mt. 11

- Man created to walk with God
- Crippled by sin
- Texts: OT picture: Ezek. 37; NT teaching: Rom. 8:6-8, “For the mind . . .”), Eph. 2
- The cry of the crippled apostle:

<sup>15</sup>For what I am doing, I don’t understand. For what I want to do, that I do not put into practice; but what I hate, that *very thing* I do . . . I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) there dwells no good thing; for the desire for good is present within me, but the *actual* doing of it is not. <sup>19</sup>For the good that I want to do, I don’t; but the evil I don’t want to do, that I practice . . . <sup>24</sup>O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?

#### B. God our Father and Friend lays us daily as beggars before the Gate Beautiful to ask for good spiritual gifts

. . . *for* day by day his friends would lay him down at the temple gate (the gate called “Beautiful”) so that he could beg alms from the people going into the temple.

- The beloved beggar is a picture of the true spiritual Church
- The Gate Beautiful is a picture of Christ, before whom we wait, and through whom all good gifts come!
- In the present stage of the Kingdom, we are primarily to seek spiritual, rather than physical, gifts

I ask that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; <sup>18</sup> that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened, so that you may know the hope of his calling, the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe . . . Eph. 1

- He does this Day by Day: In his wisdom, God has ordained that in our Christian experience we continually oscillate between weakness and strength, between our own natural poverty and the unspeakable riches of his grace!
- This is the teaching of Christ: <sup>3</sup>“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. <sup>6</sup>Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”
- This was the experience of the apostle Paul:

<sup>2</sup> Now when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with loftiness of speech or wisdom, proclaiming to you the mystery<sup>1</sup> of God, <sup>2</sup> for I *had* resolved to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> What’s more, I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; <sup>4</sup> and my message and my preaching *did not come* with persuasive words of *human* wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith would not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. – 1 Cor. 2

For this very reason, lest I should become haughty, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet me, that I might not become haughty. <sup>8</sup> Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for *my* power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, rather *than complain*, I will gladly boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> For this reason, I *actually* take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, *and* difficulties *suffered* for the cause of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. – 2 Cor. 12

### **C. In our pursuit of spiritual gifts, God desires us to fix our attention on Christ, and to look with strong expectation towards Him**

<sup>3</sup> Now when he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he began to ask *them* for a gift. <sup>4</sup> But Peter (and John as well) fixed his eyes on him and said, “Look at us!” <sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his *full* attention, expecting to receive something from them.

- In Peter and John we see the Person of Christ
- In Peter’s words we hear Christ’s command to the Church: Look at Me!

Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden look to the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until he has mercy upon us. – Ps. 123

<sup>18</sup> But we all, with unveiled face, beholding<sup>6</sup> as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; *and* this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. – 2 Cor. 3

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith! – Heb. 12

- In the lame beggar’s response we see our proper spiritual posture towards Christ: We give him our full, undivided attention, *expecting to receive!*

### **D. As a rule, God’s spiritual gifts come to us through his Word, illuminated by His Spirit; and when they do come, such words lift us up, fill us with strength, and send us into the temple precincts walking, leaping, and praising God**

<sup>6</sup> But Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have, I give *it* to you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and<sup>3</sup> walk.” <sup>7</sup> Then, taking him by the right hand, Peter lifted *him* up; and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> So with a leap he stood up and *began* to walk; and he entered the temple with Peter and John, walking and leaping and praising God! <sup>9</sup>

- Here, Peter is a picture of the Christ who speaks to our hearts through His Word by His Spirit
- When that Word comes, it lifts us up (into heavenly places)
- Fills us with strength for the day (or the need)
- Sends us into the midst of God’s people, eager to share what he we have seen and heard
- Fills us with joy and the spirit of worship (worship = glad expressions of gratitude)
- Psalm 29 pictures this beautifully:

The voice of the LORD *is* over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the LORD *is* over many waters. <sup>4</sup> The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty. <sup>5</sup> The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon. <sup>6</sup> He makes them also skip like a calf, and Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox. <sup>7</sup> The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire. <sup>8</sup> The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; The LORD shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. <sup>9</sup> The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everyone says, “Glory!” – Psalm 29

- Ezekiel 37: Dead men, hearing the prophetic word and experiencing the move of the Spirit stand on their feet, a mighty army before God!
- The two disciples on the road to Emmaus:

<sup>32</sup> Then they said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning<sup>5</sup> as he spoke with us on the road, and *as he was opening the Scriptures to us?*”

**E. When all of this happens, people will be amazed and start asking questions!**

Now all the people noticed him walking and praising God; <sup>10</sup> moreover, they recognized him as the man who would sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple begging for alms. So they were filled with amazement and wonder over what had happened to him.

#### IV. APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

A. This is the Lub-Dub of the Christian life

- Sitting before the Gate Beautiful, asking, waiting, expecting
- Hearing the Spirit speak the Word, rising, walking (serving), leaping, praising God

B. Q: How and where do we learn how to live like this?

A: In your daily Quiet Time with the Lord (HSL)

D. Quick Tips for a DQT:

- Choose a set time and place for your daily date with the Lord
- As you begin, confess afresh, in prayer, that you are a beloved beggar, whom God the Father, by his grace, places you day by day before the Gate Beautiful, who is Christ

- Tell the Lord you are fixing your eyes on him, waiting expectantly to receive a good spiritual gift from His Word
- Read the Word, slowly, meditatively, interactively, waiting and watching for the Spirit to open it up to your mind and heart
- When He does, rejoice . . . and maybe write it down . . . and look for opportunities during the day to share what He showed you
- Spend some time in free prayer, sitting at the gate, letting the Lord show you how and what to pray
- Ask him to guide you through the day, maybe write a short to-do list, and launch . . . watching and waiting at the gate even as you go!

D. In the Garden (Dean's testimony)

E. Prayer and Song