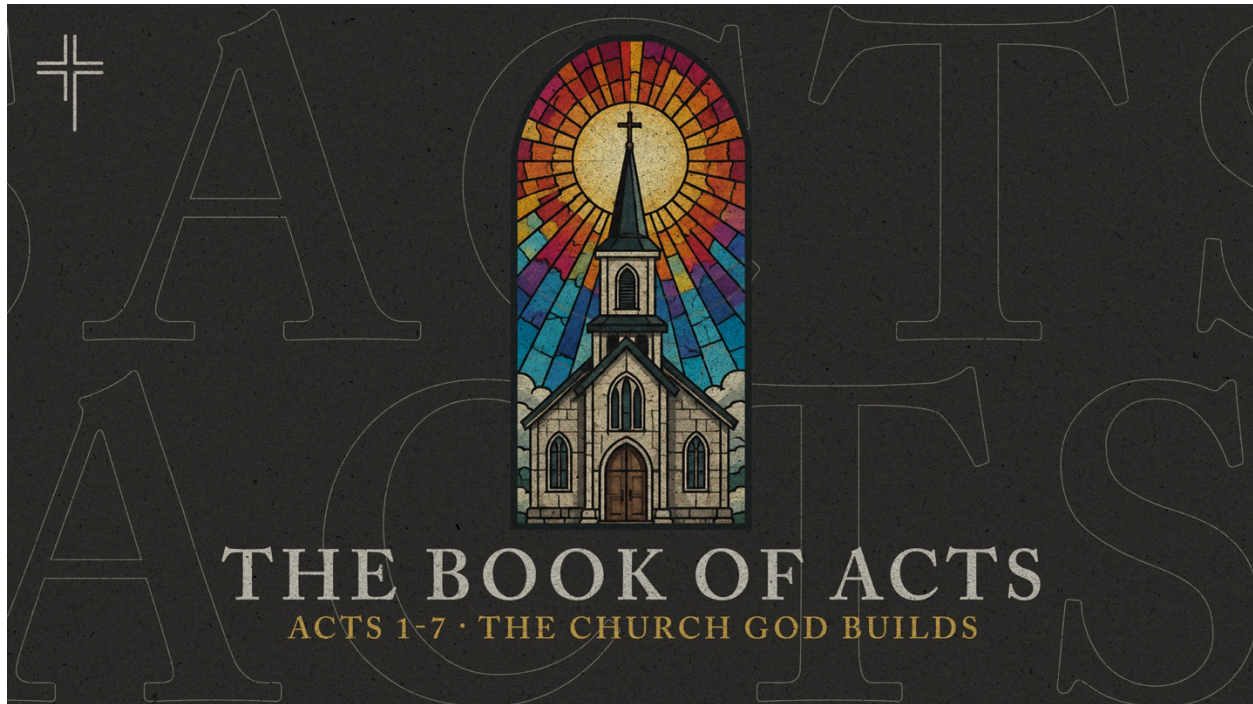




IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: THE CHURCH GOD BUILDS
SCRIPTURE: ACTS 3:1-10
DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The first two chapters of Acts provide an initial snapshot into beginnings of the church. We learn that the apostles had a mission—to bear witness about Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. And they were instructed on how to fulfill that mission—through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thus far, the initial launch of the church and efforts to bear witness has gone extremely well. After the first day, three thousand souls were saved and baptized. Acts 2:47 reports that daily people were being added to their number as they were saved.

This early Christian community was not just growing in number but also in depth. They had devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. They were practically functioning in love toward one another.

Noticeably, there seems to be no obstacles or conflicts yet.

Text

Acts 3:1-10

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.^[a] ² And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. ⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Explanation

In last week's lesson, we learned that signs and wonders were being done through the apostles. Readers of the book of Acts could reasonably ask, "What kinds of signs and wonders were being done?" Just how miraculous were the signs, how many were there, and for what purpose were they being done?

Close readers of the Gospel of John might even recall how Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father." At a few different points in Jesus' discipleship of the apostles, He also gave them authority to cast out demons and to heal the sick (Luke 9:1-6; 10:9, 17-20).

Our story today provides us with an example of how the power of God was working through the apostles.

The story picks up with Peter and John going up to the temple. The apostles made a regular practice of gathering at the temple. Soon after Jesus' ascension, the apostles were regularly in the temple praising God (Luke 24:53). Luke's first summary report of the early Christian community also included how, day by day, people were gathering in the temple together (Acts 2:46). Peter and

John planned to go during the ninth hour, which would have been around 3:00 p.m. They were going to the temple at the hour of prayer.

On their way, they encountered a man who had been lame since birth. Presumably, his inability to walk had also resulted in his poverty. Yet, fortunately, he evidently had some people who consistently took him to a temple gate where he could ask for alms. Acts tells us that they laid him daily at a specific gate called Beautiful. Since he was there every day, he likely became a familiar face to those who regularly came to the temple.

At first, the man saw Peter and John and asked them for alms. I suspect he viewed Peter and John no differently than anyone else who walked by. Yet Peter and John, we are told, “directed [their] gaze at him.” Being mindful of the poor and needy is, of course, something the Bible teaches and Jesus emphasized. Proverbs 28:27 noticeably says, “Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.” In Matthew 25:35–40, Jesus taught that His followers should feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome strangers, clothe the naked, and visit the sick. On many occasions, Jesus modeled this for them when He took notice of the blind, lame, or sick. Peter and John are not looking away, but providing a discerning focus.

In verse 2, we were told that the man had been lame since birth. Perhaps many Jews often wondered what the disciples had earlier wondered when Jesus encountered a blind man, as recorded in John 9. The disciples wondered if the reason for his blindness was the result of his own sin or his parents’ sin. Jesus, of course, answered that the reason for his blindness was not because of his or his parents’ sin, but so that the glory of God might be displayed (John 9:1–5).

It is significant that when Peter and John see this man, they do not turn his plight into a theological debate. Neither do they excuse themselves from responsibility to show compassion by assuming that he deserved to be lame because of some sin. Instead, they promptly act in a way that will display the glory of God.

After gazing at the man, Peter and John command him, “Look at us.” Peter and John will not simply drop some change in a bucket while avoiding the opportunity to connect with the man. They are not looking simply to get rid of him by offering a begrudging act of service. They want his attention because Peter plans to offer him something different from money.

The man, we are told, was expecting money, but Peter explains: “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” That Peter and John did not have money is not

surprising. In fact, their statement seems consistent with what we find in Acts and with how the apostles are generally described. Acts 2:42–47 describes how many were selling possessions and giving the proceeds so they could be distributed to those in need. Perhaps Peter and John had participated in such generosity. Paul describes the apostles in 1 Corinthians 4:10 as those who generally “hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless.” Jesus also, at two different points, instructed the disciples to go out in pairs to proclaim the kingdom of God without “staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money...” (Luke 9:3; see also Luke 10:4). It probably should not surprise us that Peter and John did not have money.

Yet Peter was not empty-handed. Peter understood that he still had something to offer. So he, like Jesus had previously done on many occasions, called the man to rise up and walk.

And significantly, he did so “in the name of Jesus.” Clearly, it was not Peter’s ability to heal, but something that God did through him. Peter will make this abundantly clear in Acts 4:9–10: “...by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.”

And Peter did what he had often seen Jesus do as well: he took the man by the hand and raised him up.

Acts tells us that the man was healed immediately. His feet and ankles became strong. His healing was demonstrated by the fact that he was walking and leaping. It must have been an amazing feeling to do those things for the first time.

The man then followed Peter and John into the temple. Peter and John seem to welcome him to join them. The man entering the temple is significant. He enters in a way that Psalm 100:4 describes: “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” It is remarkable to think that some of his first steps were into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. He is not showing off; he is joyfully celebrating what God has done for him.

It did not take long for people to notice him. After all, many had the opportunity to see him daily at the gate as they came to the temple. There was no doubt that the man had been healed, and there was no doubt about who he was. God’s mercy toward the man was undeniable. They were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Discussion Questions

- What words could you use to describe the experience of the lame man prior to his healing?
- What stands out to you about Peter and John in this story?
- How important is eye-contact when you are serving others? Or what about when being served?
- On a scale from 1-10, how good or willing are you to notice the needs of others?
- Are you more likely to ask others if you can help or wait to be asked?
- What are some of the similarities and differences between the miracles that Jesus did and the one that God did through Peter and John?
- What principles can be identified from this story about helping those in need whether it be a disability or a financial need?
- Peter and John were on their way to the temple, yet were “interrupted” by the lame man. Do you tend to view the interruptions as potential opportunities or annoyances?

Conclusions or Applications

MEETING NEEDS AND SHARING THE GOSPEL

One of the main characteristics of the apostles and the early Christians is the priority they gave to meeting needs. We have already seen examples of financial needs regularly being met (Acts 3:42-47). Here we have an example of a physical need being miraculously met.

Christians certainly are about helping others and serving those who are underserved. Christians are known for starting hospitals, disability ministries, orphan care, disaster relief, prison ministries, elder care, and many other ministries. Chances are, if you identify a need, there will be a sound Christian organization seeking to meet that need. In fact, some Christian ministries are among the largest organizations in the world seeking to serve people with particular needs.

Yet Christians are not just about meeting needs without addressing people's greatest need—their need for salvation. And this is what Peter and John will do as they see a crowd gathering around the man who was once lame and is now

leaping in the temple (Acts 3:11-26). Our text for next week will address Peter's message of salvation to those who have gathered.

At the same time, Christians are not about bait-and-switch. We are not people who meet a felt need simply so that we can share the gospel, get a response, and then move on. We do not want to be a people who are primarily concerned with getting a response, tallying a number, and then boasting about our efforts. Instead, Christians are about meeting genuine needs, sharing the gospel, and welcoming people into a church community where they can belong.

One extreme has sometimes been described as a "social gospel" —meeting people's physical and practical needs while failing to address their greater need for salvation. The other extreme could be described as "transactional evangelism" —treating acts of service primarily as a means to get someone to hear the gospel, make a decision, and then depart ways.

The early Christians in Acts seem to embody something better. They cared for genuine needs, proclaimed the gospel, and welcomed people into a community where they could know and be known. Their ministry was both compassionate and evangelistic, both practical and spiritual, both individual and relational.

Churches today should strive for the same. We should care for people's needs, proclaim the gospel, and invite people into the community of Christ.