

ST ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

**COME, JOIN THE CONVERSATION!**  
ON  
**THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

**Lesson Plan for Thursday – January 31, 2013**

**Resource Book – Kerygma Series - *“into the world”***

**Chapter 4 – *“The Power of the Gospel”***

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**Our Objectives this week:**

1. To extend our conversation about the Book of Acts while continuing growth in fellowship with other participants.
2. To relate the healing described in Acts 3 to an understanding of the church’s ministry of healing today.
3. To summarize the main elements of Peter’s appeal to fellow Jews to accept Jesus as God’s Messiah.
4. To describe the reaction of religious authorities to Peter and John’s ministry and the response of the early church to the council’s attempt to silence them.
5. To ‘brainstorm’ about situations where the contemporary church needs to engage boldly in ministry in Jesus’ name.

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving for Divine Deliverance:** *(Psalm 118:1-9, 14, 22-23 NRSV)*

P: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; ***ALL: HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER!***

P: Let Israel say, ***ALL: “HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.”***

P: Let the house of Aaron say, ***ALL: “HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.”***

P: Let those who fear the Lord say, ***ALL: “HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.”***

P: Out of my distress I called on the Lord;

***ALL: THE LORD ANSWERED ME AND SET ME FREE IN A BROAD PLACE.***

P: With the Lord on my side I do not fear, ***ALL: WHAT CAN MORTALS DO TO ME?***

P: The Lord is on my side to help me; ***ALL: I SHALL LOOK IN TRIUMPH ON THOSE WHO HATE ME.***

P: It is better to take refuge in the Lord ***ALL: THAN TO PUT CONFIDENCE IN MORTALS,***

P: It is better to take refuge in the Lord, ***ALL: THAN TO PUT CONFIDENCE IN PRINCES.***

***ALL: THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY MIGHT; HE HAS BECOME MY SALVATION.***

***THE STONE THAT THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.***

***THIS IS THE LORD’S DOING: IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES.***

## **THE HEALING OF A CRIPPLED MAN**

**Acts 3:1-11** (CEB) *3 Peter and John were going up to the temple at three o'clock in the afternoon, the established prayer time. <sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, a man crippled since birth was being carried in. Every day, people would place him at the temple gate known as the Beautiful Gate so he could ask for money from those entering the temple. <sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he began to ask them for a gift. <sup>4</sup> Peter and John stared at him. Peter said, "Look at us!" <sup>5</sup> So the man gazed at them, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup> Peter said, "I don't have any money, but I will give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk!" <sup>7</sup> Then he grasped the man's right hand and raised him up. At once his feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> Jumping up, he began to walk around. He entered the temple with them, walking, leaping, and praising God. <sup>9</sup> All the people saw him walking and praising God. <sup>10</sup> They recognized him as the same one who used to sit at the temple's Beautiful Gate asking for money. They were filled with amazement and surprise at what had happened to him. <sup>11</sup> While the healed man clung to Peter and John, all the people rushed toward them at Solomon's Porch, completely amazed.*

- A) Silently read, and then review a second time, the above healing account.
- B) "Straw" poll on our understanding of healing in contemporary situations.
- C) Assignment: re-write the story from the perspective of either i), ii) or iii) in the space below: *(Note: add details that you consider important, even though not mentioned in the text; remember that the story takes place while "P" and "J" were observing religious customs associated with Judaism and don't overlook the details Luke provides about the effect of the healing on the lame man's feet and ankles!)*
  - i) Peter and John
  - ii) The lame man
  - iii) People gathered at the Temple
- D) My personal version of this story –

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- E) Sharing results of “straw” poll – discussion, reactions:
- F) Comment by study author, Dr. C. J. Miller, on healing: (Resource Bk. Pg. 32)

*“The reason for the healings is twofold: they are done out of compassionate love, and they are signs of the presence of God. Neither Jesus nor the apostles set up healing clinics and simply healed the sick nonstop for the rest of their lives. The Power to heal is first and foremost an announcement of God’s active presence, first in Jesus and then in the community of faith. It is a foretaste of the reign of God, a sign that the new age has broken through in Jesus.”*

- G) ELCA “Provisional” **SERVICE OF HEALING** 12/2008 (will be previewed in class)

Resource found @ [www.elca.org/~media/Files/Worship/Provisional/elw\\_osa1.pdf](http://www.elca.org/~media/Files/Worship/Provisional/elw_osa1.pdf)

### **PETER’S POST-HEALING SERMON:**

ACTS 3:12-26 (CEB) <sup>12</sup> *Seeing this, Peter addressed the people: “You Israelites, why are you amazed at this? Why are you staring at us as if we made him walk by our own power or piety? <sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of our ancestors—has glorified his servant Jesus. This is the one you handed over and denied in Pilate’s presence, even though he had already decided to release him. <sup>14</sup> You rejected the holy and righteous one, and asked that a murderer be released to you instead. <sup>15</sup> You killed the author of life, the very one whom God raised from the dead. We are witnesses of this. <sup>16</sup> His name itself has made this man strong. That is, because of faith in Jesus’ name, God has strengthened this man whom you see and know. The faith that comes through Jesus gave him complete health right before your eyes.*

<sup>17</sup> *“Brothers and sisters, I know you acted in ignorance. So did your rulers. <sup>18</sup> But this is how God fulfilled what he foretold through all the prophets: that his Christ would suffer. <sup>19</sup> Change your hearts and lives! Turn back to God so that your sins may be wiped away. <sup>20</sup> Then the Lord will provide a season of relief from the distress of this age and he will send Jesus, whom he handpicked to be your Christ. <sup>21</sup> Jesus must remain in heaven until the restoration of all things, about which God spoke long ago through his holy prophets. <sup>22</sup> Moses said, The Lord your God will raise up from your own people a prophet like me. Listen to whatever he tells you. <sup>23</sup> Whoever doesn’t listen to that prophet will be totally cut off from the people. <sup>24</sup> All the prophets who spoke—from Samuel forward—announced these days. <sup>25</sup> You are the heirs of the prophets and the covenant that God made with your ancestors when he told Abraham, Through your descendants, all the families on earth will be blessed. <sup>26</sup> After God raised his servant, he sent him to you first—to bless you by enabling each of you to turn from your evil ways.”*

- A) What clues evident in the above show that this address is intended *for Jews from a Jew?*

**B) Review - Acts 3:12-16:**

- a) What does the passage indicate that God has done?
- b) What have been the actions of the people?

**C) Review – Acts 3:17-26**

- a) According to Peter, what promises has God made to the people?
- b) According to Peter, what response are the people expected to make?

**D) Special Attention to Acts 3:19-20, 23**

- a) What will be the result if the people reject God's Messiah?
- b) How would those in the Temple feel upon hearing such a message?
- c) Note this response in Acts 4:4 - *“Many who heard the word became believers, and their number grew to about five thousand.”*

**E) Repentance – How would you define it?**

[for some help, see following sermon excerpt from Pr. Delmer Chilton (ELCA)]

The word “repent” in Greek is “metanoia.” The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament has this to say about the term: *“This is a once-for-all conversion, an inner change that is required even of the righteous and must find expression in acts of love. A baptism of conversion signifies that God is at work to change our nature for the new aeon. God himself grants conversion as both gift and task ...”* (p. 642).

So, language about *“the ax lying at the root of the tree”* and unproductive trees being *“thrown into the fire,”* is good news. It is the gospel of the Lord. It is a message to be joyful about. It is good news because it proclaims that God's kingdom is coming in Christ to stop the cycle of incomplete repentance and temporary solutions. Christ is coming to cut through our feeble attempts to change our own behavior to meet some external and arbitrary standard of correctness. Christ is coming to treat the disease and not the symptoms. Christ is coming to break our hearts and change our lives forever. Christ is coming to show us God's way of dealing with ourselves and each other.

All too often our way is the way of fear and intimidation, of attempting to adjust our lives to meet external demands because of our fear of judgment and reprisal. God's way is the way of love and intimacy, of having our hearts broken by the depth and totality of God's love for us. God's way is the way of having our hearts broken so deeply and completely that God can move in and change us from within, from the very core of our being. God's way is the way of emptying us of our selfishness and pride and then filling us up with the gifts of the spirit and the fire of God's love.

When that brokenness and refilling have happened to us, our behavior changes without our having to think about it. We begin to “bear fruit worthy of repentance” as naturally and thoughtlessly as we breath. Just as our sins and misdeeds grew out of the disease of self-will rooted deep within our hearts, as new creatures in Christ acts of love and kindness will flow from us as naturally as water flows from a spring or apples sprout on apple trees. Christians whose hearts have been broken and filled with God's love and spirit do not have to think about doing good, do not have to decide to bear fruit worthy of repentance. It just happens. It is nothing to worry about or brag about. It is just what flows out of a heart and life filled with God.

## THE ARREST OF PETER AND JOHN and subsequent events:

Acts 4: While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees confronted them. <sup>2</sup> They were incensed that the apostles were teaching the people and announcing that the resurrection of the dead was happening because of Jesus. <sup>3</sup> They seized Peter and John and put them in prison until the next day. (It was already evening.) <sup>4</sup> Many who heard the word became believers, and their number grew to about five thousand.

<sup>5</sup> The next day the leaders, elders, and legal experts gathered in Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup> along with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others from the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup> They had Peter and John brought before them and asked, "By what power or in what name did you do this?"

<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, answered, "Leaders of the people and elders, <sup>9</sup> are we being examined today because something good was done for a sick person, a good deed that healed him? <sup>10</sup> If so, then you and all the people of Israel need to know that this man stands healthy before you because of the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus is the stone you builders rejected; he has become the cornerstone! <sup>12</sup> Salvation can be found in no one else. Throughout the whole world, no other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved."

<sup>13</sup> The council was caught by surprise by the confidence with which Peter and John spoke. After all, they understood that these apostles were uneducated and inexperienced. They also recognized that they had been followers of Jesus. <sup>14</sup> However, since the healed man was standing with Peter and John before their own eyes, they had no rebuttal. <sup>15</sup> After ordering them to wait outside, the council members began to confer with each other. <sup>16</sup> "What should we do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem is aware of the sign performed through them. It's obvious to everyone and we can't deny it. <sup>17</sup> To keep it from spreading further among the people, we need to warn them not to speak to anyone in this name." <sup>18</sup> When they called Peter and John back, they demanded that they stop all speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus.

<sup>19</sup> Peter and John responded, "It's up to you to determine whether it's right before God to obey you rather than God. <sup>20</sup> As for us, we can't stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." <sup>21</sup> They threatened them further, then released them. Because of public support for Peter and John, they couldn't find a way to punish them. Everyone was praising God for what had happened, <sup>22</sup> because the man who had experienced this sign of healing was over 40 years old.

<sup>23</sup> After their release, Peter and John returned to the brothers and sisters and reported everything the chief priests and elders had said. <sup>24</sup> They listened, then lifted their voices in unison to God, "Master, you are the one who created the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. <sup>25</sup> You are the one who spoke by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant:

*Why did the Gentiles rage,  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
<sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth took their stand  
and the rulers gathered together as one  
against the Lord and against his Christ.*

*<sup>27</sup> Indeed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with Gentiles and Israelites, did gather in this city against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. <sup>28</sup> They did what your power and plan had already determined would happen. <sup>29</sup> Now, Lord, take note of their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with complete confidence. <sup>30</sup> Stretch out your hand to bring healing and enable signs and wonders to be performed through the name of Jesus, your holy servant.” <sup>31</sup> After they prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking God’s word with confidence.*

- A) Compare Peter’s speech in 4:8-12 with his earlier presentation in 3:12-16
- B) Note: the deliberations of the authorities in 4:13-17
- C) Read the Court Order 4:18
- D) Note: Peter and John’s response 4:19-20
  - a) How might your response be today in a similar circumstance?
- E) Note: Petition about being given ‘complete confidence’ 4:29-30
  - a) Any suggestions about areas where the church needs to have greater boldness in its contemporary witness?

### **CLOSING PASTORAL PRAYER**

**Next Week**: “SIR” Program Lecture featuring Dr. Paul J. Maier, 2-7-2013 @ 9:30 AM

**Next ‘Conversations’** – Thursday, February 14, 2013 – 10:30 AM Ogram Hall

1. Read Resource Book – Chapter 5 – “Challenges from Within and Without”
2. In Scripture read: ACTS 4:32 – 6:7