

Norm Schwab
Yacolt EV Free
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Alms and Legs Acts 3

I remember the day well for it began a day just like any other day. It was early in the summer. The sun was bright, the sky blue and the air tasted sweet on that Jerusalem morning. But for me it was another day much like the others in the forty years I had lived in Jerusalem. A cold piece of bread and a cup of water was breakfast as I waited for my friends to come pick me up on their way to sell their wares in the market stalls. Literally they had to pick me up for my legs were useless. My legs didn't not go lame from a work related accident. My mother had a difficult time at birth and she nearly died...she recovered but alas my legs did not. They have been useless ever since. For the first 40 years I was unable to take a single step or even hold up the weight of my body. As a young child I watched with great longing as the other boys ran and jumped and played tag and raced each other throughout the cobble stone streets. I longed to walk. I longed to run. I longed to jump.

But all the healers had told my parents the same thing. No possible chance of recovery. My condition was untreatable and impossible to heal. In my teen years I saw the other boys begin their apprenticeship with the artisans of the town. Metal workers and carpenters and bricklayers and priests...Yet no one wanted to apprentice a boy who could not even stand up. My family was poor and so my future was set. The only option for a boy with no legs and no wealth was to beg for alms. Beg to others to be kind enough to toss me a coin or two so that I could eat and survive. I was one of the fortunate beggars for I had a couple of friends who every day, without fail, carried me and my pallet to one of the best begging locations in all the city...and they would get me

there early enough to get a good spot right on top of the 12 stairs that led through the Eastern gate into the temple. The gate called Beautiful.

And a beautiful gate it was. Over 75 ft. tall and wrapped in Corinthian brass with ornate carvings, the gate shone and glistened in the sun. People came from all around just to gaze at the gate called beautiful sometimes they would be kind enough to toss a coin in my ragged hat. In the evenings after the late afternoon prayers, the gates would be shut and it would take the strength of 20 men just to close the doors. That would end my day as well. Waiting to be carried back home by my friends.

Day after day always the same there I sat at the temple gates. That was my spot. Everyone in Jerusalem knew it. For decades I sat there morning and afternoon, my skin weathered by the sun and wind and rain. Year after year, 365 days a year I sat there calling out. Alms, Alms for the poor. Alms. Alms for the poor. Sure there were good days when I could quit early a wealthy woman had given me a large coin out of pity. There were days when a friend would stop by to chat. And there were also bad days when I would beg all day and yet not a single coin would be placed in my hat. There were days the cruel gangs of boys would come and push me over and laugh as they took my hat and taunted me with it until they got tired of their viscous games. But mostly, people left me alone and ignored me. Day after day the ended crowds of people passed me by. Legs. Every day thousands of legs, strong, healthy walking legs climbed the stairs and walked by me as a constant reminder of what I was missing. Legs that walked into the temple. I had sat there at the entrance of the temple for so many years, sat so close to but was never allowed to enter into.

Maybe some of you are like me. So close but never going in. Something is holding you back. Maybe not a crippling congenital problem like mind. But its something that has plagued you for years and its gone on so long that is seems too debilitating for even God to overcome.

Everyday goes and comes and no change happens...year after year you see the others that don't seem to struggle like you do and there seems no chance for healing, no opportunity for change.

That was me. There I was 40 years old begging in front of the Beautiful gate on a day that seemed just like any other day. Friends had carried my pallet out early that morning. I received a normal alms donation amount during the morning rush. No real interesting conversations during the lunch lull. The crowds began to pick up as they headed again into the temple for the 3 o'clock afternoon prayers. And that is when it happened. My life became far more than just about alms and legs.

Two men...I didn't really notice at first. In fact, most people go out of the way to avoid eye contact. They don't want to feel the guilt of passing me by. They don't want to have to deal with an imperfect person and an imperfect world, asking something from them that they are desperately clinging to. They are busy, focused on heading into church. 99 out of a 100 don't even reply "no thanks" to my request for help...but that afternoon, these two men stepped out of the rushing crowd of legs and stopped, One of the men called me to their attention, "look at us", he said. So I turned to face them. They both had eyes of piercing intensity. I wasn't afraid of their gaze but it was unnerving and unusual. They seemed so purposeful and driven yet it wasn't looks of hate or ridicule or derision. So as they came closer to me I held out my hat expecting to receive a coin or two. I thought possibly, they wanted some information in exchange else why bother to make such a prolonged stop. I was privy to much information sitting day after day in a place such like the gate you learn far more than you ever wanted to know. It's amazing what you can learn when you keep your mouth shut and your ears open.

The men knew I was begging for coin, but their first words shut down that hope in me. The one named Peter said, "I don't have any Silver

and gold for you, but what I do have, I give to you...in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene...walk”

If they had offered me a coin it would have bought me bread for maybe a day or two, but what they had to offer me was priceless from two men filled with the Spirit and had the power and authority of the resurrected Jesus inside. That's why Peter claimed the name of Jesus when he lifted me up by my right hand. To do something in the name of Jesus means to do it by virtue of Jesus' character, authority and power. To do something in his name is to act consistent with His will, to do what he would do if he were here to act in his authority and power.

I've noticed that you modern folks like to write checks to pay for things. You write the amount on the check and then sign your name. That check is only good to the extent of what you have deposited in the bank. That name represents your power to buy. The name of Jesus represents the resurrection power and authority of Jesus to heal and move and restore. You can only pass on to others that which you first possess yourself. You can only give away that what is truly yours. You cannot pass on to someone else the ability to catch a steelhead if you have not first received that ability first. You can't pass on the faith of your father or mother, or friend, if you have not first received in yourself. See the real power is not about us. The real power is just like Peter said that day. The real power is in the name of Jesus. And I was the first to recognize that very power that afternoon just outside the gate to the temple.

Peter took my hand and I stood up and started to walk. I didn't know what to say. Two men from out of the crowds of legs stop, gaze at me intently and then command me to get up and walk. Me...walk? And I 40 years of age never once taken a step. These men must not be from around here. Everybody in Jerusalem knew I could never walk....and yet here they say to walk.

I was asking for them for that which I didn't have and thought I needed most, but they didn't have it either. This man Peter, didn't have what I thought I needed most but instead offered to me something that would be a priceless gift of great value, that I could never do without. He gave me something that I never ever dreamed I could be healed from to walk!!! Peter reached down and grabbed me by the right hand and pulled me up. He was strong and I was surprised that as he pulled me up I could feel the healing of God pour into my weakened legs. I felt the joints and sockets pop together and the anklebones and ligaments and muscles instantly strengthen and heal. Immediately my feet and ankles were healed. Wow. Incredible. With a leap aided by Peters strong arm at first and then my own strong and healed legs I began to walk and leap and jump and dance and strut. The crowd pulled back in amazement. They could not speak. They could not believe what they were seeing. This man they had seen on the side of the gate for decades. Lame from birth. Always carried whenever he moved was walking. But not only walking. I was running up and down the stairs leaping and jumping and praising God. Can you believe it I am healed. I hugged the men. I hugged everyone close to me. I couldn't get enough. I wanted to play tag, and challenge everyone to a foot race. My legs were healed. They were strong. God had worked a miracle!. Wow...what a day. I threw my hat into the air and toss the coins into the nearest beggar hat. I was crippled but now I am well. May God Almighty be praised.

I ran into the temple and continued to shout and leap and praise God. I was attracting quite a crowd by now, dumbfounded with amazement and wonder. They all knew who I was but now I could out jump and out run them all..They all watched me asking each other "isn't this the guy that sat outside the gate?...but you know what I didn't care. This was the most incredible day of my life for now I could walk. I hugged Peter and John and thanked them profusely and hugged each of them about a hundred times. And we all ran. It was amazing we all ran

together...a race in the temple from the court of gentiles all the way down to the portico of Solomon. All praising God.

As you can imagine it raised quite a commotion in the temple. It was a good thing that we had ran down the portico of Solomon because is was an area big enough to handle the thousands of people that crowded in around Peter and John with questions of how. It was there on this porch with columns 27 feet high in an area almost a football field wide and 5 football fields long that Peter raised his voice and began to speak to the crowds.

Peter said, "Men of Israel. Why do you marvel at this? Why do you gaze at us? As if our own power or piety made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. The God of our Fathers has glorified His servant Jesus. Peter was telling the jaw-dropped crowd. Why do you marvel? And why look at us as if by our own power we made this man walk. All through our history did you ever find that any godly man ever did anything in his own strength? Don't you understand what is going on here? Can't you see? We didn't do this. As the apostle Paul later mentioned in his second letter to the Corinthians "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves." The real power is not about us, but comes from Jesus. There is power in the name of Jesus not as a magic word to repeat, but because of the incredible power and authority backing it up.

Peter continued right there in that huge portico to preach a very Christ centered sermon to 1000's of people who had gathered there. It was not your typical warm and fuzzy feel good sermon. After he chided the crowd for being amazed at this quite amazing miracle. After deflecting any sort of adulation away from themselves toward Jesus, he spoke painfully clear to them about their desperate need.

He spoke to this Jewish audience very plainly that Jesus was the one behind this miracle, this same Jesus they had delivered up and while Pilate had wanted to let Jesus go they demanded Jesus death and

yelled crucify him crucify him. The one who is righteous and holy they disowned and instead choose to release a known killer Barabus to roam their streets and neighborhood. They killed the author of life the prince of life and yet God instead raised this one from the dead. Peter said. You are all witnesses. You have seen it. And it was also the name of this same Jesus that healed me, the lame man.

There I stood as exhibit "A" in his evidence. God had moved in Jesus name right before their very eyes and I was the living proof in the presence of them all. No, this wasn't a feel good sermon. My healing attracted a lot of attention and they were attracted to the power, but Peter knew that the people, even me, needed to see their own terrible condition, terrible sin condition so that they would repent, turn away from the sin and begin to say yes to God and His son Jesus. Peter's words were harsh that afternoon in the temple, but only because he knew the patient must first be convinced he is sick before he will go to a doctor.

It's when we repent. When we say yes to God and turn to follow Him that God has promised to wipe away all our sin and then those times of refreshing can come in. Individual times of refreshing and corporate times of refreshing come when Jesus returns back again to reign on the earth. Are you in need of a time of repentance, a change in your life to bring those refreshing rains into your life? That day 5000 people repented and believed. God did a mighty work in my legs but an even mightier work in the lives of so many people.

Perhaps this morning you woke up expecting it to be a day just like any other day...and yet you came to the church and discovered that God wants to do far more for you than you ever dreamed possible. Maybe you realize that just like me God wants to exceed your wildest expectations. Just like me the beggar, you come to God and hold out our hand hoping for a coin or two and yet he wants to bless us far beyond our wildest expectations. We ask for some more money in our bank account. We ask

for a physical healing. For food on the table and a good night rest and yet God wants to exceed our expectations and wants to pour His Holy Spirit into us and impart healing spiritual and emotional healing. He wants to pour into us His joy and wonder and delight in Him. He wants to restore to us our broken relationship with Him who is Creator.

I thinking about this day from Peter John's perspective. For this same day started out for them like a normal day. They got up and did their normal morning routine. They had planned to go to the temple to pray together. But they hadn't planned to be drawn out of the crowds to heal a lame man. Peter hadn't stayed up all night preparing a sermon that he would preach to over 5000 men. Peter hadn't even planned to be arrested at the end of his sermon that day by the temple police. But the days events began because Peter and John were sensitive to the Spirits promptings. There were a lot of beggars lining the streets to the temple. There were other beggars there at the gate Beautiful. But Peter and John were listening and the Spirit prompted them to get out of the crowd and give to me not what I thought I wanted, but that what I needed most. They showed up and were available and if you and I do just that the Spirit will lead us to the people that need what we have to offer. If you are a believer the Holy spirit has poured resurrection power into you. Are you ready to be sensitive to the Spirit and get out of the busy crowd to help others when the spirit says, "OK there. That is the one I want you to stop and talk to. That is the one I want you to give a call to. That is the one I want you to eat your lunch with. That is the one I want you to take a meal over to. That one. Show up anticipating God to point you in the right direction and stand in amazement at what God can do.

Remember its God's timing and in his way not ours. The power comes from God not us. Jesus didn't choose to heal everybody. In fact, several times I remember him walking right by me when he was in Jerusalem going through the gate to go into the temple. I knew people he

had healed but never me. Until later. Remember it is God that moves in His timing and His way.

So what crippled areas of your life are in need of God's healing power? I begged for Alms and got legs. In fact, I got a whole lot more than legs. In some ways I am a picture of what salvation is all about. We are all born lame in sin totally unable to walk on our own or please God in any way because the first man Adam passed on that spiritual lameness to us all. Man is poor and we as sinners are bankrupt before God unable to pay back the tremendous debt that we owe Him. As a sinner just like sitting outside the temple unable to enter, No matter how close we may be, we are separated from God. No matter how far away you may feel you are it is not too far to miss out on the healing and grace of God. Your heart can be spiritually healed immediate and whole.

Some of you just like me are crippled in some area of our life, our inabilities, inadequacies. We want so desperately to love, but its so difficult. We want to care for others but we simply can't get free of ourselves. We long to live a significant life, but we are cornered by people and circumstances of life. The Holy Spirit wants to bring healing into your life and times of refreshing. God wants to wipe your sin slate clean and start anew. I just wanted you to know this morning that you too can experience the healing power of God. I don't care how bad you've been or where you've gone, no condition is too debilitating that God can't overcome it. Say yes to Jesus this morning and enjoy the freedom, the refreshment of new life in Him.

A day that began just like any other day, an early morning drizzle with promise of breaking sunshine. A shower. Get dressed. The short jog out to retrieve the morning newspaper. Oatmeal with a spoonful of brown sugar, a tall glass of orange juice, a couple pieces of toast and then its down to the office. Then the phone rings, its someone in need. A chance conversation of a neighbor walking by. God has moved in their life in a powerful way. A conversation down at the ball field later in the day. A Holy Spirit prompting to pray for a friend. A burst of wisdom in dealing with a counseling situation that leaves you wondering where that came from...and reflecting on your day you begin to realize there is no normal day for those who are filled with the Holy Spirit and expecting God to work.

Does it seem like sometimes your days seem so routine and normal and nothing particularly exciting or interesting ever happens? Has it been far too long since you have been in the thick of the Holy Spirit moving in an undeniable way around you? Have you been trying to get through life and push past the things that debilitate you and drag you

down all on your own? Do you fear that you've been hampered for so long by this thing that its become far too big for you to ever overcome it? Do you fear that nothing will ever change and you are stuck in the ruts of life unable to ever get yourself out? It has been just one normal, same old day after another.

Well, God wants to open our eyes this morning. I think he wants us to begin to tune in to listen to what He IS doing. He wants us to become aware that even though at times it may not seem like it. God is always at work everywhere and he wants us to be apart of it, right in the thick of the excitement or what he is doing in us and through us. God wants to exceed our wildest expectations as he enters our life and begins to move and act and work in us and through us. For with God there is no lost cause. There is no problem too big God cannot solve it there is no mountain to tall he cannot move it. There is no sorrow too deep He cannot soothe it. If He carried the weight of the world upon his shoulders I know that He can carry you as well. (PRAY)

It began a day just about like any other normal day for Peter and John and a lame beggar. The beggar woke up in the morning early. Probably ate a piece of bread and a drink. And like every day for the last 40 years, his friends or family members had picked up his pallet and carried him down to the eastern gate of the temple, the gate called beautiful. It was the largest and most beautiful gate stretching over 75 feet high it took the combined strength of 20 men to close her gates at night. It shone brightly in the morning sun covered in Corinthian brass. 12 steps led up to this gate that opened onto the court of women. It was on these steps the 40 year old man began to call out to the crowds that passed by him. He was a fixture here in this spot. He had been coming here for decades. All of Jerusalem knew him that he was unable to walk, his legs lame from a congenital birth defect. Every day he sat staring at the thousands of legs that passed him by constantly reminded of his own useless legs and debilitating handicap. For the beggar this day began like

any other day. By lunch time the crowds heading into the temple may have thinned out a bit but he could always count on a friend to share a piece of bread with him. As the sun started to lower in the sky the crowds picked up again for the evening prayer time at 3:00. It would just be a couple more hours before the temple gates would be closed and another day would be done. The crowds would all walk home to their families and his own friends would stop by on their way home from work to pick him up. and his friends would come by to he probably had a few people share y had their breakfast, did their normal stuff and at 3:00 Peter and

Acts 3:1ff

Chapter three now expands on the previous summary verses. 2:42-47 and gives examples of how many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

Peter and John were going up to the temple (see v.46)

At the ninth hour (3pm)

The hour of prayer. A lamb was slain at 2;30 and the pieces laid on the alter at 3;30 so Peter and John must have gone up for the evening sacrifice or for the prayer that accompanied the offering of incense

Beautiful gate (largest and most beautiful 75 ft tall) In addition to being covered in gold and silver it also was accented in Corinthian brass. Up 12 easy steps to the eastern temple entrance terrace it took 20 men to open and close the doors. It was on these steps the lame man sat. All Jerusalem knew him as he had been lame from birth. The people crowded around Solomon's porch to hear Peter's sermon and then was interrupted by temple police.

Alms: In the time before Christ almsgiving was regarded as pious to meet needs of poor and lost the motive of thanks to God being regarded as an act that helps atone for sin. They equated almsgiving with righteousness.

And a certain man (unnamed but specific known to many)

Who had been lame from his mother's womb (congenital defect unable to walk. Not a recent work injury. Long documented. Hopeless condition as he was over 40 see 4:22)

Was being carried along (was cared for by other people. Language infers continual present action)

Whom they used to set down every day (standard feature at this gate. See v.47 "day by day")

At the gate of the temple

Which is called beautiful

In order to beg alms

Of those entering the temple

(here he does it asking Peter and John for help)

And when he saw Peter and John

About to go into the temple

He began asking (he wanted help from them...he goes more than he asked for.)

To receive alms.

And Peter, along with John, (why was John mentioned twice at being included? Reliable witness? One who loved? V.1 v,4 twice John mentioned even as one who commanded to look at them.)

Fixed his gaze upon him atenisas. The fact that Peter noticed this man is evidence of the HS as there were probably many beggars lining the streets. Yet the HS pointed out this one for Peter to stop and heal. This is the same word the apostles used fixing their gaze on the ascended Lord I 1:10

And said "Look at us" (crowds of people passing by, head down from years of "no's and silence" not expecting much interaction. People tend to avoid eye contact, just drop in and move on. No one stops for a conversation or ask how he is doing. They are headed into church to busy themselves about worship. The lame man's day is always the same. Year after year.

There were hundreds of beggars in Jerusalem but this was the one chosen to by God's plan to be healed. Not all were healed. Healing is always based on God's sovereign will.

And he (lame man) began to give them his attention (tries to scoot over in there direction out of the main flow of the crowd.)

Expecting to receive something from them

But Peter said, I do not possess silver and gold, (I want to pass on something far more then you would expect, far more valuable. Peter did not have what the man expected but had what the man needed most)

But what I do have I give to you

“in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene”

Walk!

(in the name means by virtue of Christ's character, authority and power. To do something in his name is to act consistent with His will; to do what He would do if he were here to act in his authority and power. God's miracles are designed to attract attention and point people to the truth. Names of God MacArthur p. 104)

And seizing him

By the right hand (not the left)

He raised him up;

Immediately his feet (power, healing. Why the miracles at this time? 2:19, 22 God has approved of Jesus through signs and wonders done in his name)

And his ankles were strengthened

And with a LEAP, (he is off the ground)

He stood upright

And began to walk;

And he entered the temple with them

Walking

And Leaping (immediate strength and walking skill)

And praising God (he recognizes where the power came from...not from Peter and John)

And all the people saw him walking and praising God. (people observe and are reliable witnesses to this miracle)

They all noted him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful gate of the temple to beg alms

(And while he was clinging to Peter and John)

All the people ran together to them

(At the so-called portico of Solomon)

(This porch ran along the east side of the court of gentiles with rows of columns 27 feet high. It was almost a football field 90 feet wide and 5

football fields long 1500 feet long, so there was plenty of room for people in 135,000 square feet of area.

Full of amazement.

But when Peter saw this,

He replied to the people:

“men of Israel

Why do you marvel at this?

Why do you gaze at us?

As if our own power

Or Piety made him walk?

The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. The God of our Fathers

Has glorified His servant (The son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.)

Jesus

The one you delivered up (sledgehammer sermon)

**And disowned in the presence of Pilate when
he had decided to release him**

But you disowned the Holy

And Righteous One

Asked for a murderer to be granted to you

Put to death the Prince of peace of life

The one whom God raised from the dead

(Three contradictions:

1. Demanded death when roman Pilate wanted to let him go
2. Disowned the holy and righteous one and released a killer instead
3. Killed the author of life but God raised him up from the dead

(a fact to which we are witnesses)

And on the basis of faith in His name (whos faith? Not that of the beggar but of Peter and John. To tell people that they are not healed because they lack faith is misrepresenting the biblical nature of healing)

It is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man

(a persons name represented his characteristics)

(Whom you see and know)

And the faith which comes through Him

has given him this perfect health

(in the presence of you all.)

Peter says that their own eyes witnessing this healing, condemn themselves as murderers. This is not a self-help feel good story of healing. The healing attracts attention. They want the power. Peter knows they first must see their own terrible condition, need. He rains on their parade, so that God can reign in their parade. If ever a people were guilty it was those people in the temple. The healed beggar was proof that

Jesus was alive. This is probably not a message you would give today as it was designed for Peter's Jewish audience who knew the scriptures and had recently perpetrated a great injustice. A patient must be convinced he is sick before he will go to a doctor for help.

How have times of repentance brought the refreshing rains in your life?

What crippled areas of your life are in need of God's healing power?

Begged for alms and got legs. "Alms and legs"
Am I asking only for material things? Or expecting and receiving something even far more valuable?

Picture of salvation. Born lame in sin as all of us are born unable to walk so as to please God. Adam passed his lames on to all of his descendants. Man is poor and we as sinners are bankrupt before God unable to play the tremendous debt that we owe Him. He was outside the temple and all sinners are separated from God no matter how near the door they might be. The man was healed wholly by the grace of God and the healing was immediate.

Some of us are like the lame man. We are crippled in some area of our life inabilities, inadequacies. We want to love but it's difficult. We want to care for others but we simply can't get free from ourselves. We long to live a significant life, but we are cornered by people and circumstances that hold us back.

The Holy Spirit will carry us to people in need. With the power comes responsibility. Many who are delighted at the gift of the Holy Spirit are not ready for what it takes to reach out to others. They don't mind it helping themselves...

The healing was for a purpose, to bring and proclaim Jesus and authenticate the gospel. When God heals it doesn't bring glory to the preacher, it is directed to God.

You can only give away that which is truly yours. I will never be able to pass on the gift of painting like Michelangelo. But I do have the spirit of Jesus in me in the Holy Spirit. Christ lives in me just like he lives in Peter and John as well. We are both partakers of the divine nature.

p.46 Thomas Aquinas once called on the pope Innocent III while he was counting a very large sum of money. You see Thomas the pope declared, the church can no longer say silver and gold have I none. True said Thomas, and neither can she now say "Arise and walk." What about us? The church that is filled with the spirit will impart what it has.

It can impart Healing: A church filled with the spirit will impart healing to the soul in place of spiritual lameness. There can be leaping. It can impart joy. Praising God from Solomon's temple.

Erma Bombeck p56 Hughes. Story no joy in church. It imparts wonder. Temple regulars can't believe what they are seeing.

Its not about our power. Unlike some of the TV Preacher healers. The church had power because it had faith in Jesus name. It fully trusted him. So simple. So true.

Peters hand that reached down to lift up the lame man was not one of unbelief but a hand of love. The power was God's but the hand was Peters.

The beggar still clinged to them. Healed but not yet confident.

The Christ centeredness of this sermon is remarkable. First he directs them away from the miracle of the healed lame man and then directs them away from himself. All directed to Jesus. Christ. And then challenges them to repent. To change. 19b. your sins may be wiped clean. There can be times of refreshing come into your life v.19c God does not wipe away our sin without adding his refreshment for our spirits (Stott p. 93) He then has promised to send Christ to us. The promised holy spirit.

Why does Acts include this miracle here?

1. It affirms an example of the miracles that brought about wonder and awe
2. It sets up the occasion for Peters second sermon that Luke wanted us to hear
3. This miracle and sermon sets up the first persecution of the church.

Similarities and differences with first sermon. Both he was trying to accomplish the same thing. He was pointing his listeners to Jesus as the Savior of the world. He confronted them with their sin. He appealed to them to repent and gave them reason to do so.

Times of refreshing refers to the millennial kingdom as well as the individual blessing of forgiveness.

Like the begger we ask God for a few small coins. Food on the table. A roof over our head. We hold out our hand and yet God always exceeds our wildest expectations.

We also find out that no condition is too debilitating for God to overcome.

Who was the first to realize the miracle had happened? The beggar.

We are all accomplices of His murder. Just like you and me. It was because of our sin that he died and if it were not for us he would not have had to die.

Joni Earackson: How can a good God allow such things to happened? He permits one form of evil human suffering to expose a far deadlier evil our own sin. (Paul J sermon at end)

Arnold Palmer hit a 12 on a par 5 in the 1961 Los Angeles open. The golf course put up a sign noting that fact. What if there were signs up noting the sin of us? God comes along and wipes it clean. A blank slate.