

Acts Week 10

Preaching and teaching again

Verse 3:13-17; Now the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses, And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, faith which comes through Him has been given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Did all see and follow Jesus? Had all witnessed Jesus' miracles? Were all to be held accountable for our Lord's crucifixion? Peter goes on to address all that had taken place was done in ignorance, verse 3:17. Many of those who were standing-by may have been the very same people who were part of the crowd who cheered at Jesus' sentence before Pilate. What was the reason for Peter's comment in verse 14? "but you denied the Holy One, you let go a man who was a murderer and killed the Prince of Life," It was to convict the crowd of their trespass, here the people again marvel at the miracle of the lame man but most should have by now heard of the miracles Jesus had been doing throughout the land and His ministry. Pilate himself said,

Luke 23:13-15; Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, (*Of the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin:*) and the people, said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; "no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him.

In Mark 18:11; demonstrates the politics behind the leaders and rulers of the law. **"The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching."** Why do I see this as political? Because they saw the people who were amazed at Jesus' teaching and this was a threat to their power, both in that the people were turning toward Jesus and because the teachers and the Sadducees were in fair standing with the Roman powers. Jesus claiming to be the Son of God almighty, which in their understanding would make Him equal with God and the King of the Jews, posed a threat to the power they held.

Mathew 23:5-7; But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

According to William Barclay, the Talmud describes seven different types of Pharisees; six of the seven are bad.

- 1) The Shoulder Pharisee, who wore all his good deeds and righteousness on his shoulder for everyone to see.
- 2) The Wait-a-Little Pharisee, who always intended to do good deeds, but could always find a reason for doing them later, not now.
- 3) The Bruised or Bleeding Pharisee, who was so holy that he would turn his head away from any woman seen in public — and was therefore constantly bumping into things and tripping, thus injuring himself.
- 4) The Hump-Backed Pharisee, who was so humble that he walked bent over and barely lifted his feet — so everyone could see just how humble he was.
- 5) The Always-Counting Pharisee, who was always counting up his good deeds and believed that he put God in debt to him for all the good he had done.
- 6) The Fearful Pharisee, who did good because he was terrified that God would strike him with judgment if he did not.
- 7) The God-Fearing Pharisee, who really loved God and did good deeds to please the God he loved.

Now these very people were beginning to see and understand, but only because Peter has performed a miracle teaching it to be through the power of faith in this man Jesus. Peter is building a case for faith in our Lord. He began his first sermon on the day of Pentecost when the people were amazed at the tongues of fire and the translations of the peoples own language. Was it not enough that three thousand people came to Jesus that day? Now they see the healing of the lame man who they all knew, once again offers good reason for Peter to give all the credit to Jesus while convicting the people of their error. **Yes, faith which comes through Him has been given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.**

Note the manner in which Peter leads into the correction, **“Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?”** A question is a good way to lead into proselytizing because those who are asked now need to first think of what they are about to do, say, or believe. If we allow our pride to show its wicked head we far too often offend and close the door of one who may be seeking truth. When the leaders and the teachers of the law came to challenge Jesus, to find reason to convict Him of heresy. Jesus responded first with raising the failure of their understanding; this is cause for them to rethink what they asked while at the same time raising the truth of God’s power. If the Sadducees believed in the Old Testament how could they not believe in the resurrection? This a good way to lead into a conversation when trying to introduce others to the

Christian Faith. It is often good to ask what they or how they understand salvation. Sometimes it may be that you are led not to mention Jesus' name but focus on the attributes of His love by using similes. I often get a feel for a person's interest in addressing a blessed life. For instance I may lead into accidents I have had in the past of which have sent me to the hospital or long recovery times but God brought me through. Many are willing to discuss God but the name of Jesus can close doors. I believe this to be the manner in which Jesus' name has been misused as a pointing finger by those who are overzealous and often not well studied. We find this in our next verse here in Matthew.

Mathew 22:28; **“Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her. Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.**

Jesus knew what they were trying to do, they thought they had Him trapped and could then legally convict Him. There is a very important message in this that many miss. These are Sadducees asking the question but make the mistake using the word resurrection, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. But Jesus here took control of their plot and reversed it on them. **Mathew 22:33; The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,** When we approach others in hope of winning them over in a promising manner it is best not to close the door by first offending them. If we practice the ways of Jesus we can learn much. Asking a question that requires our seeker to pause and think instead of trapping us or in order to proudly demonstrate a false piety will change in a good way all we seek to accomplish.

Does it serve the body of the church to first demonstrate peoples sin and errors, whether their acts were done in ignorance or not. Is it not the very manner in which Jesus, meeting Saul/Paul on the road to Damascus convicted him of his sin for persecuting believers? It is difficult to envision our Father God excusing any who would not come to faith, there is an accountability for all who believe, this is the reason for the Scripture. The frenzy of which the crowd was stirred into was an intentional act of the rulers for political posturing, a fear of losing the power they thought they had. Pride is an awful keeper of the one who seeks to use it as a weapon against those they seek to convince and control.

If we ask the question again, does it serve the church to first show a person their sin as we seek to establish faith? I believe it does, but look at the manner in which Peter is doing so. He still makes it clear what these people have done, however not in an insulting manner to better demonstrate the power and grace of our almighty. When Peter addresses the lame man's healing he demonstrates the power and strength of the faith to all present that has now made the man full. In other words, can we address or mention the sin or errors of others without being offensive. Look here at Jesus' example, Paul had to be made aware of the sin he was committing in the presence of our Lord. Acts 9, Jesus ask, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” First, why did Saul need to ask, “Who are you Lord?” This comment shows that Saul, who was persecuting the church but who had been brought up in the ways of the prophets and the law, was incapable of recognizing Jesus. This is the very one who Israel has been waiting for, but this intervention was not what Paul was expecting.