

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 4 Aug 2024
Sermon Title : Just Like That
Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng
Text : Acts 3:1-10

INTRODUCTION

Being humans, we have limitations but through God's faithfulness, we can experience provision, protection and restoration. As shared in the testimony of a church member, we may have debts that we are unable to settle, but when human limitations meet divine intervention, just like that, there is divine provision, and the debt is paid in full by an ex-colleague who obeyed God's call to render help because she had been in a similar situation and was compelled to help. Another 2 testimonies shared show that when human limitations meet divine intervention, just like that, we can be protected from accidents even though we are unable to plan, predict or forecast everything that is going to happen in our lives; and we can be restored from pains and illnesses when doctors see no more possible cure for us, despite all the advances in medical science.

"God does not change; miracles are just as possible now as they were in the past."

- A.W. Tozer

Act 3:1-10 – A miracle that happened in the past

Acts 3:1 - Peter and John were in the inner circle of Jesus together with James because these 3 joined Jesus on the 'Mount of Transfiguration' and were asked to prepare the Passover meal. Here, Peter and John were going to the Temple together to pray at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

- People back then always go to the temple twice a day at 9 o'clock in the morning or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. These were the 2 times the priest would prepare sacrifices to be offered to God and so the people would also go there to pray as it was the time to worship God in sacrifices and prayer.
- It is not coincidental that Jesus was crucified at 9a.m. and breathed His last and give up His Spirit at 3p.m., at the times fixed for Temple sacrifices. Jesus is really God's sacrifice for us and He gave us His Son because of His love for us.

Acts 3:2 - A man lame or crippled from birth was at the Temple gate called 'The Beautiful Gate', asking for donations. This man had never experienced strength in any part of his leg or the joy of walking, always relying on others to prop him up. In those days, if you are handicapped in any way, you will not be taught any trade and the only

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way he could survive was to beg and rely on the good graces of others to donate to him. In order to do that, he had to be carried to be placed at the Temple gate daily.

- The Temple gate was one of the best places to beg for money because in those days, the Jews had 3 foundational things that they held close to their hearts: (i) the Torah which is the Law or the Word of God (ii) worship and prayer (iii) giving of alms or giving money to help others. Hence, people on their way to worship God at the Temple would likely give to those who beg there.
- Scholars are split between this 'Beautiful Gate' being the 'Shushan Gate' (facing Shushan in Persia) that is found under the sealed up Golden Gate at the Eastern Wall or the 'Nicanor Gate' which was a beautifully and lavishly decorated gate made of silver and gold. (Today, only the Golden Gate is left in Jerusalem as everything else had been destroyed in AD70)

Acts 3:3 – This man had been begging there for a long time. Peter and John had been going there to pray even though they were Christians and believed in Jesus Christ because they were still Jews, and they followed the Jewish rituals to pray to God, but through Jesus Christ. Yet, they had not encountered each other till this day. The lame man then called out to Peter and John for money.

Acts 3:4-5 – Peter then looked at the lame man and told him to look at them (Peter and John). The lame man must be surprised at the attention given to him by Peter - to be asked to look at them. He had gotten used to being ignored while calling out for donations but now there was this hope of expecting to receive something from Peter and John.

Acts 3:6 - Peter told him that he had no silver or gold (probably referring to the 'Beautiful Gate' that the man was at) but what he had he would give to him – Jesus! Peter proceeded to say, "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, stand up and walk!" Although "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene", is no special formula or magic chant and it is not a secret to get whatever we ask from God, Peter was saying that to declare that by himself he had no power but as though Jesus was physically present with them and in His name, His power and authority, and according to His will, the man was to stand up and walk.

Acts 3:7 - Peter then took hold of the man by the right hand and raised him up. This shows the kind of faith Peter had. This is the kind of level that we want to grow our faith to, where we can trust God fully and step up to do something extraordinary like this.

- When human limitations encountered divine intervention here, just like that, strength flowed into the man's feet and ankles and he stood up.

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Acta 3:8 - He finally walked past that 'Beautiful Gate' that he had sat at for so many years and he was walking and leaping and praising God because he had been utterly and completely healed – walking because he was physically healed, leaping with joy because he was emotionally healed, praising God because he was spiritually healed. When God does something, He does it fully and completely.

“God still performs miracles today often through ordinary people who trust Him to work through them in extraordinary ways” - Joyce Meyer

If we view ourselves as ordinary people who have Jesus and God works through ordinary people who trust Him and have faith in Him, in extraordinary ways, what is stopping us from being used by God, just like Peter and John? If we are ordinary people who have Jesus, the only thing that can stop Him from working through us is the lack of trust. We need to grow our faith and our trust in Him. Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ.

Acts 3:9-10 - As the man was walking, leaping, jumping and praising God, people recognized him as the lame man who used to sit at the gate asking for donations and they were filled with astonishment and amazement at what had happened to him.

The people recognized him because he had been sitting there for many years. Peter and John had walked through so many times but there was never an interaction. Yet, for some reason, that day 2000 years ago, there was a little interaction between the crippled guy and the two ordinary men who had Jesus – Peter and John, who had trust in God to do extraordinary things. God's wisdom is beyond us, His timing is also beyond us, but that day, through Peter and John, human limitations encountered divine intervention and 'just like that' the crippled man became the guy that 'used to sit' at the Beautiful Gate.

God works through ordinary people who trust Him

We need to:

- Remember that we have an extraordinary God who can do the impossible through us ordinary folks.
- Take our eyes off ourselves and place our eyes on God to comprehend how big, powerful and majestic God is.

Then we will be able to say, “God I believe in You because You are so big. Just use me to do the extraordinary according to Your will.”

CONCLUSION

When human limitations meet divine intervention, miracles happen. Miracles happen today as it happened 2000 years ago. Trust is what determines whether we are allowing God to or stopping God from using us in His work. We need to build up our trust in God to allow Him to work through ordinary people like us to do the extraordinary

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in His perfect timing so our church will be able to transform lives and change the world whether to the ends of the world or just where God has placed us right now. May we never give up hope!

A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Do you believe that miracles still happen today? Why and why not?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. Appoint someone to read Acts 3:1-10 slowly.
 - a. Imagine you were the lame man in the passage, how would you feel when you heard what Peter said in verse 6, instead of giving you the money you had asked for?
 - b. What would the name 'Jesus the Nazarene' mean to the following people after the miracle?
 - (i) the lame man?
 - (ii) the people in verse 10?
 - c. With reference to your answer to b(i) and (ii) above, why is it important for you to allow God to use you to do the extraordinary like Peter and John?

4. Are you an ordinary person who has Jesus?
 - a. Have you experienced God using you to do the extraordinary through Jesus Christ?
 - (i) Share your experience if you have.
 - (ii) Share what your challenges are if you have not.
 - b. What are some ways you can overcome the challenge(s) in 4a (ii) above?
 - c. How can your group members encourage or help you to be accountable to allow God to use you in extraordinary ways?

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share your testimony on a miracle God has done in your life. How has that miracle impacted your life and faith in God?

OR

Give thanks to God for still performing miracles today and using ordinary people like us who trust Him to work through us in extraordinary ways.

6. Take time to pray for one other in your group, asking God to open your spiritual eyes to see the miracles that He is still performing today, and remove any doubt that may be hindering you from believing and being used by Him in extraordinary ways for His purpose. Seek the Holy Spirit's leading upon our church, so we may allow Him to use us in His perfect time and place, to transform lives and change the world as we grow our trust in Him.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Beautiful One – Tim Hughes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iChhCYVm0Y>
2. Christ Jesus Glorified – JPCC Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zbr5DHnwrBY>
3. Same God – Elevation Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yse43TURces>

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