

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 11 Aug 2024
Sermon Title : Know Yet Don't
Speaker : Rev Eddie Ho
Text : Acts 3:11-26

INTRODUCTION

Our church Creative Arts Team presented a skit that parodied the events in Acts 3:11-26. You can watch the skit here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cx0Q4XWzZEs>. The main characters in the skit represent people mentioned in the Bible passage today which is a continuation from the event in Acts 3:1-10, where in the name of Jesus, Peter healed a man crippled from birth at a Temple gate known as 'The Beautiful Gate'.

Acts 3:11-26

Acts 3:11 – The healed beggar clung to Peter and John as they walked into the Temple, to an area called Solomon's portico, and all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them.

- The word 'clung' in its original language has a meaning similar to 'arrest', like how a person would grab tightly onto something that is very valuable. The scene would have looked comical to onlookers. The people in the Temple were astounded and stared at them.

Acts 3:12 – When Peter saw that everyone was staring at him, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?"

- Any normal person might have been embarrassed and would try to peel the beggar off. Peter was not bothered by the rejoicing beggar but was instead more concerned about the astounded people. Peter sensed that they were about to make him a hero for healing the beggar by a remarkable feat which no man can perform. Peter then explained to them that it was by Jesus' name that the beggar was healed, but that may not be the main reason why Peter was upset....

This was not the first time the people had heard or seen a man crippled from birth healed. Not very long ago, it was recorded in John 5 that when Jesus was at a feast where all the Jews were gathered, He healed a man who had been crippled from birth for 38 years, at a pool called Bethesda. This healing on a Sabbath was a well-known incident because to the Jews, what Jesus did was disrespectful and against their Law. It was a public incident with a public enquiry to which Jesus responded by asking what was wrong with healing on a Sabbath since He was just doing His Father's work.

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Jesus' response was so outrageous to the Jewish leaders that they planned to kill Him. Thus, everyone knew about the healing of the cripple on a Sabbath.

God has performed miracles many times in history but we humans either forget easily, or when we see all the facts, are quick to find a substitute explanation. In the skit, Dr Melvin is like the people of Israel who had seen God's miracles in the past but refused to believe that it was God's work. He had experienced God's help in the past but brushed it off as if it all depended on himself.

Tasha, Melvin's sister on the other hand represents Peter the apostle, who reminded the people what Jesus had done. After the miracles, instead of honouring Jesus, the Jews tried Him in a kangaroo court with false witnesses and substituted Him in the execution slot in the place of a murderer. They crucified Jesus...and this was the real reason why Peter was very upset with the people.

Acts 3:13-15 – Peter was more upset with the people who denied Christ than the beggar who embarrassed him. The people however were guilty as charged. When Pilate wanted to release Jesus, the people denied justice to Jesus the innocent, holy and righteous servant of God. They killed the Author of Life and Jesus' blood was on their hands. Peter was pointing out their guilt against them.

- When we deny whatever God is doing, we are denying Him, we are like the people killing the Author of Life.

Acts 3:17 – “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance as did also your rulers”. Peter is saying something really puzzling here. After accusing them of rejecting and killing the author of life, he now says that he knows the people acted in ignorance/did not know. Was Peter contradicting himself? Did the people know or not know the truth about Jesus?

- Peter was in fact saying this: The people knew and yet they don't.

The people could see that Jesus was not a normal man, they heard Him teach as One with authority, and experienced His healing as One with divine authority, and also witnessed Jesus' authority over the storm and death. By this time, Jesus had already walked with the people for over 40 days after He resurrected. The people could see the evidence that Jesus was divine, but they could not see the truth. The people of Israel were knowing yet not knowing. Melvin is like that too. What about us? Are we like the Israelites, who see the evidence and not the truth? Do we see God's miracles, but are blind to His truth?

As an example, atheists do not believe in God, and claim to believe only in scientific facts and evidence. They think life is not created by God in Genesis but generated in the 'Big Bang', a non-life event, where life came from a random collision of non-living particles which cannot be proven scientifically. But life cannot come from non-life materials and even cloning must come from life. Only God can give life and we need

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a miracle which is humanly impossible to create life from non-life objects. God wants us to enjoy life, real life, eternal life but to do that we need to recognize 2 things:

- 1) What is in our hands.
- 2) What is not in our hands.

Melvin thought that everything is in his hands, just like the people at the temple and maybe some of us. God is amazingly gracious to us. Instead of condemning us, He sent Jesus to the cross and it was at the cross that Jesus said, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." For our guilt and ignorance, this is what God offers – repent therefore, and turn back that our sins may be blotted out...so there will come a time of refreshing and restoration.

Acts 3:20-21 – We tend to read Acts 3 as a story of physical healing and that is not incorrect, but the main message is not just about physical healing. It is about the restoration of all the things.

- God wants to restore all things. Not just the physical, but more than that: mental, emotional, relational and spiritual. Healing must lead to repentance, or else there is no healing at all. Repentance leads to restoration. Both repentance and restoration are the main goals, not just physical healing.

The people in Acts 3 were ignorant, so Peter reminded them. The crippled beggar was a live example to them. The beggar saw the truth, recognized and arrested the truth. He was on the way to full restoration; physical, emotional and spiritual. (vv.7-8) In our skit, Mandy is a live example for Melvin who was ignorant. God has begun restoring Mandy, even though she was not physically healed. Mandy showed love for her friends by being more concerned about them than her own suffering.

God's promise to all people

When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we become a new creation, and are on our way to full restoration. (Acts 3:16)

- God responds to human guilt and ignorance with love and grace. This was prophesied by the prophets from Samuel onwards and was fulfilled personally by Jesus. God offers forgiveness and restoration by faith in His name.

CONCLUSION

God wants us to open our eyes not just to the facts, but to the truth. He wants to restore our body, but more importantly our mental torment, emotional stress and relationship struggles and spiritual battles. God has been working from the beginning of time up till today. These facts are plain for all to see; God is working in nature and in our lives. We need to open our eyes to the truth when God in His mercy and grace sends a reminder to us, and when we recognize that truth, we need to arrest it. Let us put our faith in Jesus, the name above all names, and the only name worthy of praise.

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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. Reflect and share who you currently identify more with:

- a. Peter – who reminds others about God's truth.
- b. The cripple who had been healed – who recognizes God's truth and clings tightly to it.
- c. The people at the Temple – who had seen God's miracle but is unable to see God's truth.

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. Appoint someone to read Acts 3:11-26 slowly.
Although Peter was upset with the people who had denied Jesus despite seeing the many miracles He had performed, he said in verse 17 that he knows the people acted in ignorance and advised them to, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,” (v.19)
 - a. (i) What does this tell you about God?
 - (ii) What does this tell you about man?
 - b. (i) What is the truth that God wants the people to know through Peter’s reminder?
 - (ii) What could have hindered the people from knowing God’s truth?
 - (iii) Is there anything that causes you to ‘Know yet Don’t’ know God’s truth in your life? How can you overcome this hindrance?

4. God wants to restore all things. Not just the physical, but more than that: mental, emotional, relational and spiritual. Healing must lead to repentance, or else there is no healing at all. Repentance leads to restoration. Both repentance and restoration are the main goals, not just physical healing.
 - a. How has knowing this impacted your understanding of God’s healing in our lives?
 - b. Are you in need of any healing or restoration from God?
 - c. How can your group members encourage or help you to seek the Lord’s restoration upon you?

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

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

5. Share and give thanks for how God has restored you completely; physically, emotionally, relationally and spiritually.

OR

Give thanks to God that despite our guilt and ignorance, when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we become a new creation, and are on our way to full restoration.

6. With a prayer partner in your group, pray for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to recognize and know His truth so you may cling to it. Pray also that your family, Life Group and our church will always seek the Lord's restoration through repentance, so He may use us to remind others, to restore all things in this world.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Holy Forever – Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkHgxKemCRk>
2. Hymn of Heaven – Phil Wickham https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_baJyIQp_w
3. Build My Life – Housefires <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHtVjQMBDoc>

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