

Bi134 Acts

Lesson Bi134-7 Miracle at the Beautiful Gate

Have you ever seen God perform a miracle? How did you feel? How did the people with you respond? In this lesson we will look at a wonderful miracle that took place soon after the Day of Pentecost. We will also look at the reactions of the people who witnessed the miracle. In doing this, we will learn some important lessons for our own lives and ministries.

One afternoon Peter and John were on their way to the temple in Jerusalem to pray. They had to pass through a huge gate in the inner wall of the temple known as the Beautiful Gate. As they were about to enter, they met a crippled man who asked them for money.

You will remember, Peter had been filled with the Spirit a few days earlier on the Day of Pentecost. Now, as he looked at the crippled man, he sensed that God wanted to heal him. He said to the man, “Look at us!” The man looked at the apostles expectantly. Peter then told him, “I do not have any money, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

Reaching down, Peter took the man by the right hand, and helped him up. Instantly the man was healed. Feeling strength come into his ankles and feet, he jumped up and began running through the temple courts, praising God with a loud voice. When the people recognized who this was, they were utterly astounded. They gathered around the apostles and the beggar who was clinging to Peter.

As he had done on the Day of Pentecost, Peter seized the opportunity and began to preach to the crowd. “Why do you wonder at this,” he asked, “and why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? It was not we who did this miracle, it was Jesus, the very one you rejected and crucified.” He continued, “You may have killed him, but God raised him from the dead.”

Peter then declared the gospel to them, saying that Jesus’ death and resurrection had been foretold by all the prophets. Peter called on them to repent of their sins. If they would do this, he said, “God will forgive you and blot out your sins.” He would send “times of refreshing” upon them. Peter also told them that they should look for Jesus to come again from heaven. All of this, he said, had been foretold by the holy prophets. God had even promised Abraham that through his offspring—that is, through Jesus—all the peoples of the earth would be blessed. They must now repent or be cut off from God’s blessings.

When the ruling authorities heard what Peter was saying, they became angry. They didn’t want the people to hear about Jesus and his resurrection. They seized Peter and John and put them in jail. However, many of those who had heard Peter’s message believed, and the number of the men in the church grew to about 5,000 (Acts 3:1-4:4).

We can learn some important lessons from this story. First, we learn some things about how we are to witness for Christ. Then, we can learn some things about how we can expect people to respond to our witness. Let's look at each of these lessons.

From our Bible story we learn five important lessons about how we are to witness for Christ:

First we learn that *we must seize every opportunity to witness*. That's what Peter did at the Beautiful Gate. As he had done on the Day of Pentecost, when he saw the people beginning to gather, he moved into action. Peter knew that God was again opening a door for him to tell people about Jesus. And because they had witnessed another mighty work of God, they were ready to listen. We, too, should be prepared to witness for Christ whenever God opens the door.

Second, we learn that *we must witness by the power of the Holy Spirit*. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter had been filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, at the Beautiful Gate, he told the lame man, "What I have I give to you." He was talking about the power of the Spirit he had received at Pentecost.

Third, we learn that *we must witness in the name of Jesus*. When Peter healed the crippled man he said to him, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Peter understood the power of Jesus' name. To minister in the name of Jesus means to minister under his authority, and to do the things he has commanded us to do. As Peter and the other disciples submitted themselves to Jesus and his mission, they received authority from him to act in his name. Today, we must do the same thing. We must be able to say to nonbelievers in need, "What I have I give to you." In other words, we must remain full of the Holy Spirit and submitted to Jesus so that, when opportunities present themselves, we will be able to minister to them.

Fourth, from our story we learn that *we must faithfully proclaim the gospel of Christ*. As he had done at Pentecost, Peter again told the people about Jesus. He told them how Jesus died on the cross and how God raised him from the dead. He then called on them to trust in Christ and repent of their sins. As we go about, it is not enough that we simply "preach the Bible." Certainly, we must do that; however, we must remember to keep our message centered on Christ. We must clearly explain the meaning of his death and resurrection. And we must call the people to faith and repentance.

Finally, from our story we learn that, when we witness for Christ, *we can expect God to miraculously confirm his word*. God healed the crippled man to prove that Jesus was alive and that his kingdom had come in power. The healing also confirmed that the gospel message was true. God will do the same for us today. If we will be filled with the Holy Spirit, submit ourselves to Christ's authority, and boldly proclaim the gospel, we can expect the Lord to empower our message and to confirm his word by performing miraculous signs.

Not only does the story of the healing of the man at the Beautiful Gate teach us how we should witness for Christ, it also teaches us a couple of things about how we can expect people to respond to our witness.

First, our story teaches us that *we can expect some to oppose the gospel*. On the Day of Pentecost some of the people mocked the disciples. Now, at the Beautiful Gate the Jewish authorities opposed the apostles as they preached the gospel. It is the same for us today. Not everyone we witness to will welcome our message. Some may even oppose us. Whatever the case, we must faithfully share the message of Christ with all.

However, our story teaches us a second and even more important lesson. It teaches us that, while some will oppose the message, *others will believe and put their faith in Jesus*. The Jewish rulers opposed the message, but many of the common people received it with joy. In a short time the number of men in the church in Jerusalem grew to 5,000. If you add women and children to that number, the number of people in the church could have been as many as 20,000—or even more. When he was with them, Jesus had promised his disciples, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men” (Luke 5:10). The same is true today. If we will faithfully proclaim the message of the gospel, the Holy Spirit will work, and some will receive the message and put their faith in Christ.

This lesson is **important** because in it we have learned how God wants us to witness to the lost in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Spirit.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that we must never fail to proclaim the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we will do this, God will confirm His word with miracles. Some will receive the message and repent and put their faith in Christ and the church will grow.

Let’s now **review** some of the important truths we have learned from this lesson.

1. When Peter encountered the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, what did he say?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered that Peter said, “I do not have any money, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk,” you are correct.
2. What was the result of Peter’s Spirit-inspired message at the Beautiful Gate?
A. [PAUSE] If you said that while the Jewish authorities became angry, many believed Peter’s message, and the number of the men grew to about 5,000, you are correct.
3. What five important lessons about witnessing do we learn from this story?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered that, (1) we must seize every opportunity to witness, (2) we must witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, (3) we must witness in the name of Jesus, (4) we must faithfully proclaim the gospel, and (5) we can expect God to confirm his word, you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to listen to this to this lesson several times until you can clearly explain the five lessons about how we should witness for Christ to someone else. You should then go out and witness for Christ putting these five principles into practice.