

# GIVING OURSELVES AWAY

Acts 3: 1-16

**INTRO:** Turn your Bibles, or turn them on, to Acts chapter 3. I have a lot to talk about this morning, so let's get right into the reading...

**Acts 3: 1-10** *"One afternoon Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those entering the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked directly at him, as did John. "Look at us!" said Peter. 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give (to) you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" 7 Taking him by the right hand, Peter helped him up, and at once the man's feet and ankles were made strong. 8 He sprang to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the man who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him."*

**Isn't that just so cool?!!! I LOVE THE BIBLE!**

Today, I want to preach on the subject, **GIVING OURSELVES AWAY**. If you have been around Christ First Church any length of time, you know we are a giving church. We desire to touch lives with the purpose of sharing the love of Jesus with as many as possible. That's been difficult the last two years with the pandemic and having to relocate, not once, but twice. But I come to 2022 with a sense of renewed purpose!

As I thought about that this past week, I wondered if it would be possible to do more, reach more, touch more, win more, than we ever have this coming year. I REALLY BELIEVE IT IS. But to do so, I think we will need to become selfless with our lives. We need to be willing to **GIVE OURSELVES AWAY**. And that's what I want to talk to you about. Before I get into the sermon, let me lay a little foundation...

The book of Acts needs to be understood within it's context if it's going to be applied correctly. It's an amazing book showing the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem and just a handful of people, to the masses, all the way to Rome. But in order for the Gospel to spread as God intended, the disciples had to give an extreme measure. They had to give themselves away!

In Acts 3 we see Peter and John. These two guys were together when Jesus called them. They were in business together. We see them together a lot in scripture. At the time of Acts 3, Jesus has already returned to the Father. He's no longer with them physically, but His power, His Spirit, has come down to them and is living in them. Because of that, their heart has changed. And consequently, their lives are changing as well.

Here, in chapter 3, Peter and John are going to church and they see this guy laid out in front of the gate called Beautiful, and he calls out to them. And with that simple call, Peter and John start experiencing the potential of God in their lives and ministry. **NOTICE...**

**I) THE PARTNERSHIP:** vv 1-2 *“One afternoon Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those entering the temple courts.”*

The Bible tells us that Peter AND John were going to the temple to pray. AND, This is a key conjunction in this story. Did you know that it's of the utmost importance who is on the other side of your AND? I wonder who's on the other side of your AND. And I wonder what difference that's making in your life? The person on the other side of your AND can make or break you. A good partnership is important to your success. Peter and John made good partners. They were opposites, but good together. Peter was loud and obnoxious. John was quiet, a listener. Peter was bold, John was timid. We see this at the tomb of Jesus. Peter and John raced to the tomb when they heard Jesus was alive. John got there first but Peter was the first one to go into the tomb. John got there first but he stayed on the outside. He was cautious. That didn't mean he didn't care. He was just cautious. Peter rushed in! But sometimes when people rush in it creates situations. John was cautious but consistent. Peter was bold but often made a blunder of things! The truth is they were different but they made a good team. They were partners.

There's power in partnership! That's true of all life. It's true in marriage, business, and in church. It's the reason I choose to have a Pastoral Leadership Team here at C1C. I don't want to be the sole voice of this great church. There's nothing in my ego that needs to be the only decision maker. We're better together! I need to be challenged, I need to be held accountable. You need to be encouraged. You need biblical instruction. Our dynamic here at C1C is strengthened by our differences! So many preachers today wants everyone in their church to act just like them. I don't want you to act like me! I want you to be yourself in CHRIST! Be who He wants you to be. **!I'll take you just the way He makes you!** Listen, I learned a long time ago, people don't have to share my perspective to share my purpose. **WE ARE IN PARTNERSHIP!** BUT partnership means we must work together, share the burden, be there for one another. **IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, you are in the right place!**

Now look at v 2 *“And a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those entering the temple courts.”*

So, we see that this man, this beggar, had partners too. Someone was bringing him to the Beautiful gate every day. I don't know if they were professionals who carried him there on an every day basis and they got a percentage of what he received, or if it was friends and family that took him, taking turns about to help him out. **IDK. BUT whoever it was, although they were willing to help, there was only so much they could do for him.**

Here's some truth. It's possible that you have some friends in your life. **PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE, THAT HAVE TAKEN YOU AS FAR AS THEY CAN.** It doesn't necessarily mean that they're bad people, these people helped this beggar as much as they could, but they could only get him so far. And regardless of how much he appreciated his partners, he needed some new partners. **LISTEN, there will come a time in all our lives when HELP is not enough.** This man had been getting HELP for the biggest part of 40 years, HELP and HAND outs. He didn't need HELP, he needed HEALING! Some of you have loved ones you think you're HELPING. And your constant HELPING is keeping them from getting the HEALING that they need. You can only take them so far. God is the one that can bring about the healing they really need. But they may never realize their need for healing if you keep helping.

The beggar is sitting there and Peter and John walk up. He calls out to them hoping for some MONEY but instead he gets a MIRACLE. He didn't get what he asked for, but he got what he needed! And it happened when he hooked up with the right partners.

One thing that's interesting to note though, is that the Bible doesn't say that John actually helped at all. It says that Peter reached out his hand and picked the man up, John was the SILENT PARTNER. And thank God for silent partners! Thank God for the people that don't always have to be talking, people that don't always have to tell you they got your back, cause they just do. And thank God for all the partners in this church that might not stand on stage, play a guitar, sing in the praise team, or preach a sermon, but you are partners in reaching a world with the message of Christ. And the rest of us couldn't do it without you. Thank God for our silent partners! NOW NOTICE...

**II) THE PLACE:** v 2 *"And a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those entering the temple courts."*

Let's give this lame man some credit. He couldn't walk, he was dependant on others, he was limited in his choices, but he made a good decision in where to be. He said, don't take me to the bar. Most of those people down there have more problems than I do, they're not going to help me. And I sure can't drink this issue away, so don't take me down there. Don't take me to the club. Think I can dance in my condition? Besides all those people do is make fun of me. Don't take me there. Don't take me the crack house, NO quick fix is going to fix this. If you're going to take me anywhere, take me to the church where people care about others who are hurting. TAKE ME TO THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO PRAY!

You know what you did right today? Even if every other choice you made this week was bad one, you did something right today. By coming to church, YOU PUT YOURSELF IN THE BEST PLACE FOR BLESSING! You never know what God will do when you find yourself in the right place at the right time. For this man, the right place was down at the church, and the right time was 3 in the afternoon. God had set him an appointment he knew nothing about . And the meeting he's about to have will forever change his life.

He said, if there's one place I can go that I'm sure to get some help, it's the church. Take me to the church and just sit me down outside. I like the fact that at the lowest point of his life, he decided that the one place he could go where he would encounter the most generous people, was to the church. Out of all the places he could have gone for help, he chose the church. THE CHURCH SHOULD BE KNOWN AS A PLACE OF HELP! I want our church to be known as a place that HELPS and HEALS! I want to help more people than any two churches in our part of the country. I believe the reason so many people rely on the government for help and hand outs is because the church hasn't done what God has called us to and taught proper morals and scripture about how to live and give. We haven't loved enough. We've hoarded instead of helped, we've been greedy instead of gracious. No wonder the world's in the shape it's in. Let's learn to live life open handed instead of closing our fist on those in need.

Here was a man who had the wrong motives for going to church. He was going for the money! Does scripture criticize him for that? No! Then why would we? I'd rather have someone IN church for the wrong reason, than for them to be somewhere else for any reason!

This man wanted one kind of CHANGE, but he got another kind of CHANGE. He wanted a little MONEY, but he received a big MIRACLE. He had become a FIXTURE outside the church, but Jesus made him part of the FAMILY and brought him into the church.

Good things happen when you're in the right PLACE!

**III) THE PRICE:** Ch 4: 1-3 (Don't read) Obedience can be very costly. Do you know how they rewarded Peter for helping out this man? They put him in prison. And guess who had to go with him? John! Be careful who you hang around :)

There's a price to obedience. AND SOMETIMES IT COST US OURSELVES. It cost Peter. It cost John. And if God gets His way in your life, it will cost you something too. God doesn't have a place for freeloaders in His family. That's the reason when He saves us, He also gives us gifts for the Kingdom. And He expects us to use those gifts for Him. He expects us to be willing to GIVE OURSELVES AWAY if that's what He asks of us.

**CONCLUSION:**