

JESUS - POWER IN THE NAME OF JESUS- Acts. 3: 1-16.

Message by Pastor Wilson on Aug. 6,'06

There are many things going on in the families of our congregation. As I was preparing to select topics for my messages, I got a thought that I want to speak few messages on JESUS. My desire is that through these messages I want God to help us to see JESUS lifted up high in our lives and in the life of our church. The first message in this series is "The power in the name of Jesus."

We know Jesus is God and God is powerful. He is almighty and he can do anything. Is that what I am saying here when I say the power in the name of Jesus? No. It is different than saying that God is powerful. The title of today's message is "the power in the name of Jesus."

I want to share with you today that Jesus has given us authority to use his name and when we use his name appropriately in the right context we will experience a supernatural power in our life. The name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth is powerful. When Jesus was with his disciples, he told them in John 14: 12 "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me anything in my name, and I will do it." This does not mean that God will give us any thing and every thing regardless of who we are and what we ask. God's answer to our prayer is always conditional. His love for us is unconditional, but his answer to our prayer has to meet certain conditions. Even here he says "anyone who has faith in me." This is one condition. The faith we have has to be so complete that we believe that God is a faithful God and He is all powerful and He will do what we ask. The second thing is that we must ask in the NAME OF JESUS. When we pray there is a supernatural power added to our prayer when we pray in the name of Jesus. Then you ask the things according to his will and desire. He will do what ever you ask according to his desire. What are the things which are according to his will and desire? The things which are within his will and desire are the things through which the son may bring glory to the Father. These are some of the conditions. In the passage which was read for us this evening, Acts 3:1-16, we see that these principles and conditions work so powerfully in the life of Peter and John.

Here we see that one day Peter and John were going up to the temple in Jerusalem at the time of prayer, three in the afternoon. Now a man who had been born lame was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. This is the way they did things back then. Giving alms to the poor is considered an honorable thing. And I am sure when people are going to the temple wants to look honorable in the presence of God. So they will give generously. The same thing is done in India even now. There we can see a lot of beggars in front of the churches and temples. No welfare program. No Medicaid. If your family couldn't provide for you, you were put out in the streets.

When this poor lame man saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Then, taking him by the right hand, he helped the lame man up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. This is what exactly Jesus said. "Ask anything in my name I will do it." Peter had the faith and confidence that God will make this lame man to walk if he ask in the name of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth". And when he was healed the man went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping and praising God. God's name was glorified through Jesus Christ.

Jesus was faithful to do it then and He is faithful to do it even now. Bible says that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:8). But there is a problem though. God is the same but His people have changed. Now, even many of the evangelical believers do not believe in miracles. Do you know how God's power works in our lives? His power works in us according to our faith. Remember, when the centurion wanted Jesus to heal his servant, Jesus told him that he will go to his home and heal his servant, but the centurion told Jesus that he was not worthy for Jesus to come to his home to heal his servant and he asked Jesus just say one word that his servant will be healed. And Jesus told him go let it happen to you according to your faith and the centurion's servant was healed. Even now in many countries and places where Christians have to go through persecution and poverty and suffering, God continues to perform miracles among them.

There is a story about a saintly doctor named Thomas Aquinas. During his time he visited the Pope Innocent IV. The pope was so pleased that this famous saintly doctor paid a visit to him and he showed him the rich treasures of the Roman church and boasted that "the time has gone when the church was saying, 'Silver and gold have I none'." "Yes," replied the saintly doctor, "and also the time has gone when the church could say to the lame man at the temple gate, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Rise up and walk'."

Things are changed. Christians are more dependent on their possessions and their riches than their faith. We have forgotten that the name of our God has power to raise the lame man. There is power in the name of Jesus. Do you remember what happened when this lame man was healed? Bible says when Peter raised this lame man and when all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

I want you to imagine that if Peter appeared in front of a church here in Chicago and he saw a lame man sitting in a wheel chair and he told him "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" and helped him to his feet and the man started to walk and jumping and praising God, what do you think will happen to the people of that church? I

bet you that exactly the same thing happened two thousand years ago will happen today. They will be filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to that lame man. Right?

Let us see what Peter had to tell these people. V 12 – 13. “When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.” Here Peter gives them the brief summary of God’s plan of salvation and His power given to His people. It is not us it is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. He connected the God of Abraham with Jesus to help the Jews to grasp the truth. And then he plainly tells them what they have done to the author of life, Jesus Christ. V. 15. “You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.” He summarized the entire gospel of Jesus Christ with in these few verses. Peter didn’t mince words. You didn’t have to ask after the message, “I wonder what he was talking about?” He spoke the truth, directly from the heart. It was hard and it was real.

I wonder what Peter would say to us this day about the barriers, which we have in our lives for experiencing Christ’s power? After all, in our own way, we, too, have fallen short. He wouldn’t accuse us of having Christ put to death, but he might accuse us of ignoring Christ and making Christ such a low priority in our lives that he hardly matters at all. What do you think? Would that charge stick? He might point to our love of material possessions and comfort. In any contest between God and mammon in our list of priorities, if God would come out second best then we are the losers. What is it that keeping you from experiencing Christ’s power in your life? This is an important question. We will never experience Christ’s power in our lives until Christ is the priority in our lives.

Finally Peter explained how the lame received his healing. V.16 “By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.” First of all the faith in the name of Jesus, second It is the power in the name of Jesus has given this complete healing to this lame man.

If you are very discouraged that the church has lost its faith in the power of the name of Jesus, may I encourage you by telling you that there was a time when the disciples of Jesus also could not heal a boy. There was no power in their prayer. Matt. 17: 14-20. The father of that boy brought him to Jesus and told him that the disciples could not heal the boy and Jesus healed him. Then the disciples asked Jesus, why couldn’t they do it? Jesus pointed to their lack of faith. Again, it is the power of God, not our faith alone brings out result for our prayers. But faith is an important ingredient which must be present. Today, If we feel weak or powerless as Christians, we should examine our faith, making sure we are trusting not in our own abilities to produce results, but in God’s. Always remember there is power in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Believe it, Practice it. God will be glorified in and through you. I want to invite you to refresh your soul this day. Believe in the power Christ’s resurrection. Remove any barrier in your life that might deprive you of

his love and his power. Open your life to the refreshing power in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Develop a passion for Jesus. All other passions are an inferior pursuit. A passion for him will refresh you in this world and the world to come. Amen.