

Christ Heals The Lame
Acts 3:1-10, Trinity Sunday II
June 25, 2006

Beloved of the Lord.....We have just heard from the Holy Scriptures a glorious example of the strength of God's power, His strength to heal, the strength of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Jesus Christ is God's own Son come in the flesh. He has power to heal, and He has power to save. But there are many in this world who bear His name falsely. There are false Christians and false prophets who falsely use the name of Christ while promoting evil. For example, there is a movie called "Leap of Faith", starring Steve Martin. He plays the part of a "Faith Healer" who goes from town to town in his decked out bus, drawing hundreds of people to his tent where he performs before them, healing or conning those who are sick. But in the end he is nothing more than a con artist who manipulates and uses his knowledge of human nature to deceive the simple minded. He doesn't really heal anyone in the name of Christ, rather he deceives everyone in the name of Christ.

While we dare not use Hollywood as a source of religious guidance, it does serve to illustrate that even Hollywood and the unbelievers of the world, are well aware of the con these "faith healers" play. On the other hand, there are likewise many sincere people who are drawn to these "faith healers" only to be deceived. Brethren, let us remember that Jesus has warned us such "faith healers" would come when He said, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Mt. 24:24 Such false prophets truly do show "great signs and wonders". But whether they use slight of hand, con games, or even satanic powers it makes no difference. In the end they lead souls away from Christ, and so we must avoid them and not be deceived, lest we forsake the true Christ which speaks to us through Holy Scriptures. "I am the way, the truth, and the life", Jesus said.

I. Our lame world which is dead in trespasses and sin. In our lesson today, we see the Peter and John going to the Temple to pray when they came across the lame man. It was the "hour of prayer", the ninth hour, which is 3 P.M. in the afternoon. Here we are reminded to pray throughout the day, morning, noon, and at night. "Pray without ceasing". Through our prayer, and the name of Christ, the power of God is always at work.

But as Peter and John came to pray, "a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple." He was laid at a place where he expected to find good people; good people who care for those in need. So the church should be a refuge for the weary, a place where those in need can

come for help. Those who love Christ will be happy to help those who are truly in need. It is our duty. The Bible says, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." Prov. 19:17 The man of our lesson today was poor because he was lame and unable to work. Not only was he lame, but he always had been lame, from birth. From his earliest days as an infant he could not walk. Someone always had to carry or hold him, or else he just had to lay there helplessly on the ground. What a poor man this was! Nevertheless we must say this was God's will. God does allow suffering in the world. For the unbelievers suffering is a just punishment for sin. Their suffering helps to work repentance. But the suffering of the believer is quite a different matter. God's often wills His own children suffer for His own good reasons. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose." Rom. 8:28 While the purpose of our suffering may never in this world be perfectly clear to us as it was later with this lame man, it should be enough for us in faith to know simply that God knows best. Paul writes, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8:18

But there is another lesson for us today in the lesson of the lame man. It is a picture of this very lame world which we live in. It is a "lame world" in the sense that it is "dead in trespasses and sin". Our world is not a live, healthy, or vibrant world! Rather it has the poison of the serpent coursing through its veins. Satan himself has poisoned this world by way of sin. Adam and Eve took the bait, they swallowed the deadly poison, when they disobeyed God's crystal clear command in the Garden of Eden. God said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But Adam and Eve disobeyed God's holy Word. **THEY DID EAT OF IT.** Mankind has suffered ever since. All manner of evil is the fruit of man's own sin. And so the Bible says, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

And for this reason, in our lesson when we see the poor and pitiful lame man, lying near the temple gate, this is none other than a picture of ourselves! For we are the lame man,...we are the poor miserable creature who cannot walk and cannot work. We are the creature who cannot heal himself. Because we are dead in trespasses and sins, we cannot even stand up on our own two feet! We cannot make ourselves whole! The lame man is us!

II. Hear God's Holy Word. But thanks be to God, there is Christ the Healer, who sends Peter and John to this poor lame man! When the lame man asks for alms, the Bible says, "Peter, fastening his eyes upon him [saying] 'Look on us'". "Pay attention now dear soul, listen, for something great is about to happen!"

Now let us listen too! For the third commandment of God says, *Thou shalt sanctify the holy day!* What does this mean? *We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it!* The Holy Day, the Sabbath Day, is every day for the Christian. It is Sunday through Sunday, Monday through Monday! Every day of the week is holy! Each day is a gift from God to you! Do not waste nor squander it, as if you are lame, helpless, and unable to do a bit of good in this world! We are God's children by faith in Christ Jesus! What then does God require of us in the Third Commandment? We should hold preaching and the Word of God sacred. Like the lame man who steadfastly upon Peter and John, so we should look steadfastly upon Christ Jesus, and thus cherish and treasure every word which falls from His sacred lips! We do this in part when we hear the preaching of God's Word. God's Word is not to fall upon dead ears, but it is instead to enter our hearts. We should gladly hear God's Word, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. For the Gospel Word brings life to our dead soul! We are likewise to use His Word daily in our lives, spreading His Word wherever we go. To do otherwise is sin. Only let His Word do the work for you and do not be discouraged. We are but tools in the gracious hand of God.

III. Christ the Healer. And isn't this just what Peter and John were, namely tools in the hand of Jesus of Nazareth. For when the lame man looked steadfastly upon Peter and John, "expecting to receive something of them", Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk!" Peter then took the lame man by the hand, lifting him up! "And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God!" After years and years of not knowing what it was like to walk, as the rest of the world did, suddenly not only did his legs have strength and feeling, but now he walk AND leap! He jumped up and down through the air like a little child who dances! Joyfully, wonderfully, happily, "walking and leaping, and praising God!" For it was God who had healed him, not Peter and John! Jesus of Nazareth, out of infinite mercy and grace healed the legs of this poor man! This miracle served to glory not man, but God! For only God has power to work true and genuine miracles!

But what is the greatest miracle of this lesson today? Is it merely the physical strength God provided to this man's legs, or is there more! Indeed there is much more! For after this miracle, witnessed by many, Peter preached a sermon which converted thousands (Acts 4:4)! If you read the rest of Acts chapter three Peter preached to the Jews that it was the name of Jesus Christ which did the healing! To the Jews Peter preached saying, "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities!" There it is, the Gospel

truth! Namely that Jesus is sent to bless you!....by turning every one of you away from your sins! Peter said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." The Gospel "miracle" which took place here far surpassed the miraculous healing of the lame man! God's Son was sent to bless us, Jesus Christ of Nazareth was sent "to seek and to save, that which was lost!"

It is by this name, the name Jesus of Nazareth, that you are indeed healed of your own sins, beloved of the Lord. Christ is your Healer! By the name of Jesus of Nazareth, God does indeed cause the lame to rise up and walk! The Bible says, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Col. 2:13 And so you see that even though you were the lame man, lying there at the side of the road, outside that "Beautiful" gate, God has quickened you by way of Jesus of Nazareth! He has raised you up, just as He did the lame man. Jesus of Nazareth has raised you up by forgiving you all your trespasses and sins. He has removed all your guilt from you, taking it upon Himself! He has taken away your disease of sin and laid it upon Himself. Jesus is the Second Adam! He has paid the price you could not pay. He has died your death, giving you life! He has made a sinner a saint! By grace through faith, by the glorious remission of sins through Jesus Christ, you are the one who now walks and leaps and praises God! Go now into God's temple by faith, and praise your merciful Healer Jesus Christ. For though you were laying outside that "Beautiful" gate of heaven because of sin, Christ the Healer has reached out His Gospel hand to you, lifted you up, delivering you from all sin. By Christ and through His holy precious blood, He has brought you into His True Church. You stand before Him now as a perfect and upright creature, a sinner made a saint, a cripple made a new man!

Let us therefore out of thanks to God spend the rest of our lives walking and leaping and praising God! For though we were dead, yet now we live! We have life through His name! And do not worry beloved, Jesus Christ, the Healer, will be a constant source of healing throughout your life. Whatever problems we suffer, Christ can heal! Therefore glorify God each and every holy day, Sunday through Sunday. Treasure His Word, for it gives you life! And consider well how this lame man of our lesson is now at living forever in heaven above, in perfect peace and bliss! No longer does he lay outside the "Beautiful" temple gate, but Christ has brought Him into His heavenly home. This man even now lives happily in heaven with all the saints. No doubt he is still walking and leaping and praising God above. May God grant this for every one of us. Amen.