

Thursday - Crossing Barriers... Is Powered by Faith

Read Acts 3:6b-7. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" That is a gutsy thing to say. Peter knew he had the Spirit of God in his life, just as Jesus said he would (Acts 1:8). And he called on it. Can you imagine what Peter felt holding the man's hand and watching him rise to support his own weight - for the first time ever? Today, healings and other miracles seem to be more common in other cultures than in our own. Sometimes our worldview limits our belief that God can intervene. Ask God to remove doubt from your heart. Ask him to build your faith that he can alter things around you and in the lives of those to whom you minister. Ask him to make your heart a fertile place for faith to grow. Ask him to prepare you to believe him for something big.

Friday - Crossing Barriers... Results in Miracles

Read Acts 3:8-10. God honored Peter's faith. The man is healed - he stands up, leaps and walks around! Initially, he asked for money, but in the end he got what money could not buy. Last month our Ansari team and I walked into a mosque passing many lame people laying on the ground begging. Frankly, it was difficult to see. If one of them had been healed that day it would have created a major commotion, just like it did in our text. Those present at the temple, with Peter and John, were filled with wonder and amazement at this healing. A second miracle was that this man's life was used to bring others closer to God. Is there room in your life for miracles? Although we don't see them every day, are you willing to ask for miracles, pray for healing, and expect God to do what only He can do? God is still in the miracle-working business and he wants us to ask him to work. Perhaps the greatest barriers are not cultural or linguistic, but barriers of faith. Praise God that he has brought you from death to life. Praise him that he still does miracles. Ask him to grow your faith to believe and ask for miracles that his Name would be praised!

Grace Works/Gracia Que Funciona God's Grace Transforms Us All Acts 3:1-12

First Baptist Church of Elk Grove and Casa De Luz
Who Are We?

God Created Us For Good Works ...

_____ Others

Acts 19:8-9 – *Paul in a Jewish synagogue in Ephesus*

Acts 1:8a – *Jerusalem*

Acts 3:1 – *Peter and John in a temple*

FBC

_____ Others

Acts 1:8b – *all Judea and Samaria*

Acts 3:2-7

FBC – Casa De Luz

_____ Others

Acts 1:8; Acts 15 – *The Jerusalem Council*

Acts 3:8-12; Acts 4:4

FBC **and** Casa De Luz

Who We Are: A People, That God Is Building

1 Peter 2:5; see also Ephesians 2:14-22 ...

... To Show That His Grace Transforms Us All

My Response:

As I Minister **To** Others ...

... As I Minister **With** Others ...

... How Can I Let God's Grace Transform Me?

Who Can I Invite To Casa De Luz?

Sunday, April 25, 2010

by Derek Zahnd, Outreach/Mission Pastor

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...and he opened to us the Scriptures (Luke 24:32)

On Sunday we talked about how God calls us to cross barriers. I wonder what those first disciples felt when they heard the phrase “all Judea and Samaria” that Luke records Jesus speaking in Acts 1:8. They may have thought, “This is not going to be easy!” Crossing cultural and language barriers can be exciting, complex and rewarding – but it isn’t easy. I remember how humbling it was to learn Spanish as an adult – and initially sound like a six year old. Though we all find comfort in our own culture and language, the gospel was never meant to be limited to one culture or to one language. Like the water and fountain on the auditorium platform, the gospel is a life-giving gift that runs on its own. The Spirit continues to empower God’s people to be witnesses to Christ even across barriers, just like it did in the first century. Keep your Casa De Luz card in your desk or purse this week and see if God gives you an opportunity to invite someone to Casa De Luz. Now, let’s take a second look at how Peter and John crossed barriers and how that led to transformation.

Monday - Crossing Barriers... Is a Regular Thing

Read Acts 3:1. Going to the temple was a regular event for Peter and John. At times they went daily. They did not “carve out” special time for this encounter with a man born lame. Going about their lives they came across a barrier that they would cross in Jesus’ name. No applications, no rehearsals, just the grace of God flowing through them to someone in need. If you are like me, much of your life seems to be run by a calendar. We plan and we do. How might you invite God to intervene in your calendar? How could you add flexibility to this week, in order to cross barriers into ministry, even amidst your regular activities? God’s grace will continue to pour into you. Ask that his grace would pour out of you in new ways as you go about your regular activities today.

Tuesday - Crossing Barriers... Involves Discernment

Read Acts 3:3-5. The indication is that there were thousands of people going in and out of the temple that day (Acts 4:4). The man born lame may have asked dozens of people for money the day before and undoubtedly planned to ask still others for money this day. He initiated the relationship and made it an economic one when “he asked to receive alms”. In all likelihood, some had ignored his need while others had given him money. Yet Peter and John were discerning. They understood the man had more than a monetary need – he needed to be healed. When we cross barriers, especially economic ones, the number and gravity of the needs can be overwhelming. With our team to the Ansari in India, I took a taxi through the streets of Kolkata last month. Poor, ill and lame people seemed to be everywhere. I felt burdened with the needs – until I remembered, this is a city of millions; this is where a person would come from the countryside for help! Peter and John probably looked much like many others walking past the man born lame – but they were different. They had been with Jesus and that morning he gave them discernment. Ask Jesus to give you added discernment to understand the real need behind the request or the behavior that you encounter as you cross barriers. Ask him for the faith to respond to what he reveals.

Wednesday -

Crossing Barriers... Springs from Abundance Thinking

Read Acts 3:6a. Peter and John did not have what this man asked for, but they did have what he needed. What if they’d felt inhibited by what they did **not** have? Undoubtedly, many around them were wealthier. But, money was not the man’s true need. Healing was. And Jesus can heal. And they believed in Jesus. Do you ever let the knowledge of what you **don’t** have prevent you from ministering for God? What things sometimes prevent you from crossing a ministry barrier? Does Jesus require education ... ordination ... or title? What is your definition of “qualified for ministry”? What is God’s? God knows our weaknesses. Our tendency is to focus on our disabilities. Yet he insists his grace is sufficient in each and every case. List some of the spiritual blessings God has given you. Perhaps these include love of the Bible, authentic relationships with other Christians, confidence in his love for you. Ask God for an opportunity today to act out Peter’s statement, “What I do have, I give to you.”