INTRO
This has been a fun start, as we’ve looked at the Authority of Jesus and how, through the Holy Spirit, we now have that authority. Once you realize you have the presence of God, the fire of God, and the protection of God, you have nothing to lose. I think the reason we don’t go out and share the gospel is that we forget about the fire of God. We’ve been baptized in the Spirit and the fire. Our one word for the book of Acts is Authority. What you see in Acts 3 is that the number of people who received the authority of Christ had increased. We are going to see Peter and John radically walking this authority out. If you want to see God move, pray and pursue.

TEACHING
Acts 3:1: Peter and John were going to the temple to pray. I want to look at how the Jewish people prayed during these days. In Psalm 55:17, Jews prayed three times a day: (1) the third hour at 9 a.m.; (2) the sixth hour at 12:00 p.m.; and (3) the ninth hour at 3:00 p.m. The mentality was to integrate prayer constantly in their lives. If we are going to walk in authority, we too have to be people of prayer. We have to be in tune with the Lord constantly.

Let’s look at the relationship between Peter and John. Peter and John had been friends for a while:

• In Luke 5:10, John was Peter’s business partner in the fishing business. Remember that the writer Luke created two volumes. The Gospel of Luke is volume one, and Acts is volume two. In volume one, Luke recorded the beginning of Peter and John’s calls to ministry. In volume two, John and Peter began walking out their faith.

• In Luke 22:8, Peter and John prepared the last Passover meal together. Sometimes we are hesitant to take on tasks that don’t fit our understanding of our calling. Peter and John are an incredible example of doing different tasks in ministry because the Spirit of God led them to do so.

• In John 20:3–4, Peter and John were the ones who ran to Jesus’ empty tomb together. There seems to have been a bit of competition between the two as it is mentioned that John beat Peter to the entrance. These two had been through everything together. They had done life together.

• In Acts 8:14, Peter and John ministered to Samaritans who believed in Jesus.

Acts 3:2: In the following verses, Peter and John experienced doing ministry without Jesus being physically present. How did they get to that point? They had witnessed the Authority of Christ and now were going to experience the fire of God within them. When you are moving in your call, you experience the fire of God. When you are stagnant in your call, the fire goes out.

Peter and John came across a man who had been lame from birth. This lame man was apparently persuasive enough to have people carry him to a place at the temple gate called Beautiful. He was probably not begging for healing but rather begging for money. Every day, the man asked for alms, which were charitable donations of money.

Acts 3:3–6: This lame man saw Peter and John and asked for help. Peter instructed the man to look at him and John. Peter explained that they had no silver or gold to give him, but Peter commanded, “In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!” Peter and John were walking in the Authority that they saw in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Their authority came from the name of Christ (Acts 3:16). This healing came about through faith in the name of Christ (Acts 4:7–10). There is power in the name of Jesus! Nelson’s Commentary states, “The phrase ‘in the name of Jesus’ is not a magical formula used to give some affirmation or guarantee to a prayer. The power in the name of Jesus comes from what the Holy Spirit will do because of that name.”

Acts 3:7: the moment this lame man had been born, other people had been carrying him. Peter simply held out his hand and helped the man stand up and walk.
I am going to step away from teaching and move to equipping. People who have gone out sharing the gospel and praying for healing have, in my opinion, gotten weird. We’ve all seen people pray for healing in the name of Jesus and then get sidetracked about why this person needs to be healed and how they need to be healed. Peter didn’t say anything about all that had to be done for healing to take place; he just told the man to get up and walk. The simplicity of the name of Christ is enough. We have the Authority—so keep it simple. This is why, if you think about the book of Acts and how we act today, we’re weird too. We want to add all this stuff and steps when Christ’s name is enough. Be simple and walk in authority. Have I been weird? Absolutely. Have I tried all different methods? Yes. All I can say is, if it hasn’t worked yet, keep trying to walk things out by faith.

Wiersbe wrote, “It is easy to see in this man an illustration of what salvation is like. He was born lame, and all of us are born unable to walk so as to please God. Our father Adam had a fall and passed his lameness on to all of his descendants (Romans 5:12–21). The man was also poor, and we as sinners are bankrupt before God, unable to pay the tremendous debt that we owe Him (Luke 7:36–50). He was ‘outside the temple,’ and all sinners are separated from God, no matter how near to the door they might be. The man was healed wholly by the grace of God, and the healing was immediate (Ephesians 2:8–9).”

I’ve read this story many times and have failed to see this image of salvation here. I think it is really interesting. Immediately, this man was healed. There was nothing he had to walk out. There is nothing we can do to earn grace.

Acts 3:8: After the man was healed, he jumped up and started walking. The man was jumping, leaping, and walking. He had new life! When you have a new identity, do you still act like the lame person you were, or do you act like you have life—leaping and jumping? God wants us to walk out these new identities so that He gets the glory. Peter and John believed they had the Authority in Christ and acted on it. We must walk by faith. When we discipline ourselves to live out our faith, we learn to love the lifestyle. We have all been called to be a witness in season and out of season.

Acts 3:9–11: The man was jumping and praising God, and the people who saw it happen were filled with awe. This story would not have happened if Peter and John had not embraced their authority and walked in the fire given them. Their actions changed an entire community. This man, previously lame, was holding onto Peter and John, and people were running up to them. Why were they running toward them? Because God had shown up! 

Acts 3:12–21: Peter saw these people and questioned them, “Why are you amazed?” The only way Peter and John could do these miraculous things was because of Jesus. Peter tied everything back to the old covenant. In other words: “You’ve seen all these things before with Jesus, and you handed Him off to be crucified.” They had denied the Holy and Righteous One. Peter said, “You killed the source of life…we are witnesses of this!” Peter’s confidence in his authority through Christ allowed him to speak harsh truths without fear or trepidation. The name of Jesus had given this once lame man perfect health. Because of these past actions of the Jews, Peter called on the people to repent and turn to Jesus.

CLOSING

Peter finished this encounter strong. When you walk with authority, when you walk with the name of Christ, anything can happen, and anything is possible. I encourage you to start walking in authority that is always based in prayer. Pray and pursue. That’s how you see God move in your life.

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