

THE WORD HAS POWER- Acts 3:1-4:31

(Expanded Sermon Notes)

There have been some powerful moments in history. Moments that have defined an age, a nation, or even an individual. These moments are captured by historians, told by orators, and brought alive for us in the movies. These moments are so powerful that when you stop to think and reflect on the situation you will be triggered to respond in with some sort of emotion.

Just in the last 100 years there have been moments etched into the minds and hearts of people. Moments where people will say, I'll never forget that day. Whether the landing on the moon, the assassination of JFK, or 9/11, those were powerful moments people will never forget.

Another powerful moment happened when the ally powers finally overcame the wickedness of the Nazi's and pure evil of Adolf Hitler to end World War II. People filled the streets all over the world in celebration of the evil finally vanquished. There was great power in that moment for all who were able to experience it.

The power of that moment defined the century and nations all over the world were able to secure a new identity. And no matter how powerful the experience it pales in comparison to the power that emanated from Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago, at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This moment is so powerful that the shock-waves are still visibly seen in this culture. This is the moment that literally changed everything. The power behind this historic event and the reality of its meaning has transformed lives for over 2,000 years. This moment had been so life-defining then, that we today are looking to connect people to that same powerful moment where they experience Jesus and His resurrection in a life-defining way. In a way that helps them to know as those during the time of Acts that **The Word has Power.**

We are going to observe a portion of Scripture that captures for us the explosive energy that is found in the Power of the Word.

When the Word of God is proclaimed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, lives are transformed.

I want to set the scene for you.

The power of the HS has just been given to believers at Pentecost and the body of Christ is beginning to form with 120 believers.

Peter gives his first sermon and the power of the Word is unleashed and -3,000 believed!

There is explosive energy in Jerusalem, dynamite-like power and the movement of the way of Jesus is about to go full-blown nuclear.

The Word has Power to heal (3:1-11)

Acts 3:1 ESV

¹ Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

The temple is the center of Jewish life; loaded with people, there is excitement surrounding the festival of Pentecost.

This place would be electric with activity. There would be a general busyness and bustling going on at the temple.

Acts 3:2 ESV

² And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple.

Beggar was placed at the gate of the temple. The condition of the man was so severe that people had to bring him. **He didn't do it on his own.** He was strategically placed in a position to be where many people would see him and have compassion on him and give him money.

There would be thousands of people who would pass by, so this was a great opportunity for him receive alms, or the good deeds of zealous religious people.

Notice where the man was. He was not in the temple, but outside the temple. Because of his physical condition, because of his blemishes and brokenness, he was away from worship. He was deemed unworthy to enter the house of worship. He was just on the outskirts.

Close enough to see what was going on, but not close enough to experience the power of God, or hear the Word of God. He was far enough away.

Before we get deep into our passage, I want to ask this question. Do you identify with this beggar? Are you close enough to religious experience, yet far enough away from Christ? Are you so close that you can sense the power, but never experience the life-transforming power of God?

What is hindering you from worship? Do you feel unworthy, rejected? Are you like this beggar, on the outskirts?

Let's pick up the text.

Acts 3:3 ESV

³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms.

This is just another encounter for the beggar. Yet, this is where the ordinary becomes extraordinary, because that's what an awesomely powerful God does.

[Acts 3:4](#) (ESV)

⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John,

All of the sudden the world stops, the busyness stops, and everything is in slow motion. Peter stares intently at this man, John Joins him. Remember he is a beggar. Thousands of people passing by and Peter and John stop, and they do this amazing thing.

They look at the man. They recognize his humanity, they understand his condition, they know his struggle and they take a moment to let the man feel like a human.

How many times do we pass people by and never give them a second of our time. How many times do we see people begging for help, but we avoid eye contact?

[Acts 3:4](#) (ESV)

and they said, "Look at us."

The beggar too was avoiding eye contact. His years of shame and guilt keeping him from looking at them. Yet, through all this an intense moment of beautiful grace happens. Peter says, Look at us, look.

It's as if Peter and John are recognizing this man's need for human connection by something as simple as looking at them. This is someone who is made in the image and likeness of God, someone who has been literally begging for help. What a powerful picture.

You can sense this man's humanness spring forth.

Acts 3:5 ESV

⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

Now that there is this connection, now that human to human interaction is taking place. We should know this is not just eye-to-eye, but heart-to-heart. Now that Peter and John have secured the attention of the man...they've seized the moment. Peter speaks

[Acts 3:6](#) (ESV)

⁶ But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you.

The man asks for money, and he believed that’s what he was going to receive, but what happens next is absolutely revolutionary. What the man thought he needed (silver or gold) is contrasted with what he really needed, Jesus Christ.” [1]

Peter knows this man does not need a handout; he needs a healer. He needs to be made whole. He needs Jesus, who is more than a healer. The same applies for us, we need Jesus.

[Acts 3:6](#) (ESV)

in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”

Here we see Peter release the power of the Word, Jesus Christ, upon the man.

One writer says, “We must remember that Jesus had probably entered this very gate of the temple many times and would have been well-known to a man who sat there every day. When Romans talked about the name of Caesar, they implied all the authority and power of the emperor. So here Peter referred to Jesus and everything about him as he delivered what we might call the first pure gospel in Acts.” [2]

Peter points to Christ, it’s not by the power of Peter, but the power of Jesus Christ. Peter is humble and knows it’s not about him, but all about Jesus.

Acts 3:7 ESV

⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

This is nothing short of a miracle, and that’s the whole point. “Healing does not take place because the right formula is pronounced but because Jesus is openly acknowledged as the only source of help and salvation.”[3] The power of the Word is released by the authority of Christ and this healing through the Holy Spirit confirms Peter and John. This miraculous display proves not only who they are, but whose they are. They are ambassadors for Christ and they are sent by Him.

Here we understand that:

The Word has Power, Power to Heal.

This is the first miracle that is done through the apostles, and it is the spark that lights Jerusalem on fire with the power of God, the power of the Word, the Name of Jesus Christ, the name above all names.

It's His name, His power, His authority that gives new life, a transformed life.

Acts 3:8 ESV

⁸ And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

Lame men, don't walk, lame men don't jump up. This man had been in this condition his entire life and now, he is given a new life. So, he jumps up and he does something he had never done before. He entered the temple.

His entire life he was an outcast, his entire life he was unworthy, his entire life he was left by the side of road, literally waiting by the beautiful gate. Can you identify with that? Doesn't that hit so hard.

For the first time he can enter the into house of worship. That's the power of the Word, that is the impact of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. What does he do. He is jumping and leaping and praising God. This man is making a spectacle. He is making a scene. He is praising God, glorifying God. How much of a scene was it?

Acts 3:9 ESV

⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God,

Everyone sees this. This is undeniable. This is too much. The evidence is there.

[Acts 3:10](#) (ESV)

¹⁰ and they recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms.

What? How can this be? And if you think that the detailed-oriented writer of Acts, the physician Luke, just happens to drop in the title of the gate twice for no reason you are mistaken. The providence of God takes a broken man and makes him beautiful at the beautiful gate. This is complete healing, physical and spiritual. What a landmark of transformation, change that is visibly seen by everyone and that's what the word of God does.

The word of God has power, power to heal.

No matter what your situation or circumstance, no matter your background, or your hurt, the Word of God can heal you, by the power of His name. That's the principle for us. The Word of God Heals.

You may be thinking, Can there truly be a change like that? Let's see how the people respond.

[Acts 3:10](#) (ESV)

And they (the people) were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

The people who had walked by this man, are the same people rejoicing with Him. There is something happening, the people know God is on the move, there is this supernatural energy and this miracle blows the minds of the people.

Acts 3:11 ESV

¹¹ While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's.

The man is clinging to Peter and John, there is a throng of people all around pressing in and the people are utterly astounded. This means they can't comprehend what happened. They see it, but they don't understand. God is doing something big; the Power of the Word is changing lives.

There were 3,000 people that believed at Pentecost and now the Holy Spirit prompts Peter for a second sermon in wake of the healing of the lame man. So, on Solomon's Porch Peter addresses the crowd.

This is no small crowd. This is thousands of people.

Here we see

The Word has power to Reveal Jesus (3:12-17)

Acts 3:12 ESV

¹² And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?"

Peter goes right back to humility and uses this miracle as a situation to present a history lesson. We must know that these were heavily religious people. These were people coming for the prayer meeting, people who were coming to worship God. These were people who are well versed in the Scriptures and the history of God's chosen people. Peter says "Men of Israel" Do we have your attention now? Will you listen up, will you pay attention?

Then Peter delivers his history lesson, with this significant point. The Word, The Scriptures, they reveal Jesus as the Christ.

Acts 3:13 ESV

¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

Peter is laying a foundation, tying the entire narrative of salvation together through the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Peter says, I know who you are, I know you understand your history, but do you know who Jesus is?

This is question for everyone everywhere, right?

Do you know who Jesus is?

For the crowd there things get personal, Peter says of Jesus, He is the one you turned in to the authorities. We should mention that the crucifixion and resurrection were still fresh in their minds as it was only about 50 days respectively, since those events happened.

Peter goes into an all-out assault.

Acts 3:14 ESV

¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

You denied the truth, you rejected the truth. In case there is any mistaken who Jesus is, Peter calls Him the Holy One and the Righteous One. And with those titles everyone who hears understands that Peter is talking about the messianic king, the chosen one, the Christ.

The people who hear would have many years of Jewish teaching, days at synagogue, even events like this day, prayer at the temple, all fuse together in their minds and the Holy Spirit puts all things together for them as Peter says to them.

But rather than accept the messiah, you asked for the murderer, Barabbas, to be released. What kind of people would do that?

Peter is filled with the power of the holy spirit and delivers one blow after another, pricking their hearts with words fused with energy. He goes onto say.

[Acts 3:15](#) (ESV)

¹⁵ **and you killed the Author of life,**

It's those words that echo through the temple complex. Maybe those words have echoed through your mind. Have you ever let yourself become the villains in the grand narrative of Scripture? Have you ever been able to identify with those who killed the author of life?

We all should because it's our sin that put Jesus on the cross. It's my sin, your sin their sin. They were physically there, but these words are for us too.

You killed the author of life. Ouch. That is a crushing blow and great equalizer for us all. Aren't you glad that's not the end of the story, aren't you grateful that's not the end of the sentence? There is a comma there, not a period, then the good news for all of us, then my two favorite words. But God.

But God raised Him from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

Peter says. What you meant for evil God meant for Good. What you meant for death God meant for life. To this we are witnesses. We have a testimony. **We were there with Jesus, His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension.** We were there, we know who He is personally and intimately. We understand and experience the power of the gospel and we want you to know it too. Peter's message is all about the gospel.

The gospel is like a caged lion... It just needs to be let out of its cage.

Charles Spurgeon

Here we see Peter let the lion out of its cage; this is the power of the Word.

Acts 3:16 **ESV**

¹⁶ And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

It's the name of Jesus. What a beautiful name it is amen. This is the second and third time that "The Name" is mentioned and we want to dig into this phrase a little bit more because this is the key verse for chapter 3.

The question was raised in verse 12? How was this man healed? How is all this possible?

Scholars tell us, "It is because of Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him. The beggar need not understand the resurrection, the ascension, or any other Christian theology. His response to Peter's command and outstretched right hand demonstrated faith. It's by Jesus' name." [4] [5]

We see here, that this man's faith in the power of the Living Word, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Scripture has made him well.

The Word has power; power to heal and power to reveal Jesus Christ.

Yes, the word has power, yet there is energy in this experience for all those that are there. They are in the midst of miraculous power through the Holy Spirit filled apostles and Peter continues his sermon and proves that

The Word has Power to Convict.

Acts 3:17 ESV

¹⁷ “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.

Peter showers the act of the crucifixion in grace and mercy. Rather than further condemning them, he gives love and grace and compassion. The same thing is offered to us. Do you need love? Do you need mercy? Do you need grace? I know we all do and Peter echoes the words of Christ. “Father, Forgive them for they know not what they are doing.”

Acts 3:18 ESV

¹⁸ But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

This was all part of the fathers’ plan. This was all carefully documented in the Scriptures. The prophets foretold that Messiah would suffer; he would be the suffering servant.

Isaiah 53:3 (ESV)

³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV)

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy and Peter has delivered the gospel, he has let the lion out of its cage, he has revealed the Christ from the Scriptures. There is miraculous evidence of the healing power of the word. The beggar is clinging to Peter during this message and Peter has the entire frenzied crowd on the edge of their seat.

Peter knows that the Word has power, power to CONVICT and He doesn’t just leave them there. He gives them the next step. He tells them to respond to the truth. Respond to the power of the name of Jesus Christ. How?

Acts 3:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back,

Repent, the same message as John the Baptist, the same message as Jesus Christ. Repent, turn away from your sins and turn to the name above all names Jesus Christ. The same invitation applies for us today. This is not some ancient plead for an ancient people. This is the call for us today. Repent, and Come to Jesus, the Holy One, the Righteous One the Author of life. Peter, why should they repent? Why should we repent?

[Acts 3:20](#)(ESV)

that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,

Let's say this another way. Come to Jesus, turn to God and experience the Power of the Word. Power that heals, power that reveals and power that CONVICTS us.

Perhaps you can't identify with the beggar, nor do you identify with the apostles, or the villains. Perhaps you identify with the religious people of the age who were hearing this message. Those who practice religion, but do not have a relationship with Jesus? It's not about religion, it's about relationship, always about relationship with Christ.

What is your response?(2x) My response is yes, always yes, forever yes to Christ, and it's my prayer that this is your response too.

Respond with repentance. Abandon religion and cling to the cross that gives you a relationship with the savior. You get to truly experience grace, and mercy, when legalistic religion loses to true love. Respond like that, with repentance and faith.

If this weren't enough to move the crowd Peter goes on to rehearse the history of the Jewish people. He is giving them every possible reason to understand the Power of the Risen Lord and the Power of His name, The Power of the Word.

He says Moses spoke of Him, the prophets confirmed Him, He was promised in the Garden as the Hero of the Hurting who would crush the serpent once and for all through the offspring of Abraham.

All of Scripture points to Jesus, the Messiah, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. Here is the last line of Peter's sermon

Acts 3:26 ESV

²⁶ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Wow! God sent Jesus to turn the Jewish people from their wickedness.

He says the word first, indicating there must be others that the Messiah is for and we know through the rest of this book that Jesus is for everyone, to the Jewish people first and then the gentiles. This creates a massive stir in the thousands of people.

There is a frenzy of activity and not everyone is cheering. For you see...

The Word has power to Confront the wise.

Acts 4:1-3 ESV

¹ And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them,

² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

The leaders said we can't have any of this proclaiming Jesus, none of this resurrection and the best way to stop a movement is to take away the leaders.

Well, you can't stop what the Holy Spirit is doing. Take away the people, but you can't take away the power of the Word and the Word of God does what it was intended to do.

Here is the power of the Good News.

Acts 4:4 ESV

⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

The Word has power, and the power of the word transforms lives. The number of believers explodes! There were 120 at the coming of the Holy Spirit. There are 3,000 people who believe at Peter's first sermon on Pentecost and now 5,000 people believe.

The power of the Word is the catalyst for this world-rocking movement, and you can see the foundation of repentance being laid as people believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

The religious leaders in Jerusalem are freaking out. The panic button has been hit multiple times. They lock up Peter and John; all the elders and leaders gather together even Annas and Caiaphas the high priests. This is the A-list of religious authority in the Jewish world. The red carpet is laid out for this incredible gathering of leaders.

Then the inquisition begins:

Acts 4:7 ESV

⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?”

Just this one question sets Peter ablaze with truth. He had spent the whole night in prison, and you can imagine it was a night filled with prayer because we are told.

[Acts 4:8](#) (ESV)

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit,

Do you notice that phrase. Filled with the HS. Anytime you see that, you know that fireworks are about to go off and you better pay attention because something amazing is about to happen. This is not just Peter; this is Holy Spirit-filled Peter.

[Acts 4:8–10](#) (ESV)

⁸ Here is Peters message, “Rulers of the people and elders,

⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed,

¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.

Peter says this to the very leaders that led the people to chant Crucify Him, Crucify Him. These are powerful words to leaders who murdered the chosen one.

Peter says you killed him, but God raised Jesus from the dead and it’s by the Power of His name, the power of the Word that this man lives well.

The Word has power to SAVE

Acts 4:11 ESV

¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

You rejected Him, you killed him, you tried to destroy Him, but He has become the cornerstone of everything. He overcame sin and death.

Jesus Christ is the scarlet chord that weaves together the entire story line of Scripture and He is the crimson-stained cornerstone that true faith is built upon.

What boldness, what power, what courage what strength. This is HS filled Peter and he delivers the crown of his message.

[Acts 4:12 \(ESV\)](#)

¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Amen and Amen! Yes, Yes, Yes!

The Word of God has power to heal, to reveal, to convict and to confront. It also has power to Save. There is no other name, no other way, but Jesus Christ. He is the way the truth and the life and everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

This is the moment. Here we see God orchestrate the gospel message to hit the hearts of the leaders of Jerusalem. And Peter lets the gospel lion out of his cage again. What a truth.

[Acts 4:13 \(ESV\)](#)

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished.

The leaders were amazed, astonished. They were shocked at the power of the message. Here is their conclusion.

[Acts 4:13 \(ESV\)](#)

And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Don't we want that to be said of us. Don't we want the world to recognized that we have spent time with Jesus, that we know Him and that He knows us. This is it, to be a light to the world because we have the light of Life in us.

Acts 4:14 ESV

¹⁴ But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

There was nothing they could say, there was nothing they could do. Everyone in Jerusalem could see the visible power of the Word. Everyone knew the power of the name of Jesus Christ.

The same happens today. No one can deny the power of Christ in a life that is transformed.

When the Word of God is proclaimed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, lives are transformed.

The lame man was transformed and...

The leaders knew they couldn't keep Peter and John locked up so they are going to release them, under one condition. Don't mention the name of Jesus anymore. You know it's not good for reputations, and our careers. This Jesus thing, don't mention it or speak of it.

Acts 4:19–20 ESV

¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,

²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

The Word has power to COMPEL

It compels men to tell the truth. It moves men to share Jesus.

Peter and John couldn't keep quiet, they were not going to remain silent. They were going to “go tell it on the mountain” scream it from the temple courts through all of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Why? Because God was moving through the power of His Word and because they were SENT. They were SENT. And here is the result.

[Acts 4:21](#) (ESV)

²¹ all of the people, were all praising God for what had happened.

The power of the Word is setting Jerusalem ablaze with the Name of Jesus. The people are astonished, everyone is praising and glorifying God.

Well what exactly happened?

Acts 4:22 ESV

²² For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

God had healed a man through the power of the Holy Spirit, by the living Word Jesus Christ.

This drives home our point.

When the Word of God is proclaimed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, lives are changed.

Peter and John leave and go back to their friends and tell them everything that happens. All the believers are encouraged and burst into praise of God.

Acts 4:31 ESV

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

They all get together with one unified voice praying and praising God.

Their prayer was giving glory to God for the Power of the Word. They were in the middle of a powerful experience, with prayers so powerful the earth shook by the power of the Word.

We too should pray.

- **We should pray because the Word has power to Heal**
- **We should pray because the Word has power to Reveal**
- **We should pray because the Word has power to Convict**
- **We should pray because the Word has power to Confront**
- **We should pray because the Word has power to Save**
- **We should pray because the Word has power to Compel**

And when we are compelled we can share the truth of Jesus Christ, which is the single greatest thing we can offer a hurting world.(2x)

So whether you identify with the beggar, the apostles, the villains, the religious, or the believers, know that **when the Word of God is proclaimed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, it transforms lives.**

Are you not compelled by the power of the Word and the Name above all names Jesus Christ? Let us be so moved to be those who offer Christ, fully prepared to share, by the power of His Word.

There is one thing I want you to do this week. Be inspired and empowered by the Word to Share Jesus. Why?

The greatest thing I can offer to a hurting world, is the truth of Jesus Christ.

I want you to be filled by the Power of the Word and the Holy Spirit to share Jesus. Maybe God will use you to share the gospel with someone in a moment so powerful that it transforms their life.

Go and let the lion out of its cage.

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