

Are You At The Gate Beautiful?

Acts 3



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FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:19-21 (KJV) "Repent¹ ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; {20} And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: {21} Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

A wonderful thing happened at the gate called Beautiful today - a crippled man repented, and he was made to walk again. A wonderful thing happened during the hour of Prayer today - a lost soul repented, and eternal life began. A terrible thing happened while Christ was in our midst today - the Gospel of Christ was rejected in favor of the message of mankind.

When we look at this word "**Repent¹**", the very first word in our focal text today, we often make the mistake of applying that word to *someone else*. The word "**Repent¹**" is the Greek word **metanoëo** {pronounced **met-an-o-eh'-o**}, [Aorist Active Indicative], which is actually what is called a *compound verb*. It is derived from two other words: **meta** which means *to go against* or *to change*. The second word, **noëo**, means *your perceptions, or the operation of your mind*. The word **repent¹** or **metanoëo** means *to change your way of thinking, change the way you look at things, move your mind from the ways of this world to a different way of*

thinking. John the Baptist first used this word when he

1. The word "**Repent**¹" is the Greek word **metanoeo** {pronounced **met-an-o-eh'-o**}, [Aorist Active Indicative], which is actually what is called a _____ . It is derived from two other words: **meta** which means *to go against* or *to change*. The second word, **noeo**, means *your perceptions*, or *the operation of your mind*. The word **repent**¹ or **metanoeo** means *to change your way of thinking, change the way you look at things*

preached about the coming Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, when he said:

Matthew 3:2 (KJV) "And saying, Repent¹ ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The *very first sermon* Jesus our Savior preached as is earthly ministry began was:

Matthew 4:17 (KJV) "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent¹: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Though Jesus miraculously healed many in Chorazin and Bethsaida, their failure to repent caused them to lose eternal life, though it gained them the Master's curse:

Matthew 11:20 (KJV) "Then began he to upbraid the

cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented¹ not:"

The heart of the message of the Gospel is that each person *metanoeo*, that is *change your way of thinking so*

2. The heart of the message of the Gospel is that each person _____, that is change your way of thinking so that God can bless your life.

3. John the Baptist preached *repent*, Jesus preached *repent*, people are cursed because they do not _____ (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 11:20)

that God can bless your life.

1. The Lame Man Had To Repent

Peter and John were on their way to Church that day. The Holy Spirit had just come, three thousand souls had been added to Christ's Church because *they got their minds right* and turned to Jesus for salvation. Because *three thousand repented, three thousand were saved*. The early Church was still meeting in the Temple Israel, on Solomon's Porch, and these two worthy Apostles were headed to Church to do a little praying and praising of Jesus. As they came to the Temple they saw an unnamed man sitting at the gate called Beautiful.

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:1-2 (KJV) "Now Peter and John

went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. {2} And 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;"

Now, this *man* wasn't beautiful, he was an *unnamed lame man*, one who was born lame. The gate was called Beautiful because it led to a place where God was to be worshiped, but the man was nameless, an unemployed beggar. He had a few friends, but most of those who passed him by probably cared little about his needs. Perhaps he felt the loneliness of his condition, but today he would find out God cares!

The Bible is full of nameless people whom God has healed. Though Jesus' friend Lazarus is named as one our Lord raised from the dead (**John 11:43**), there are many others who are *unnamed* though God blessed them beyond measure. There is the *woman of Samaria*, the one we call the "woman at the well", who went to draw earthly water from a well, and instead came from that well with the *living water of salvation* (**John 4:14**). There is the *woman with the issue of blood*, who, reaching through a crowd, touched the hem of the Master's garment. Because she changed her mind and reached out to God in faith she was made whole that day (**Matthew 9:22**). There is the *woman of Canaan*, a race cursed of God, who begged the Master that He heal her unnamed daughter (**Matthew 15:28**). Because she believed, her daughter was made whole that very day.

Listen Beloved, for every Adam, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, there are hundreds who are unnamed but blessed because they *changed their minds* and turned completely to Christ. The *woman taken in adultery* called Jesus **Lord**, and because she believed her spotted past was purged by He who alone has the power to forgive sin (**John 8:11**). The one named *Simon the Pharisee* may today be in eternal hellfire because he judged Jesus Christ as less than a prophet, whereas the *unnamed woman, a sinner* who *changed her mind* and washed the Master's feet with her tears, and dried the Master's feet with her hair - this *woman of ill repute* now sits in yonder glory with all the saints who have ever been - because she *repented*:

Luke 7:48 (KJV) "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."

We love to think much of ourselves, of our names, of our abilities ... but the Lord often blesses those who are *nameless but repenting*, whereas He curses those who have great names but whose minds are still on the things of this world.

4. We love to think much of ourselves, of our names, of our abilities ... but the Lord often blesses those who are _____, whereas He curses those who have great names but whose minds are still on the things of this world. (John 11:43; 4:14; Matthew 9:22; 15:28; Luke 7:48)

The Bible tells us something about this lame man, though it never mentions his name. We read:

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:2-3 (KJV) "And 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; {3} Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms."

This man was focused, not on where he was, but on *what he didn't have*. Because he was lame he was unemployable. No one would hire him, for how can a lame man be of any use in a farming community? This man had *friends*, for these friends, we are told, carried him to the Temple *every single day*. We read that in this text:

a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple

Unnamed friends laid an unnamed man in a Beautiful gate every single day so he could beg for money. His friends did what *they thought* was the best that they could do for him. He can't be employed, so lay him at the gate, a prime gate, the Beautiful gate. As this lame man lay at that gate, pitifully begging, God's Apostles came up. This man was in a pitiful state that required the *very hand of God*. This man needed to **metanoeo**, to **repent**, to change his way of thinking. As the drama unfolds we

read:

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:4 (KJV) "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us."

"Look on us". What a powerful command! This is an *Imperative* verb in the Greek, a command: *stop looking for money*, look at us! Turn your mind from your pitiful estate, and *look at us!* The Apostles did not want the unnamed beggar to look *to them* for strength or salvation, but these Apostles wanted to get his attention off of money, off of the passing crowd, off of the world, off of the lame man's destitute condition, and they wanted this man to turn his mind to *Someone Greater than all these things*. This man's *only hope* was that he *repent*, **metanoeo**, turn his eyes and his mind from where he was to where Jesus is.

5. "Look on us". What a powerful command! This is an _____ verb in the Greek, a command: *stop looking for money*, look at us! Turn your mind from your pitiful estate, and *look at us!* The Apostles did not want the unnamed beggar to look _____ for strength or salvation, but these Apostles wanted to get his attention off of money, off of the passing crowd, off of the world, off of the lame man's destitute condition, and they wanted this man to turn his mind to *Someone Greater than all these things*. (Acts 3:4; 1 Corinthians 4:10)

There are times when the preacher raises his voice in

preaching, and times you may condemn this raising. Yet he does not raise the voice to wallow in his flesh, nor to promote salvation through his own pitiful abilities. If he shouts, or cries, becoming a spectacle before you, a fool for Christ's sake:

1 Corinthians 4:10 (KJV) "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised."

then condemn him for a fool, but listen to the message of the Gospel. This was what Peter and John meant when they said "**Look on us**": Heed the message that we now have from God.

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:5-6 (KJV) "**And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. {6} Then 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 and John had his attention, but what they offered was not the things of this world. The *things of this world* will not save, will not heal, and will not bless. You may enjoy silver and gold for a small time in this life, but in eternity those things are useless!

When I was a young man we used to run the *hurdles* in the gymnasium, back when I had to do *physical education*. Can you imagine me running the hurdles? If

you've ever run the hurdles you know that you run and jump over a *bar*, or a series of bars all set to different heights. The coach kept raising the bars until only one runner was able to clear them all in the allotted time. The coach never *lowered the bar*, but you were encouraged to strive to reach that bar and exceed where others failed.

Too often today the Church has mistakenly *lowered the bar* of God's Gospel of salvation in order to accommodate the masses. In many modern Churches Peter and John would have been encouraged to *help this man find gainful employment*. Others would have said that Peter and John should have *passed the collection plate*, gathering funds for this poor crippled man. Perhaps these two great Apostles should *network* others like this man together, because there is added strength in numbers. I find it interesting that neither Peter nor John suggested any of these *oh so modern methods* of self help. Both of these Apostles shared Jesus Christ with this man, and something miraculous happened that day. The Bible says:

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:6-8 (KJV) "**Then 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. {7} And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. {8} And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.**"

That man was made whole. Though *he still wasn't given a name by the Scripture*, he was given a new name in Heaven. He was saved, healed, redeemed, and blessed beyond measure because *he believed on the name of Jesus Christ*. He changed his mind, **metanoeo**, repented of his old way of life, and God changed him, miraculously changed him, and blessed him to walk once more.

The Bible tells us that the Apostles had wondrous, miraculous powers, given to them by Jesus. The Bible tells us:

2 Corinthians 12:12 (KJV) "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

I want you to understand, though, that the miraculous thing was not that this lame man walked. Yes, that was miraculous, but the true miracle is that he was now a *child of God by faith in Christ Jesus*. The Bible says of this man that the one who beforehand was a beggar, the one who daily got up, whose *high moment in the day* was when someone dropped a penny in his plate, this man was now **"walking, and leaping, and praising God"**. This man was overjoyed because salvation had come to his house that day, salvation because of Jesus had come into his life. Listen Beloved: when you *repent* and turn *solely to Jesus*, then and only then will God bless your life beyond measure. This man *repented*, changed his mind, changed his focus from the world to Jesus, and

because of this he was saved! By the way, *Peter and John* did not correct this man for **walking, and leaping, and praising God**. The man was overjoyed because of Jesus! Just as King David of old danced in the street as God's Ark came into Jerusalem (**2 Samuel 6:16**), this blessed man danced because Jesus Christ, that wonderful Ark of Salvation, came into His heart. The love of God lifted him up to walk, whereas the love of his friends could only leave him sitting at the gate Beautiful. The power of God in Christ caused this man to leap and shout, becoming a spectacle of rejoicing, whereas all others who passed through the Gate Beautiful drearily moved toward a prayer service of obligation rather than that of love. How emotional was this man? Look at the text:

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:11 (KJV) "And as the lame man which was healed held² Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering."

6. The man was overjoyed because of Jesus! Just as King David of old danced in the street as _____ came into Jerusalem (**2 Samuel 6:16**), this blessed man danced because Jesus Christ, that wonderful _____ of Salvation, came into His heart. The love of God lifted him up to walk, whereas the love of his friends could only leave him sitting at the gate _____.

The Bible says "the lame man which was healed held²

Peter and John". This is the Greek word *krateo*² {pronounced krat-eh'-o}, which means *to seize, hug, hold back*. In other words, he *bear hugged* these disciples! And I don't blame him. I believe I'd have hugged them, too!

Application: We are all lame, limited, weak and unable without Jesus Christ. The unsaved person must turn his eyes from worldly means for survival. The *professor of Christ* must also repent, **metanoeo**, turn from the world's offerings and turn toward Jesus Christ.

In so many ways we are daily enticed into following our own resources. But it's just like that old song says:

**I can't even walk, Without You holding my hand;
The mountain's too high, and the Valley too wide;
Down on my knees, I learned to stand;
Lord I can't even walk, Without You holding my
hand!**

2. God's People Have To Repent

As the crowd gathers around this spectacle, around the unnamed but now saved and walking man, Peter begins to preach the Gospel message. Listen to what he preached:

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:12 (KJV) "And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?"

The beginning of Peter's sermon shows us that *the Apostle himself had repented* before he preached the Gospel of Christ.

I love this section of Scripture, because of who was preaching it. Peter, brash Peter, often stood up and put himself first. You remember Peter don't you? Peter was the first one out of the boat, walking on water - for a while, anyway - toward Jesus (**Matthew 14:28**). Peter was the first one to speak up and ask a question when Jesus taught (**Matthew 15:15**). Peter was the first one to figure out that Jesus was the Christ, the *Son of the Living God* (**Matthew 16:16**), but Peter was also the one who said that he wasn't going to let Jesus go to the Cross (**Matthew 16:23**). The old Peter was the one who said, *Lord, I'll never deny you* (**Matthew 26:75**), then denied the Master when a little girl called out his name. But this was a different Peter who stood before the crowd this day.

John also, the one who preached with **Peter** this day, used to argue with his brother about who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. The younger of the sons of Zebedee (**Matthew 4:21**), at one time John and

his brother James came to Jesus and asked to sit *on either side of Him* in Heaven (**Mark 10:35-38**). Though James and John were brothers, both Peter and John were *often arrogant as they walked with Jesus*. When Jesus was taken prisoner, just before His *necessary death on the Cross of Calvary*, Peter and John followed Jesus from a safe distance (**John 18:15-20**). As John recounted this act of cowardice, he referred to himself as *the other disciple*:

John 18:15 (KJV) "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest."

John became as *that nameless beggar in the Gate called Beautiful*, though he was *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. Here is a lesson that even the Christian, even a minister, even the servant of God must remember. *Repentance* is not just the person entering a state of salvation, but repentance - **metanoeo** - is a state that even a Christian must come back to. Even the saved must be constantly on their guard, lest we begin to think the power is *in us* and not *in Christ*. Repentance - a proper mindset before God - is the state that the Christian servant is called to, and a state that you must be careful to guard. As Peter said:

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:12-13 (KJV) "... Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or

holiness we had made this man to walk? {13} The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go."

The power of salvation is in Jesus! The power for eternal

7. John became as *that nameless beggar in the Gate called Beautiful*, though he was *the _____*. Here is a lesson that even the Christian, even a minister, even the servant of God must remember. *Repentance* is not just the person entering a state of salvation, but repentance - **metanoeo** - is a state that even a Christian must _____.
(Acts 3:12; Matthew 14:28; Matthew 15:15; Matthew 16:16; Matthew 16:23; Matthew 26:75; John 18:15)

life is in Jesus! The power for victorious life while you walk this earth is in Jesus! C.H. Spurgeon, that Prince of Preachers, said in the message *Jesus Wept*:

"Learn hence, my brother, that if you think to do any good in saving sinners, you must not be half asleep yourself: you must be troubled even to tears. Perhaps the most difficult thing in winning souls is to get ourselves into a fit state. The dead may bury the dead, but they cannot raise the dead. Until a man's whole soul is moved, he will not move his fellow. Tears storm a passage for warnings. If Christ's whole

self must be stirred before Lazarus is raised, we must be thrilled before we can win a soul. how can you expect to see His power exercised on others if you do not feel His emotion in yourselves? When I am weak, then am I strong. "Jesus wept", then He raised dead Lazarus."

Both Peter and John had to **metanoeo**, *repent* of their own power, and trust Christ fully. The believer must keep the *mind of Christ* as he or she moves through this life. The Scripture says:

Philippians 2:5 (KJV) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

You have a choice as to which mind will be in you. The Scripture says "**Let this mind be in you**". The servant of the Lord must have the **mind of praise**, for He is worthy of praise:

Romans 15:6 (KJV) "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Church that Jesus died for must have a **mind of peace and cooperation**:

1 Corinthians 1:10 (KJV) "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that

ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

The Christian is to recognize himself as an *ambassador of Christ*, one who represents His mind - not our own wishes:

1 Corinthians 2:16 (KJV) "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Believers must constantly be on guard lest the slanderer, that old Devil, or the world itself *corrupt our minds*:

1 Peter 1:13 (KJV) "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"

8. Both Peter and John had to **metanoeo**, *repent* of their _____, and trust Christ fully. The believer must keep the *mind of Christ* as he or she moves through this life. (Philippians 2:5; Romans 15:6; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2:16; 1 Peter 1:13)

3. Finally, The Unbeliever Must Repent

A crippled man *changed his mind* and focused on Christ, and was healed. God's workers, Peter and John, *changed their minds* and focused on Christ, and were healed. Now the force of the message goes to the *unbeliever*, the person who has never committed his way to Jesus.

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:19-21 (KJV) "Repent¹ ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; {20} And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: {21} Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Peter's message was very simple, as simple as rungs on a ladder. Repent, metanoeo, turn your mind from the ways of the world and toward Jesus. When you repent, you will *be converted*, changed from *lost* to *saved*. You will come from a state of being what Jesus called *a tare*, and will become *the wheat of God*. You will become:

Galatians 3:26 (KJV) "... the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

no longer a *stranger to God*, but will become a *stranger to this world*. You see, this *conversion*, a thing that God brings on you once you accept Christ as Savior, this conversion brings you to the next step of the ladder:

that your sins may be blotted out

The joy of having your sins forgiven is like the joy of the lame man, crippled from birth, but now free to walk and rejoice! Jesus Christ cannot come into you to live in partnership with you until you turn to Him for salvation. Once you **metanoeo**, then Jesus comes *into* your life. Peter preached:

FOCAL TEXT Acts 3:20-21 (KJV) "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: {21} Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

It is God's will that all people be saved, and the Spirit calls all to come to salvation in Jesus. The Bible says:

2 Peter 3:9 (KJV) "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."