

## **"The rich preachers with no money"**

### **Acts 3:1-10 NIV**

"One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. <sup>2</sup> Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. <sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. <sup>4</sup> Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, 'Look at us!'

"<sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. <sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.' <sup>7</sup> Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. <sup>9</sup> When all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup> they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him."

**Do you consider this healing of the lame man a dubious Bible miracle?**

**Skeptics must consider this fact.**

**Bible miracles didn't happen in *Alice in Wonderland* settings, where everything was make believe.**

**The Bible marvels occurred among typical people in ordinary situations.**

**Think of a beggar in a prime location.**

**I took this photo of a Nazareth, Israel beggar in 1980.**



**Whether he picked a good begging spot, I can't say.**

Our tour guide leader discouraged giving to beggars, and as the sandaled foot in the lower left of the pic indicates, the passerby gave no help either.

**Our text states that someone was taking the crippled man to what appears was a lucrative spot.**

**Recall how Jesus watched in the Temple one day as people brought their offerings?**

**The wealthy blew trumpets and made quite a show when they brought sizable donations.**

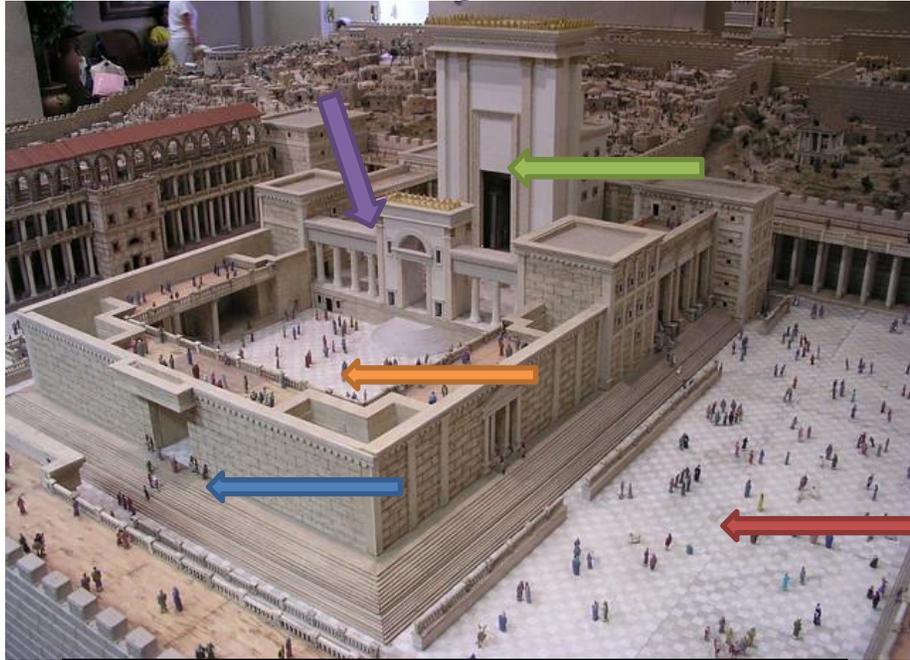
Today, contributors call the press corps so their pictures will be in the morning paper, posted on Facebook, and on the 10 PM local news.

**If the helpless guy were in the right place, he'd probably benefit from being at the main entrance as people, who gave for show went in.**

**The beggar saw Peter and John and decided to ask them for money.**

## Did they appear to be good prospects?

The Book of Acts doesn't give us these details.



Model of how the Temple and its courts probably looked in 30 AD. The Romans destroyed it in 70AD.

Arrow legend

-  Court of the Gentiles
-  Likely location of Beautiful Gate
-  Court of Women
-  Court of Men
-  Entrance to Holy Place, where only working priests could enter and in rear behind a huge curtain or veil, The Holy of Holies. The High Priest could enter behind the veil only on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippu.

The Temple faced east.

On the basis of my experience, if you are looking for financial help, preachers are generally not good prospects.

In the late 1950's when Norma and I moved to Los

Angeles to finish college, we cashed my oil company pay checks and bought groceries at a large supermarket. Knowing that I hoped to go into ministry one day, the manager warned Norma that we should protect our credit, because ministers tended to be flighty folks and it wasn't because they had angel wings.

I think Leighton Ford related the following:  
**From about 1919 to 1943, Merton Rice preached for a huge church in Detroit. He came home one morning on the train with little money. He gave the train Pullman porter the last bit of change he had. Rice forgot that he had nothing, when a beggar in the train station asked him for money. Instead of reaching into his pocket, he invited the fellow to eat breakfast with him in the station lunch room. Both ate a hearty breakfast. When Dr. Rice went to pay the bill, he realized his pockets were empty. Seeing the predicament, the beggar paid for both breakfasts.**

**Highly embarrassed, Dr. Rice said, "Come with me in a cab to my home, and I'll repay you."**

**"Oh no you don't," replied the beggar,**

**"you've stuck me for the breakfast bill,**

**but you can't stick me for the cab fare, too!"**

**You've seen that pleading look beggars give you. If you are concerned about panhandlers approaching you, it's best to avoid eye contact with them.**

Possibly the beggar asked for alms because Peter and John made eye contact with him.

Peter looked straight at him, as did John.

Then Peter said, ‘Look at us!’

“So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them...Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’”

**If you ever wore a cast due to a broken or sprained ankle, did you run the day the cast was removed?**

**Three facts help us understand this miracle.**

**First, money remained an issue for Jesus and the Twelve Apostles.**

John’s Gospel records them on the eastern side of Lake Galilee near Passover time.

“Because they saw the signs he (Jesus) had performed by healing the sick,” crowds of people followed.<sup>1</sup>

**Recall, most of the eastern side of Lake Galilee was in the Decapolis area (Greek for ten cities).**

**The Decapolis was a group of several cities dominated by Greek influences.**

Two of the Apostles had Greek names: Philip, which means *lover of horses*, and Andrew, which means *manly*.

**Some scholars wonder why Jesus spoke to Philip and Andrew on this occasion.**

**First, Jesus asked Philip: “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”**

<sup>6</sup> He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered . . . ‘It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!’”

Philip likely spoke Greek and knew the area’s markets well and the prices.

**Philip’s answer tells us that he thought their situation hopeless.**

**“Jesus, we can’t feed all these people. Do you know what that would cost?!”**

“<sup>8</sup> Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup> ‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?’”

Andrew likely conducted a quick survey to assess how much food the *Greek crowd* might have brought.

**He thought their dilemma hopeless, too.**

**Doesn’t seem as if Jesus and the Twelve operated on a posh budget, does it?**

Luke 8:1-3 tells us of wealthy women who helped fund Jesus’ ministry.



Cities of the Decapolis  
Wikimedia Commons map

<sup>1</sup> See John 6:1-9 NIV

After Jesus resurrection, their group grew from 12 to 120 to 3000, many from out of town.

**It's doubtful the Apostles had any mad money.**

**The second fact: when he first chose the Apostles, Jesus gave them power to heal the sick:**

**Matt.10:1** "Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness."

**They had the ability to heal for about three years prior to Pentecost.**

**Third, Jesus' death, resurrection, and return to God's right hand with his promise that he would return to Judge everyone, changed everything.**

**Prior to Jesus' death and resurrection, the Twelve argued and strove for attention.**

**Churches often get caught up in titles and promoting personal ambition.**

**He wasn't well educated and his manner was somewhat rough and crude. He became a Christian and he constantly pestered the minister to help him be of some genuine service.**

**In desperation, the minister handed him a list of ten names with this explanation: "These are all members of the church, but they seldom attend services. Some are prominent men of the city. Contact them to be more faithful. Here is**

**some church stationery you may use to write the letters. Get them back in church."**

**The man accepted the challenge with rugged determination and enthusiasm. About three weeks later, a letter from a prominent physician in the city reached the church office. His name had been on the list. Inside the letter was a check for \$1,000 and this note:**

**"Dear Preacher, Enclosed is my check for \$1,000 to make up for my missing church so much, but be assured that I will be present this Lord's Day and each Lord's Day following. I will not by choice miss services again.**

**Sincerely, M.B. Jones, M.D.  
P.S. Would you please tell your secretary that there is only one "T" in dirty and no "C" in skunk."<sup>2</sup>**



Note that church faithfulness is at issue here; not devotion to Jesus.

**After Jesus resurrection, the Apostles wanted to honor Jesus.**

**"Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you.**

**In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."**  
**Peter and John knew that because Jesus is Savior and Lord, he deserves all credit and honor.**

<sup>2</sup> I have lost the source of this illustration.

**As Paul told the church in Ephesians 3:21,**

**"To him (God) be glory in the church..."**

**Colossians 3:17 NIV**

**"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,  
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God the Father through him."**

**If you worship in a building or among people who  
follow a reformer, e.g. Calvin, Luther, Knox, Smith,  
Wesley, any authority but Jesus,  
prayerfully consider this from God's Word:**

**1 Cor.1:10-13** "I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with one another. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose... <sup>12</sup> Some of you are saying, 'I am a follower of Paul.' Others are saying, 'I follow Apollos,' or 'I follow Peter,' or 'I follow only Christ.'

<sup>13</sup> "Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not!"<sup>3</sup>

**If we are baptized into Christ's death and raised with him, wearing any other name or title divides Christ's body, doesn't it?**

**Why wear any name but Jesus, God's Son?**

**If Martin Luther could have saved you, he would have come back from the dead.**



**Martin Luther's grave  
Wittenberg, Germany**



**John Calvin's grave  
Geneva, Switzerland**

**John Wesley's grave near John Wesley Chapel in the Cathedral of Methodism, London, England.**

**His brothers are buried nearby.**

**I think you pay handsomely now for touring the site.**

Reformers, popes, religion founders, preachers, and past world leaders remain in their graves awaiting the day when Jesus returns to judge all people.

**No other name under heaven can save you or me.**

**Add these 2 truths to the 5 points of the Good News.**

**Jesus never acquired or guaranteed riches here.**

**Neither moths, rust, thieves, inflation, nor Russian tanks will ever penetrate heaven, where he is.**

**The beggar got a preview of Jesus' power.**

We glorify the Son of God, who paid the penalty of our mistakes and came back from the dead.

**We, our loved ones, and neighbors can bank on him.**

**When our treasure is in heaven,  
we're rich as the Apostles were.**

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 New Living Translation