

Theme: As You Are Going: The Church on Mission (Matthew 28:16-20)

Title: – As They Went - Acts 3:1-10

Aim: How God used Peter & John as they were going.

Intro: What's your "normal routine?" I'm sure not every day is the same, but for most of us, much of the day is doing the same thing we did yesterday – get up, get ready, eat breakfast, read Scripture & pray (I'm sure that's part of your day, right?), aligning w/God, then going to work, which might be the same but maybe different day by day; then going home, relaxing, having supper (maybe you're the one to fix it), relaxing more before you go to bed, only to do it all again the next day, at least until the weekend. On Sundays, corporate worship is part of our routine. During the week, Bible study may be part of our routine. We all have different things added or subtracted during the week. If you're retired, then it certainly will look different, but you have developed a routine as well. I've found that if I don't do certain things in sequence, I'll tend to forget something, like taking my morning meds or shaving one side of my face. I usually figure it out before too long into the day, but... However, I would submit to you that for those of us in the American church, even sincere believers, desiring to be disciples, in love w/our Lord Jesus, there's generally something missing in our daily, weekly, monthly routine, something which should be a consistent part of our lives, practice as Christians: talking about Jesus, sharing our faith w/those who do not yet believe. Theme: As you are going; the Church on mission. As we have repeatedly noted, our mission is the Great Commission Christ gave His disciples/us before He ascended into heaven. ***"Go therefore & (as you are going) make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And behold, I am w/you always, to the end of the age"*** (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus had told His disciples ***"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you & you shall be My witnesses..."*** (Acts 1:8). We don't know how much time had elapsed since the Day of Pentecost when about 3000 came to faith in Christ. The apostles were busy

teaching & the disciples learning. They were caring for each other & worshipping God together in the temple. They were witnessing, sharing Christ w/those they met day by day. It was all part of their routine as followers of Christ. It's interesting that Luke gives a great example of that Godly routine in our text this morning – Acts 3:1-10 [READ]. I) **Peter & John were going about their normal routine**. There's nothing to suggest that this day was any different than any other day. We read last week that "day by day they attended the temple together..." (2:46). There probably were others w/them this day, tho Luke zeroes in on Peter & John. Worshipping God & prayer were priorities for them. Other parts of their routine would have included teaching & fellowshiping w/one another. Luke wrote that they "were going up to the temple..." Having been to Jerusalem I can attest to you that if you wanted to go to the temple you had to go up. The temple is not there anymore, but it was built by Solomon on what is called the Temple Mount, or Mount Moriah, where Abraham took Isaac to sacrifice him as an offering to God, tho God stopped him – was testing Abraham's faith/obedience. We're told that the temple in its glory could be seen for miles around, glistening in the sun as you approached Jerusalem. (Depiction of Herod's temple, which he had repaired & rebuilt & expanded during his reign. Herod's temple would have been the temple Peter & John & the disciples would have gone to.) The larger building, of course, was the sanctuary, w/the Holy Place, where only priests could go to replace the shewbread & replace oil for the menorahs & such. That led to the curtain behind which was the Holy of Holies (Most Holy Place) which contained the Ark of the Covenant (by now that was long gone, having been permanently removed w/the Babylonian exile). That of course represented the very presence of God & into the Holy of Holies only the High Priest could go once a year on the Day of Atonement to place the blood of sacrifice on the horns of the altar. The other buildings or courts would have been the court of men, court of women, court of priests, court of the Gentiles, where Jesus drove out the money changers, & areas where rabbis would teach their disciples. Jesus would have taught

there. We stood on steps where Jesus is thought to have taught. So, they went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, which Luke tells us was the 9th hour or 3 PM. The Jews counted their days beginning at 6 AM our thinking. II) **Peter & John went w/an eye toward needs to be addressed & w/an ear toward the Holy Spirit.** They reportedly entered the temple area thru what was called “the Beautiful Gate,” supposedly easy access into the temple courts. It’s likely that the apostles/disciples entered thru that gate every time they went to the temple, tho we’re not sure of that. The Holy Spirit could have led them this particular way on this particular day. It could have been part of their routine or the Holy Spirit took them out of their routine that day, for this encounter. We need to listen to the Holy Spirit’s promptings & be ready to obey. If this was part of their daily routine, to come this way, then the Holy Spirit showed them something they had never seen before (this man begging) or prompted them that this was the time. III) **They encountered this man who Luke reports had been lame from birth.** He couldn’t walk or get up on his own. He had to be carried & placed daily at this gate, which was an entrance to the temple area. How gracious of his friends to carry him here every day! This was his workplace & he spent the day begging for alms. It’s all he could do. He was like numerous ones Jesus encountered during His ministry – lame, blind, deaf, demon possessed, etc. Peter & John had seen Jesus heal again & again, displaying His Lordship over all. **They met this man at his need.** We need to bear that in mind if we’re to be on mission for God. We need to pay attention to those around us & not so caught up in our routine. As they were about to go into the temple area, the man asked for alms – “help me!” I’m sure he wasn’t the only beggar at the Beautiful Gate that day, but God had him in mind that day. They stopped & looked him in the eye & said “Look at us.” He expected to receive something from them – coins to buy some bread perhaps. But Peter said, “We don’t have any money.” They could have stopped there & gone their way. “Sorry, we don’t have anything to give you.” I’m sure he had heard that before & maybe he had stopped being offended

when he heard it. But Peter didn't stop there. He said, "**but what I do have I give to you.**" Peter & John had Jesus & they knew that Jesus could heal this man. Peter spoke Jesus to the man & his situation. "**In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up & walk.**" That would have been a very cruel command if Jesus couldn't heal the man. Peter "**took him by the right hand & raised him up,**" again, a cruel thing to do if the man wasn't to be healed. But it says, "**immediately his feet & ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood & began to walk...**" The man felt the healing; his feet & ankles felt different. He knew something was different & he did what he had never been able to do – he stood up, upright & began to walk. This was certainly nothing that Peter & John could do. They were probably as in awe as the man & the rest of the people were. It was the name of Jesus spoken against impossible odds. We need to speak the name of Jesus more! Jesus, touch Kelly Wunsch! Jesus, touch our children! Jesus, touch those who struggle emotionally. The name of Jesus spoken showed/shows who He is. He is Lord of all! He is Lord of salvation! He is the repairer of broken lives! But if Jesus only healed this man lame from birth & did not redeem him, the man would still be lost. Jesus didn't leave him in his healed state. The man entered the temple w/Peter & John. He couldn't have done that before because of his handicap. He wouldn't be allowed. Now he went into the temple area w/a newfound faith in this Jesus. He went "**walking & leaping & praising God.**" There's a song about that we used to sing in our college chapel. I used to love to see Dr. Carlyle Roberts lead that song & leaping on the platform. Look how God used this. People saw this man walking, leaping & praising God & they "**recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were all filled w/wonder & amazement at what had happened to him.**" That word "amazement" in the Greek is "a throwing of the mind out of its normal state – blended fear & wonderment." They didn't know what to make of it, but they knew God had done something extraordinary. God used this miracle in Jesus' name as a set-up, if you will. V) **Peter didn't share the gospel**

w/this man until he shared it w/the crowd that had gathered. We'll hear about that next week from Pastor Derek. The point, tho, is this: you don't have to be a Peter or John to be a witness for Christ. You don't have to go around healing people (which they didn't do – Jesus did). Just go about your routine, but looking for opportunities to represent Jesus. Perhaps Peter & John had prayed for this man before & God the Holy Spirit led them to meet this man in his need that day. Sometimes the opportunity will come; sometimes the Holy Spirit will want us to wait. We (talking to myself) just need to be alert, listening & following the Spirit's lead. Speak Jesus into the lives of others. Help them to know who Jesus is, & what He came to do, that there is salvation in Him. It's a mindset we need to have. As we are going, let us be the church on mission.