

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

19 February 2023

Living Christ in the Church

Text: "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. . . . It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see." *Acts 3:6 and 16.*

Lenin's embalmed remains lie in a crystal casket in a tomb in Red Square in Moscow.

An inscription on the casket reads: "He was the greatest leader of all peoples, of all countries, of all times. He was the lord of the new humanity. He was the savior of the world."

All that Lenin did is in the present tense.

We have the true Savior of the world, the living Christ.

How do we know that Jesus Christ is living in power among us?

For the Jerusalem church, the healing of the lame man signified the power of the living Christ and that he was present among them.

How about us?

Do we see lives being changed miraculously?

Are things happening among us that amaze us and fill us with wonder?

The book of *Acts* emphasizes the reality of the living Christ in the church.

Let us consider three lessons from *Acts 3*.

The lesson of a crippled society and what can be done about it.

Peter and John had an encounter with a lame man who had been crippled from birth.

Each day someone carried him to the gate Beautiful.

He begged from the crowds of worshipers who passed this prominent place.

This is where the man's healing took place.

The lame man saw Peter and John approaching the gate. So he begged them for money.

Why Peter and John?

Only God can answer that.

But Peter's words changed the man's life.

"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 took the man by the hand and helped him up.

The man was healed instantly.

He jumped to his feet and walked around the temple courts praising God.

This crippled man had been made whole.

The truth is that all of us are crippled, and all of us need healing.

All of us have sinned, we are like sheep who have gone astray, and we are dead spiritually.

Like the lame man at the gate, we are helpless and powerless, spiritually crippled without Christ.

Salvation is our most basic need.

Our society is crippled too, with its crippled morals, marriages, and relationships.

Our society is crippled by perversion.

Abortion continues to claim innocent lives.

Pornography continues to destroy homes.

Ramped immorality is destroying millions of lives.

People are crippled by alcohol and drug abuse.

People are crippled by negative attitudes, anger, hate, resentment, bitterness, and unforgiveness.

Only Jesus can bring us the healing we need.

The lesson of divine authority and how to appropriate it.

Acts 3:6 says that Peter healed “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.”

Jesus promised his disciples, “Whatsoever you ask, ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

So Peter spoke in the name of Jesus Christ.

There is power and authority in the name of Jesus.

The answer to our crippled generation is the name of Jesus Christ, not silver or gold or self-help or positive thinking.

And Peter claimed this authority of Jesus’ name.

Jesus was given all authority in heaven and earth.

He shared his power with the apostles, and according to *Ephesians 1:19-23*, all believers share the privilege of his authority.

All that we do should be done in the awareness of spiritual authority.

We have the authority to call people to salvation.

We have the authority to pray victoriously.

We have the authority to resist the devil and make him flee.

We have the authority to enforce Christ’s victory in life and home and church and nation.

The spiritual authority is not to be taken lightly; it is to be exercised by believers who are filled with the Spirit, living cleansed lives. and walking in faith.

There is power in the church when believers appropriate this authority.

The lesson of a living message and its relevance for our times.

Peter explains that the miraculous healing of the crippled man was God’s work.

It was the living Christ at work.

What makes this first-century message relevant to the twenty-first-century times?

The message of the responsibility for Christ’s death.

The apostles declared that the crucifixion was the greatest crime in human history.

The fact is, all of us are responsible for Christ’s death.

The message of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Without the resurrection there is no hope, no salvation, no church, and no living Christ.

The message of the power of Christ’s presence.

This is the secret of the Christian life and the source of power in the church.

The message of repentance and new life.

Repentance is a forgotten message in our generation, but there is no new life without it.

The message of revival from the Lord’s presence.

The message of the return of the Lord.

The message of the early church was the second coming of Jesus Christ.

His coming was always in the consciousness of the first believers.

The message of response to God’s message.

It is a simple message: hear and be blessed, or refuse to hear and be destroyed.

Responding to Christ brings untold joy, rejecting him brings spiritual ruin.

Whenever the message of salvation is preached. Something happens.

The book of *Acts* is living proof of the living Christ in the church.

The living Christ means hope for a crippled society, authority for the people of God, and a message for all times.

Apply his power and authority to your life by faith and let his Word be living and active in you.

Then you will become His people and He will become your God and good things will happen in your life and the lives of those around you.

And the Kingdom of God will come on earth as it is in heaven.

And we will be truly Christian believers.

For we will be “Christ Like” in all we do.