

Church of Christ at Red Hill

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CHINA MISSION NEWSLETTER

MISSIONARY

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Dear brethren:

In Acts 3, we find the account of the healing of the lame beggar. There are many attendant points in its narrative that are significant in regard to miracles generally. I here mention only one of those points as it relates to a question raised in a recent Bible study—to wit, a question relating to the fact that the healing did not depend upon the faith of the one being healed.

Clear Bible teaching demands that no man has the power to perform miracles today. Though some may think they do have that ability, they are sadly mistaken. The age of miracles ceased circa A.D. 100, which is consistent with the passing of the Divine purpose for miracles at that time. Needless to say, many who claim to have this ability, by necessary inference, must always fail, though their failure is not necessarily obvious for many reasons beyond the scope of this article. But when the failure is an embarrassing, undeniable fact, they then deflect blame for the lack of success on the lack of faith of the one they are attempting to heal. This excuse runs counter to what we observe in the Scriptures. In Acts 3 we have the account of the healing of the lame beggar:

³When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he *began* asking to receive alms.

⁴But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" ⁵And he *began* to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!" ⁷And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. ⁸With a leap he stood upright and *began* to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. —Acts 3:3-8

Notice just one aspect in this story as it regards the faith of the one being healed: How much faith could the beggar have had when not even expecting to be healed? Each verse in the excerpt above, except v. 8, has some element—a word, a phrase, or a clause—that indicates no faith was present on the beggar's part. Incontrovertible to any reasoning person, is that the beggar did not exhibit any faith in Peter's ability to heal him nor any faith in the Divine source of power acting through Peter, for he was not even expecting to be healed at all on that occasion.

In Matthew 17:19-21 we have an example of a lack of faith causing a miracle to fail, but note this salient point: Failure was due to the meager faith of the disciples; it had nothing to do with any lack of faith on the part of the demon-possessed boy. Likewise, consider this: How much faith did any deceased person have at the moment of their being raised from the dead by Jesus, Paul, or Peter?

During a recent weekly study while teaching about the healing of the lame beggar, a sharp student essentially asked: Why then do we read in multiple passages: "your faith has made you well"? These words are found in six passages: the healing of the woman who touched His garment; when Bartimaeus received sight; and when the ten lepers were cleansed. Each person mentioned in these passages had the confidence that Jesus was able to heal them. Inasmuch as it was their faith that motivated them to come to Jesus for their physical healing, in that sense it was said, "your faith has made you well." The decision to exercise, or to not exercise, the authority and power to heal does not reside with the recipient of the miracle, but upon the one with whom the authority and power resides. And that authority and power to heal can be exercised even upon one exhibiting no faith, as is evident in the case of the lame beggar of Acts 3.

There is a parallel in the spiritual realm. It is faith that motivates one to come to Jesus to be saved by His authority to forgive sins. And, it is His miraculous power to heal that manifested His authority to forgive sins (cf. Matthew 9:5; Mark 2:9; Luke 5:23).

Your servant in Christ,

Eugene F. Brzozowski

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Thank you for your continued support in spreading God's word to a lost world and helping Eugene and family spread the gospel effectively this year. Your support and prayers allow Eugene to continue his efforts to spread God's word in Taiwan. He always expresses his appreciation for you.

To help with our bookkeeping, **please be sure to mark your donations for Eugene or Natasha or both.** If they are not marked, then they will be logged as support for Eugene.

We look forward to 2025 being another great opportunity to help spread God's word in Taiwan and help Eugene keep you informed concerning his efforts.

If you have a question, please do not hesitate to contact me.
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I would appreciate your input.

Chuck Taylor
(for the Red Hill elders)