Show and Tell

Acts 3:1-10 Kimby Young

Acts 4:13-22 February 9, 2025

As I said last week, the theme and challenge for the entire book of Acts is a call for disciples to share our faith, to witness to what we know to be true of God’s love in Jesus Christ our Savior. And the promise is if we share our faith, miraculous things will happen by God’s grace. Today’s scripture continues that invitation. In fact the two scripture passages today are part of one story – the beginning and the ending. I just decided not to read two entire chapters of scripture this morning. Go back and read the whole story if you have time. It is the story of how Peter and John answered God’s call to let people know about Jesus. And it’s a good example of how we can do the same thing. No, I’m not suggesting we will be able to cure people. But I do believe God will bring healing and life to anyone who receives God’s gift of love.

In today’s scripture, Peter and John witness to their faith in Jesus Christ in two steps. They show and they tell. First comes the showing of God’s love. When the story opens, we find them just going about their everyday business. They are on their way to the temple for afternoon prayer. This sounds like something they do every day, or at least every chance they get. Often people who were in need would wait at the temple gates to catch people on their way to worship, asking for help – usually in the form of money. Peter offers a much greater gift. He stops and engages with the lame man. Scripture says, he “looked intently” at the man. We all know the difference between dropping a few coins and actually looking at someone’s circumstance. I’ve done both in my time and you probably have to – I have walked on by and I have stopped to help. To stop and look and listen. To engage with someone and understand their story takes more courage, more time, more love.

Peter says, “What I have I give you.” He offers the gift of Jesus Christ and calls on the power of the Holy Spirit to heal the lame man. For us the healing we can offer might be less dramatic. But when we show people God’s love in any way, we are offering a miracle. When we show people what love looks like, When we point to the love of Jesus, When we show people God, then miracles happen. I’ve seen it. You’ve seen it, I hope. Again, maybe not an instant cure for a lifelong illness, but maybe a blessing of just as much power. The chance to know Jesus. The chance to be transformed by that love. The chance to make a difference in the world. There are many ways to show God’s love. Sometimes it is easy. Sometimes it takes more time and effort. Jesus Christ calls us to try – to try to show God’s love to everyone we encounter.

I think many of you, most of you, are very good at showing God’s love. Like Peter and John, you give what you have. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves to take the time, to pay attention, to make the effort. But we know what it means to show God’s love because we have received that gift of God’s love in our own lives. We love because we have been loved.

The interesting message from the book of Acts and today’s scripture passage is that the gift of God’s love doesn’t end with the giving. The man is healed but that is just the beginning of the story. The man healed runs around jumping and leaping and praising God. The transformation is immediate and obvious. People notice. People ask questions. Peter sees the opportunity to tell people about the miracle – to tell people about Jesus and the transformation possible because of God’s love. Peter doesn’t stop with the show. He goes on to tell.

The part of today’s scripture I left out between chapters 3 and 4 is a whole sermon Peter preaches in the temple about God’s love in Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. He wants everyone to know about Jesus. He explains that this miracle of healing is because of Jesus, and that anything is possible because of the power of God’s love in Jesus Christ.

Sometimes we don’t point to the presence and power of God as clearly as the first disciples did. Sometimes we are reluctant to talk about God at all. We don’t want to offend anyone or embarrass anyone. We don’t want awkward moments. We are afraid to speak up. But sometimes we actually do have to spell it out. Sometimes we do need to give God the glory. The stories from Acts remind us to go ahead and point to God – tell people when you see signs of God’s love. Tell people when you notice grace. Tell people how God has blessed you and where you see the movement of the Holy Spirit in the world. Tell people.

Because sometimes people don’t know what we think they must know. Sometimes people don’t notice God. Sometimes people don’t realize how very much God loves them. Sometimes people don’t see the good. Sometimes people don’t understand that grace is right here given to everyone. Sometimes you have to say it as well as show it. And you who know me, know that I believe you can never say too often. Jesus loves you. God loves you. You are blessed. You are welcome. You belong. God will give you whatever you need. Believe. And say it. Tell someone. Make absolutely sure they know God’s love.

In the end of the scripture reading for today, Peter and John appear before the council in Jerusalem and they are told not to speak about Jesus again. They are threatened with arrest if they continue to speak. Peter and John say, “we’re going to keep talking about Jesus.” It is right to tell about Jesus. We absolutely must tell people about Jesus. Nothing could stop them. And the result is 2000 years of church history. 2000 years of people hearing about Jesus and coming to believe. According to Acts, that is the actual miracle of this story – not the healing, or not just the healing, but all the believing that followed that loving act of God. It is miraculous when someone believes. It is miraculous when anyone receives and accepts the grace of God. It is miraculous to know that we are loved and to share that love in the world. It is miraculous to see and to share the love of God in Christ Jesus anywhere any time.

We may not be able to heal someone with a touch or a word, but then again, maybe we can with God’s power and presence. When you notice someone. When you stop and pay attention. When you see someone – really see them and try to understand. When you give what you have – whether it is time or care or encouragement or hope. When you give what you have because of the love you have received from Jesus. When you show God’s love. When you tell of the grace of Jesus. When you give glory to God. Well, then, that’s when miracles happen. That’s when healing comes. That’s when love grows and grace abounds. That is the blessing of God in Jesus Christ our Savior. May you be so blessed.