

## Acts 3:1-25 (A Constant Cause)

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> Oct

As I was studying this passage, I was struck by somethings that we could say were constants in the life of the early church...

That the early church was flying by the seat of its pants, learning as it went along...developing good habits and questionable habits as they went along. But there were certain habits that were constant cause for opportunity...

- Constant cause to explain and declare Christ!
- Constant cause to view Christ as central to the mission.
- Constant cause to create wonder and turn "the world upside down."
- Constant cause of frustration for the opponents of the message of the Gospel.

We are going to take a little time and look at a couple of these constants....

Sometimes when you read the pages of the book of Acts you wonder how they got as far as they did...really with very little to go on other than the fact that they were not on their own...

Jesus had promised a comforter, helper, paraclete. He had promised that would receive Power from God to fulfil the mandate of the Gospel...

He had promised his disciples that they would do even greater works in and through his name.

In fact, Paul says when addressing the Corinthian believers who thought they had arrived... and they had no need of Paul or anyone to help them.

**"But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power."**

1 Cor 4:19-20

Not just miracles, but the power of changed and transformed lives, where Jesus is more than someone who lives in an extension at the side of their self-satisfied, self-built homes...Jesus is not just interested in moving in. He wants the keys!

As we travel through the book of Acts, we are looking for cues that we can pick up on... We are seeing a people who have willingly surrendered the keys to their lives. It is no longer about them and theirs...But His!

We are beginning to the Genesis of the church, looking at the fluid nature of something that has just been birthed in a deluge and was becoming orientated with new surroundings.

The early church was being led by people who had been and were being led by Jesus and were now discipling others...and feeling their way one step at a time... Terror and Trepidation...

We can take some encouragement...we have so much, we have the cannon of scripture...the writings of the apostles and we have the same Holy Spirit that inhabited and flowed out of the apostles...

Do we dare to dream...?

### 1. The early church had a constant cause to explain and declare Christ!

We have spoken about this miracle, many times...like all miracles it has 1 specific point. That is to validate the message of the Gospel and point to Jesus! Signs and wonders are not the goal of a powerful local church! Introducing people to Jesus is...the funny thing is when Jesus becomes the absolute centre, the core...miracles happen. God is Glorified. But the greatest miracle is the New Birth...

We see again in this window into the life of the new-born church, a heady mixture of sound and fury...faith and incredulity...and yet here is a people unlike any people that has ever been seen before living highly questionable lives making the most of God given opportunities.

Here it comes... so simple..." **Can you spare some change?..."**

No.1 Peter and John are not thinking what would Jesus do?

They are asking the question what is Jesus doing?

They are confronted by a man in rags, lame all his life... Who only asks for money...

But these guys have their Jesus senses super charged... and they know Jesus is going to give this guy more than he bargained for... and they had to be obedient to that prompting.

So often we miss the opportunities because we either not willing or not listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

**Many of us would have given what was asked and hurried on with our day...**

But their prompt and willing response led to an opportunity to explain and declare the Gospel of Christ!

We see this repeatedly in the book of acts even into the very centres of power...

Religious and governmental... The Gospel was making headway...because of the choices that were being made by the believers to simply watch, listen and obey.

2. They had a constant cause to view Christ as central to the mission.

"What we have we give you...." This was not an ego trip, if it was when people pointed to them and gasped as if it was because there incredible Holiness that maybe there were people in front of them who had actually managed to get their stuff together and follow the program ....

They would not have been so quick to correct their misconception...

They would have bathed a little in the limelight, basked in the reflected glory for a moment or two.

In fact the total opposite was true.... their response was definite and immediate.

Nothing to do with us...everything to do with Jesus! They were not going to let those who gasped in amazement for one moment that it was anything other than an act of Grace from and through the power of the risen Christ.

<sup>12-16</sup> When Peter saw he had a congregation, he addressed the people:

"Oh, Israelites, why does this take you by such complete surprise, and why stare at us as if *our* power or piety made him walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified his Son Jesus. The very One that Pilate called innocent, you repudiated. You repudiated the Holy One, the Just One, and asked for a murderer in his place. You no sooner killed the Author of Life than God raised him from the dead—and we're the witnesses. Faith in Jesus' name put this man, whose condition you know so well, on his feet—yes, faith and nothing but faith put this man healed and whole right before your eyes. The Message

### 3. The early church had a constant cause to create wonder and turn "the world upside down."

Whilst miracles like the one at the beautiful gate create cause for wonder... We see throughout the book of acts many more... even up to this point in the story...

The declaration of the Gospel... resulted in "What shall we do?"

The working of signs and wonders...resulted in "Everyone being filled with awe."

The gathering of the believers and the sharing of what they had with anyone who had need...resulted in "enjoying the favour of all the people."

This just brings us to the end of chapter 2...

An act of obedience brings about a miracle and the opportunity to declare Christ.

"Friends, this world is not your home, so don't make yourselves cozy in it. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives." 1 Peter 2:11-12

4. Constant cause of frustration for the opponents of the message of the Gospel.