

Ben Libby
 Sermon
 September 13th, the 15th Sunday after Pentecost

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness, AMEN. Our sermon text for this morning comes from Psalm 33, beginning at verse 10:

Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, an hour of prayer. 2 A certain man who was lame from birth was carried there every day and placed at the temple gate, which is called Beautiful, so that he could beg for donations from those entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked them for a donation. 4 Peter looked directly at him, as did John. Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So the man paid close attention to them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I will give you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!" 7 Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately the man's feet and ankles were made strong. 8 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk. He entered the temple courts with them, walking, jumping, and praising God. 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 They recognized him as the one who used to sit begging for money at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. 11 While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people came running toward them in utter amazement in the area called Solomon's Colonnade.

This is the Word of The LORD!!! The congregation may be seated...Mercy, Grace, and Peace ARE YOURS from your God and Father and your Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed...

*"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
 By any other name would smell as sweet."*

These are famous words, penned by a famous author, from a famous play. William Shakespeare wrote these words for his play "Romeo and Juliet". The words are famous because, as brief as they are, they are profound. Names don't really matter. A person, place, or thing is what it is. A name dresses it up, but it either has value or doesn't. If the flower had some other abhorrent name other than rose, it would still smell sweet and look beautiful.

Names don't matter. This is something that I am trying to remind myself lately. My wife and I are trying to find a good name to pick for our third child. This is something that can be over-thought and stressed over. But at the end of the day, his name is what is. No matter what we call our child, we will still love him. We do not yet know what our child will be named. But God does. He already knew him from the foundation

of creation. It's just up to us to figure it out. That really takes the pressure off.

Names don't matter. Except for one. When you boil it all down, there is only one name that really matters. That name is JESUS CHRIST. His name is the only one that you need to remember. That is the only name you need to know when it comes to your everlasting soul. It is the name of the person who paid for your sins in full. It is the name that will get you into the gates of heaven.

In our sermon text this morning, Peter and John were walking through a gate. There they saw a certain unnamed beggar who was destitute. Everyone knew him and knew who he was. He himself had heard that name before. It was a name that was on everyone's lips. But little did he know just what that name could accomplish. He would never forget what that name did for him that day, and no doubt he would never forget what that name would do for him in the future. What is

in the name of Jesus? It is beauty, it is power, and it is worthy to be praised! - MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATIONS OF OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT O LORD, OUR STRENGTH AND OUR REDEEMER, AMEN!!!-

Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, an hour of prayer.

The name Jesus had really been gathering steam for some time at this point. I doubt you could find anyone in the city who hadn't heard it or said it in the past couple of months. Within that timespan, Jesus had entered the city, been crucified, resurrected, and ascended. 10 days later, Pentecost had taken place, and the Holy Spirit had been outpoured on the Apostles. The Apostle Peter already preached about the name of Jesus on that day. He would do so again on this day.

But first, he had a powerful introduction and object lesson. The name that Peter had proclaimed and would continue to proclaim would be seen and shown working in action. **2 A certain man who was lame from birth was carried there every day and placed at the temple gate, which is called Beautiful, so that he could beg for donations from those entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked them for a donation. 4 Peter looked directly at him, as did John. Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So the man paid close attention to them, expecting to receive something from them.**

This man was used to not receiving eye contact. He had been coming to this Beautiful gate daily for many years. Later we find out that this man was over 40 years old. How many times had he been dragged up those steps? How many times had he been given small alms and how many times had people averted their eyes from him? How many times have we looked straight ahead pretending not to see someone with a cardboard sign on the side of the road?

But it was different back then. Back then, if you were crippled like this man, this was the only way to survive. There was no welfare back then. The government did not care for people like this. Instead,

he relied on the charity of others. He relied on people getting him here and carrying him home. He relied on the generosity of the temple community. Many people would go through this gate and many people knew about his poverty. No doubt his begging had been a common refrain that was a familiar part of going to the temple.

But on this day, a couple of men caught his attention. As he was making the general pleas for alms, he saw two men staring him straight in the eye. Their attention caught his attention. Surely, they were about to give him something. He never would have guessed about what kind of beautiful donation he was about to receive at the Beautiful gate.

6 But Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I will give you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"

I wonder what the greatest donation this man had ever gotten was. Church folks are a giving bunch. This is common knowledge and it is often exploited. I can't tell you how many phone calls I have gotten looking for some kind of financial assistance. Ascension is pretty early in the alphabetical listing of the phone book. They call looking for help with the mortgage, help with the utility bill, even help to get Christmas presents. I don't think they realize how *little* we have to give monetarily. On the other hand, I also don't think they realize how *much* we have to give spiritually.

I will always remember one such call. I can't remember what the lady was asking for, money for something. I responded with basically the same message as Peter had here. I said something like, "Well, we don't have a lot of money here, but we do have the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." She said, "Ok, great!" So, I continued. I talked about how Jesus died for her and how all of her sins had now all been forgiven. This meant that now she could have the hope of eternal life. I went on *until* I was interrupted . . . by the dial tone. I had evidently missed the sarcasm in her voice. She didn't say "OK, great!" She said "k, great.." and then hung up.

Sadly, the Gospel often gets dismissed out of hand. It is the greatest thing we have that we can give, and it

is our mission to do so. But most people don't really care about that which they cannot see. They are not worried about the next life, they are worried about today. They often fail to see the potential for what the power of the Gospel can really do.

But this man would see that power in action! **7 Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately the man's feet and ankles were made strong. 8 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk.**

What had Peter given this man? It wasn't anything that he could hold in his hands. It wasn't anything that could be bartered or sold. It wasn't anything that would sustain him. It was greater than any of that. This was a miraculous healing. Yet, it was even greater than that too! What had Peter really given this man? It was the name of Jesus. It would heal his legs, but even greater still it healed his soul.

What is in the name "Jesus"? Would He who would be called Jesus by any other name be as beautiful, powerful, or praiseworthy? NO! His name was given by the directives of angels on behalf of God! His person was around long before that, indeed before the beginning of time itself. It was through Him that all creation had come into existence. In the beginning, He simply was. All things were made through Him, and without Him, nothing was made that was made. It was always JESUS, as was explained, **"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."** (Mat 1:21 NKJ)

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds | In a believer's ear! | It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, | And drives away his fear." There is no name more beautiful to the destitute. His name has the same power today as it did that day in Jerusalem. When someone once asked Jesus who He was, He quoted the Old Testament and told them this: **"The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 "And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."** (Mat 11:5-6 NKJ)

That man, before the name of Jesus was proclaimed to him that day, was laying on lame legs. Afterward, he was upright and would walk and jump. But the fact of the matter is that the name "Jesus" is so powerful, one day everyone will bow down in reverence to it. **Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.** (Phi 2:9-11 NKJ)

That man served as a great lesson and example to the people who were in the temple there that day. He also is a great lesson and example to us. Why? Because he is you. You were him. Before the name of Jesus came to you, you were just as helpless and destitute. There was nothing you could do about your sins. They crippled you. We were dead in our trespasses and sins, and try as we might, there was nothing that could be done about it. But then came the name of Jesus, the name which saves His people from their sins. Jesus' name has power because of who He is and what He did and does. He saved you from your sins and won you the right to eternal life in heaven. His name came to us, by the mouth of a disciple, and it made us alive again. Our spiritual feet and ankles were made strong by it. Now we can jump for joy...all because of the name which is above all names.

And that is exactly what the man did! **8 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk. He entered the temple courts with them, walking, jumping, and praising God. 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 They recognized him as the one who used to sit begging for money at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.**

There is nothing better than first-hand testimony. This is why witnesses are so vital in any important court case. If someone saw with their own eyes what happened, then their testimony is crucial. Everyone

who was there that day could testify to the after-effects of this miracle. They all knew who the man was, even though they had never seen him like this before. The man practically spent all his time there, presumably for decades. He begged day in and day out. Yet here he was, not just upright for the first time in his life, but jumping and leaping for joy! They all saw it, and they all were filled with wonder and amazement.

Testimonials are also important. Whenever there's any kind of infomercial, they are always full of testimonials of people who have used the product and loved it. They speak about how it changed their lives, or how they now will never use anything else again. This man's testimonial was not one of verbal endorsement. His testimonial was much more powerful than that. He didn't have to say anything. He signed his affidavit of appreciation by vaulting repeatedly through the air.

Peter would seize the moment and expound on what just took place. **12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 "But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 "and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16 "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. (Act 3:12-16 NKJ)**

Word spread quickly about this event. The Priests and commanders of the temple guard arrested Peter and John for this. The next day there was a trial and they demanded to know by what power or name they had done this. Peter once again said, **let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene,**

whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead! By him this man stands before you healed.

11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone.

12 "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved." Acts 4:10-12

It all boiled down to one name: JESUS! He was the reason that a lame man was healed. He was the reason that many believed what Peter said that day (Luke tells us here that the number came to be about 5,000). Jesus was the reason why Peter and John were arrested and charged . . . with a miracle? When they later ordered them to stop preaching this name, Peter told them it wasn't possible. They wanted to punish them for preaching that name of Jesus, but **They found no way to punish them because all of the people were praising God for what had happened.**

So too is it with us. We can't help but praise and preach the name of Jesus. Why? Because we are first-hand witnesses to its beauty and power! That name took condemned sinners like us and healed our souls. It took us, dead in our trespasses and sins, and instead made us dead to sin and alive to Christ! We cannot help but to jump and leap around in this world and express our joy and gratitude for what He has done for us. It's not possible to keep silent. As Peter explained to those who arrested him, **20 For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.**

We can't help but speak about the wonders that God has performed in our lives. And that is how the Church grows. We have been given the exact same thing that this unnamed beggar had been given. It's not anything that we could hold in our hands, but rather it is something that we can grasp onto tightly by faith. It's not anything that can be bartered or sold, but it's worth far more than any amount of silver or gold. It's not anything that would sustain us physically, but it will sustain our souls until the end of time. Our legs may not have been healed, but even greater still our souls have been healed forever.

*“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.”*

Call us whatever you want. We can be rightly called both sinner and saint. Both are correct. We can be called destitute beggars. We can also be called healed vaulters. Both are true. One is the past and the other is the future. While we carry around with us this body of death, the past comes back to haunt us. But the future promised to us by the Name above all names always resounds.

What’s in a name? Very little. Except for one Name: JESUS! In that name, we find a promise that is constantly looked for and a purpose that is constantly lived for. That very same name is the name to which sinners point to and are declared to be saints. Through the name of Jesus, we also find our names, and we find that they are written down in the book of life. It is a name that is beautiful, powerful, and worthy of our praise. It is a name that is powerful enough to heal our bodies, but even greater, it is powerful enough to heal our souls! AMEN!!!