

Community Group Discussion Questions

“The Healing through Peter” Acts 9:32-43

Sermon Series Title: “Church Beginnings”

Sermon Series Summary: From now until around Easter, we will be in the book of Acts, covering chapters 1-12. After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, we see the NT church being born by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this series, we see the church being built, the kingdom going forth, and the gospel being proclaimed.

Setting: The book of Acts is a transitional book between the resurrection of Jesus and the established local churches of the epistles. With Jesus’ call to the church in Acts 1, we see how the gospel spreads to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth.

Summary: We transition from Saul back to Peter. The Lord brings him to Gentile towns and uses him to heal various people. Aeneas is a paralytic, Dorcas is dead, and Simon the tanner is an outcast. God uses Peter to heal and raise all of them by the power of Christ. Through this passage, we see our own healing, sanctification, and salvation in Christ.

Sermon Points:

1. The Characters
2. The Cure
3. The Christ

Main Idea: *“Jesus heals and resurrects us through His word and work.”*

Opening Question

1. Is there an area in your life where you feel like you’ve been healed by Christ? Explain.

(Answers will vary.)

In our passage this week, we will transition from Paul back to Peter. We see the Lord laying down the foundation for the kingdom and the Holy Spirit to fully come upon the Gentiles. Peter goes to Gentile towns this week, and we see the healing of Christ through him.

Read Acts 9:32-43

Community Group Discussion Questions

2. What does this passage teach us about the compassion and healing of Christ?

(We see that the compassion and healing of Christ extends to the lowly, the broken, the hurting, the dead, and the outcast. It reaches to the lowest of society, and Christ brings healing to them.)

Aeneas is a paralytic who has been paralyzed for 8 years. He has not been able to heal or even take care of himself. His mat has been his permanent dwelling. But Peter, by the power of Christ's word, calls him to rise and make his bed. He correctly cites the source of life and healing as Jesus and essentially calls Aeneas to not live his previous life in paralysis anymore.

For Dorcas, she has been dead for awhile like Lazarus. She was a woman of faith and generosity. The community loved her and was mourning over her. However, Peter sends everyone out like Jairus' daughter in Luke 8 and prays. Peter then says similar words to Jesus in Mark 5 and calls Dorcas to rise. He holds her by the hand to raise her up.

For Simon the tanner, he works with animal carcasses, so he is unclean. He is required to live at least 50 cubits, outside the city as an outcast. And we see the healing for him as Peter stays in Joppa with him for many days. Peter most likely has the option to stay with anyone, but Peter decides to stay with him.)

3. What does it show us about our own healing?

(This passage shows us that we are the paralytic. Maybe we're paralyzed in our shame, and we would rather run away than people find out about our brokenness or weakness. Maybe we're paralyzed in fear, because we fear losing the things we love most. Maybe we're paralyzed in anxiety, because we are losing control and it feels like our lives are falling apart. Maybe we're paralyzed in addiction, and even though we try so hard to pull away, we fall back into our addictions. Maybe we're paralyzed in guilt, because we know how sinful we are. Maybe we're paralyzed in depression, because we have a dark perspective on ourselves and this world, and nothing gives us hope and joy.)

We are the ones dead in our sin. There is no way we can save ourselves. There is no hope within ourselves. We don't have the power to resuscitate ourselves or others.

We are the ones outcast because of our sin and shame. We are unclean, and we are exiled from the presence of God.

Community Group Discussion Questions

Christ heals us. He is the source of life for us. By the power of His word, we can rise up and walk. We are raised from the dead. Not only that, we have the power to make up our bed, knowing that our permanent dwelling place is no longer on the mat. The dominion of sin has been broken, and it no longer has power over us.

This is all by way of the cross. Jesus took on our paralysis, being nailed not to a mat but to a cross for our sins. Jesus took on our uncleanness and exile, being cast out shamefully to Calvary. Jesus took on our death, so that we may have righteousness and life.)

4. What are some ways we are challenged by this passage?

(One challenge may be from the story of Aeneas. We are healed, but we may not have risen. We're not walking. We're still acting like we're paralyzed even though we have the power to walk. We don't make up our bed, because we're comfortable in our beds of idols and this world. We're afraid of losing our earthly treasures and joys, so we stay seated.

Another challenge may be from the story of Dorcas. At her funeral, we see the tunics and garments Dorcas made to the widows and the poor. What are the tunics and garments that people will bring at our funeral? How have we loved and ministered to the broken around us?

Another challenge from the story is to pray. Peter has performed many miracles already, but he still prays for Dorcas to be raised from the dead. He relies on the Lord. He knows that Jesus is the sole source of life and that he cannot do anything without Christ. Do we have that dependency, rest, and trust in the Lord?

The last challenge from this story is the call for us to reach the outcast and unclean. Like Peter, we may be the hands and feet of Christ to touch those who are broken and hurting. We can be in relationship with them, disciple them, and live life together with them like Peter, just like Jesus reached out to us and brought us into community.)

Final Thoughts: *Our passage shows us the broken people that God heals through Peter as the gospel starts to reach the Gentiles. In their brokenness, we see our brokenness, and in their healing, we see our healing in Christ. And through that healing, we are challenged and empowered to go and be manifestations of Christ's healing to those around us as we humbly rely upon the Lord.*