***HOMEWORK FOR FEBRUARY 18***

***Acts 4 and 5***

***Acts 3:8-9***

***…he sprang up, stood a moment, and began walking. Then he entered the Temple court with them, walking and leaping, and praising God. Everyone saw him walking and praising God***.

**What Does it Say?**

He sprang up, stood a moment, and began walking. He entered the Temple court walking, leaping and praising God. Everyone saw him. He was walking and praising God.

**What Does it Mean?**

**DO** you see him? The time of Shul, prayer is starting, and you don’t want to be late. Oh, there is the lame beggar, asking for money… ahhhh some things never change! You can always bet on running past that guy on your way to Temple each day. You run past him, business as usual, get your normal spot, and begin to praise God. You praise Him from Psalm 145 and then move into the prayers for the Redeemer to come, Adoani to bless…. yada yada yada… but then…. it is NOT business as usual! Who is the screamer off key in the back who doesn’t even know the right way that this prayer is done? He is messing up the flow…. then you turn… and it’s ***him,*** the LAME beggar! Naw, can’t be! What in the world?!?!

We have routine, don’t we? We go to a certain church, we go to a certain service, we sit in a certain location, we have expectation of normalcy and flow, we have comfort in sameness, and then, all of a sudden my experience is wrecked. God has done a miracle, but if I was being honest, I would be a tad bit peeved that it interrupted the way things are run. Yes, it’s a miracle, but maybe he could get a special time to share, or a Sunday School class would invite him. This is not on the schedule. We do not have time in our schedules for the Holy Spirit to show up and show off, do we? So we miss the miraculous. The people of Acts 3 did not miss the miraculous, which is awesome! They stopped their day, stopped where they were going on their way, and looked closer… even if it meant the schedule for the rest of the day would be affected. I know I would have probably gotten in my car quick so I could get out of the parking lot in a timely manner while everyone else was listening to Peter.

I love this lame beggar in Acts 3. You totally see why the Holy Spirit led Peter and John to him. Peter and John could be trusted to take a minute to see where the Holy Spirit was leading and be sensitive to that. This lame guy could be trusted with an incredible personal testimony of Jesus. This guy was trusted with something HARD… he was lame for over 40 years… so this was not just passing palsy. This man was begging for his existence, trying to matter in a society that ran by him constantly, and occasionally would throw a coin his way. He was worth what was in his cup day after day. How many people even noticed he was there and how many people knew his name or cared what his name was? They would give him money because God commanded them to do so, they obeyed God, they were devout, they loved God and so they did good… day after day… Yada, yada, yada.

I love what God does. God loves to take the most insignificant person, and puts them in the middle of a room full of devout God-fearing people and then shines the light on that insignificant person. He gives them the stage that person tells of their love for Jesus, and the power in the name of Jesus that gave them such a powerful witness! I love it! You cannot shut this guy up! ***That*** is why he was trusted. This guy was given the ability to walk…. ***AND HE DID***…. he could have sat back down, thanks a lot, that healing is between you and me… this is the only way I know how to make bank… I don’t have any other skills than this… I mean truly, Jesus is going to come and heal me and disrupt my life as I know it? We are healed to ***walk***! TO continue, to ***procuterio*** (from message last week). It is your witness and my witness of what the Name of Jesus has done in ***our personal lives*** that draws people to Himself! We get to live in the presence of the Living God and He is doing things each and every day\ that become our *continuing* testimony. It may not be a miraculous healing from wheelchair to marathon, but He is miraculous! We settle for normal. There is no accountability in normal. There is no disappointment in normal either.

The testimony of this man could not be taken away from him. Every time he got up from that day on… he would literally be a walking testimony of Jesus! His witness could now go farther and deeper and wider! This is why we are healed! The people who attended the Temple prayer service that day cannot tell this man that he is a liar or that he really isn’t healed. There is NOTHING that can take the testimony of who Jesus is to this man. ***That is*** the testimony of Jesus that He died to give ***each of us***! We may have been “saved”, “found”, our whole lives, and have gone to church and not missed a Sunday, but have we missed Jesus in the normalcy of all of it?

The answer to the brokenness outside the doors of the church is the healing that needs to take place on the inside. It’s time we allow the Holy Spirit to come wreck our perfectly planned out services, Bible studies, and retreats and programs, so He can join us to His testimony of awesomeness! We cannot obey the command “Go and make disciples” (Matt 28) if we have a lame impotent Gospel. The Good News of Jesus heals us, makes us to walk, frees us, and gives us sight…. perhaps we had no idea we were sick, lame, bound and blind until this man in Acts 3! It is time for us church people to embrace and know the ***personal*** testimony of who Jesus is, and what He has done for each of us. That’s the message that will draw a broken world to the feet of Jesus. Have you been healed? Have you been set free? Have you been given sight where you missed Him right before your eyes for so long? What has Jesus done for you? If there is no story of healing, feeding, leading or freeing, perhaps it’s time to bend your knee and ask Him, personally what story of Jesus He has for you.

**What Does it Mean to me?**

What is your personal testimony of how God’s presence is continually showing up in your life? I am not asking what the moment of your conversion is necessarily, I am asking how you have continued to walk in that life change and how He is currently continuing to impact your life?

Is your witness of Jesus just summed up in a conversion experience? Did you realize it was a beginning and not an end? How are you going to continue to seek an ongoing testimony and witness?

LIVE it OUT

Ask God, first of all…. to show me what my testimony of Jesus is, then ask the Holy Spirit to lead me to where He would like me to share that testimony. There is someone who needs the hope of Jesus, and the fire of the Holy Spirit He has entrusted to me.