

Theme for 2021

WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT; WE ARE ONE IN THE LORD!

‘They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love.’

“I have commissioned them to represent me just as you commissioned me to represent you. And now I dedicate myself to them as a holy sacrifice so that they will live as fully dedicated to God and be made holy by your truth.” “And I ask not only for these disciples, but also for all those who will one day believe in me through their message. I pray for them all to be joined together as one even as you and I, Father, are joined together as one. I pray for them to become one with us so that the world will recognize that you sent me. For the very glory you have given to me I have given them so that they will be joined together as one and experience the same unity that we enjoy. You live fully in me and now I live fully in them so that they will experience perfect unity, and the world will be convinced that you have sent me, for they will see that you love each one of them with the same passionate love that you have for me.”

John 17:18-23 The Passion Translation (TPT)



This Week’s Thought – May 30, 2021

“Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” **Acts 3:1-6 English Standard Version (ESV)**

“We’re ALL in this TOGETHER.” To go to the temple at the hour of prayer was to surround yourself with the whole of the Jewish community. This was not a sparsely attended midweek prayer service but was the very heartbeat of their religious and economic life. The temple and surrounding areas would have been flooded with people, coming and going at breakneck speeds, rushing from prayer to the next engagement, business meeting, etc. Though lacking billboards and skyscrapers, this scene was closer to Times Square (Pre-COVID) than it was a simple countryside village.

In the midst of this activity and commotion, Acts 3 presents us with a remarkably intimate and personal scene. Like all major cities, ancient or modern, the poor and homeless are to be found, living in the margins and begging for scraps from the tables of the affluent passersby. The man in our story, lame from birth, had suffered physically every day of his life. Yet this physical pain brought with it deep social alienation and isolation, pushing him to the fringe, out of sight and conveniently forgotten by those who did not want to be encumbered by his trials.

In light of this alienation, the response of Peter and John is most remarkable, and worthy of deeper reflection. In a story such as this, it is easy to rush to the miracle, focusing on the healing done in Jesus’ Name, commanding the man to “*rise up and walk!*” However, there is a preceding miracle that must also be pondered and celebrated: **the Apostles gave this man the gift of being seen.**

Peter directed his gaze at him. Not a passing glance, or a look of annoyance, but focused and directed attention, directing not only his gaze, but his time and attention, fully present and willing to enter into the man’s story and situation. How rare and even miraculous this is! It is far too common to look at people without ever truly seeing them. We may cast our eyes in their direction, but are we able, and willing, to enter into their story? Can we lay aside the question that drives so much of our decision making – “What’s in it for me?” – and instead learn to give of ourselves, expecting nothing in return?

Application: Who’s story can you fully enter into today? Ask God to give you eyes to see the needs of others around you and to enter into their stories, loving them as you have been loved by the Father.

Prayer of reflection and response you might pray this week: “Heavenly Father, create in me a clean heart. Life is so complicated, busy and chaotic. But amid the mess, please give me the strength and courage to see people, places, things and events through Your lens. Please guide me and change me, oh God. Please give me Your heart for others and the world around me. Each and every day, help me to see, through Your eyes, the truth of what is, what has been and what will one day come. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate Name of Jesus, Amen!”

Yours in Christ, Pastor King