

ACTS: Growing Hope One Life at a Time

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There is something you have that God needs. God needs your mind and your body to accomplish his purpose in the world. God is spirit and he needs a physical vehicle to carry out his intentions on planet earth. He needs you to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Acts 3:1-8 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter looked intently 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 or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

For Personal Study

Jesus carefully chose his disciples. After His resurrection they were responsible to teach the Word and grow His church. He taught them and he showed them how to live a godly life. At the Pentecost they received the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide them. And in our lesson today, Peter and John were taking the strength they had, and together making it more than the sum of the two.

The Holy Spirit works in us individually. But when we work in community, the power of the Holy Spirit can use our hands and hearts to do great things. God has organized his people into congregations from the time of the twelve tribes. Jesus, in Mark 6:6-13 sent out his disciples in pairs, driving out demons, healing people and teaching.

During the time of Acts, the Apostles were a minority receiv-

ing ridicule, contempt and persecution from the society at large. They stayed true to their Lord, and working together preached repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ and they grew the church. In 2006, we as Christians are being ridiculed, shown contempt and even persecuted. God, through Jesus Christ, assured us of our salvation. We must continue to spread His word, working together in a time tested way to show the world His love.

Wants and needs are often confused. Look at the beggar by the temple gate called Beautiful; he thought money was what he needed. The Holy Spirit, through Peter and John, knew the real need of this poor man and gave him back his legs so that he could take care of himself.

The man looked directly at the Apostles, as they commanded. He

gave his attention. The beggar hoped for what he wanted, but was given what he was needed. The Holy Spirit worked in him to look at Peter and John, to face what was missing in his life. When given what he needed this man praised God. Through Jesus Christ we are given what we need in life. We also should praise God when we are given what we need, not what we want.

Readings & Questions

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Turn to page 2 for more inspiration and learning, on your own or in a group!

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Readings & Questions for Daily Discovery or Group Discussion

Monday, June 19

What examples of working with members of the community of St. John show how the Holy Spirit is working in our world? Mark 6:6b-13.

Tuesday, June 20

Why does giving testimony as a group seem to give additional strength to all? Acts 4:18-20

Wednesday, June 21

The Apostles baptized many people. How can you be a part of our congregation in seeking the lost and through baptism bring them to new life in Jesus Christ? Luke 15:1-7

Thursday, June 22

Our society worships winning. Jesus however, teaches us that winning isn't about how successful each attempt is, but rather how many attempts will reach those who need His word of salvation and grace. How can you focus on 'sowing seeds' and meeting others needs? Matthew 13:1-9

Friday, June 23

God has given us salvation through Jesus Christ. As Christians we have a responsibility to share this Good News. To merely believe is to be a lazy Christian. How can you be diligent and find the wealth of salvation? Proverbs 10:4

God's Church in Action



"Now, when I am sick and weak, there is hope ..."

ELCA World Hunger Appeal's Stand With Africa supports efforts to banish hunger, promote peace, and withstand HIV/AIDS. Your "extra-mile" gifts make these special commitments possible. Thank you.

Rose, a 31-year-old widow whose husband died from AIDS, lives in Rakai, Uganda. Rose, herself, has lived with HIV, and now AIDS, for several years. Before she was ill, Rose supported her family through banana farming, but this labor-intense work had to stop as she became weaker. The family home was in poor repair and the roof would often leak. Rose had little hope of finding work to support her family.

Fortunately, Rose found the community HIV/AIDS program of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), supported through gifts designated for Stand With Africa. Counselors helped rebuild Rose's home, for which Rose was "overwhelmed with joy." To help supplement the family's income, Rose received a goat, and she gave back the first offspring of this goat to help support another family living with HIV/AIDS. Goats are particularly helpful because they are easy to care for; Rose's children can manage them while still attending school.

Rose is grateful for the assistance given to her family. *"Now, when I am sick and weak, I have hope and know that even when it rains, I can sleep comfortably. I am grateful for the LWF and pray for my dear God to bless them."*

Last November, St. John's sale of Fair Trade gifts, jewelry, coffee, and chocolate helped those in Africa and other nations become self supporting, bringing hope to both them and their families.