

"HELP AND HEALING IN JESUS' NAME"

ACTS 4:1-12

FOURTH S. OF EASTER

MESSIAH, BOERNE

APRIL 21, 2024

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT. AMEN.

TEXT: ACTS 4:1-12

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST:

SHAKESPEARE ONCE ASKED, "WHAT'S IN A NAME?" WELL,
ACCORDING TO BUSINESS LEADERS, QUITE A LOT. IN FACT, THE
NAME OF A BUSINESS OR CORPORATION IS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT,
BUT CAN EVEN BE ADVANTAGEOUS. THUS, BUSINESSES SPEND
THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS DOING RESEARCH TO FIND THE RIGHT NAME,
AND THEN SPEND MILLIONS PROMOTING IT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE
RIGHTS TO PUT THE NAME OF A CORPORATION ON A SPORTS STADIUM
CAN COST A BUSINESS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. ALSO, WITH MORE
AND MORE BUSINESS BEING CONDUCTED OVER THE INTERNET,
COMPANIES SEEK DOMAIN NAMES THAT WILL HELP THEM BECOME MORE
PROFITABLE. DOMAIN NAMES HAVE BEEN SOLD FOR THOUSANDS,
EVEN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

PETER SPEAKS ABOUT A VERY IMPORTANT NAME IN OUR TEXT
THIS MORNING. IN FACT, HE SAYS THAT THE NAME OF JESUS, FAR
FROM BEING SIMPLY AN ADVANTAGE, IS ABSOLUTELY *INDISPENSIBLE*
FOR OUR LIFE AND SALVATION. IS THAT THE WAY THE NAME OF

JESUS COMES ACROSS IN YOUR LIFE—AS A PRICELESS, ESSENTIAL NAME THAT IS HONORED AND GLORIFIED AND TO WHICH YOUR MOST VALUABLE TIME AND ATTENTION IS DIRECTED? OR DO YOU OFTEN FIND YOURSELF NEGLECTING AND MISUSING THE NAME OF JESUS AND ALL THE BLESSINGS GOD PROMISES TO THOSE WHO HONOR AND USE IT PROPERLY? WE PRAY THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD GUIDE US THIS MORNING TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING AND APRECIATION OF THE NAME OF JESUS SO THAT WE MAY HONOR IT, LEAD HOLY LIVES THAT GLORIFY IT, AND, CALLING UPON IT, RECEIVE HELP AND HEALING IN EVERY TIME OF NEED; IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.

THE EVENTS IN TODAY'S TEXT FLOW OUT OF THE PREVIOUS DAY'S EVENTS SPOKEN ABOUT IN LAST SUNDAY'S FIRST READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. PETER AND JOHN HAD GONE TO THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM TO PRAY AND ENCOUNTERED A LAME MAN BEGGING AT THE GATE CALLED "BEAUTIFUL." THEY TOLD HIM THEY HAD NO MONEY BUT WOULD GIVE HIM WHAT THEY HAD: HELP AND HEALING IN JESUS' NAME. PETER TOLD THE MAN, "IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WALK" (ACTS 3:6), AND TAKING HIM BY THE HAND, THE MAN IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO WALK, JUMP, AND PRAISE GOD FOR THE BLESSING HE HAD RECEIVED IN JESUS' NAME. THAT MIRACULOUS HEALING LEADS TO PETER'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE RULERS AND ELDERS IN TODAY'S TEXT. PETER'S MESSAGE FOCUSES ON JESUS CHRIST AND THE POWER OF HIS DIVINE NAME TO

GIVE LIFE AND PERFECT HEALING TO FRAIL, SINFUL HUMAN
BEINGS LIKE THE LAME MAN.

THERE'S GREAT BLESSING IN THE NAME OF JESUS FOR YOU
AND ME AS WELL. REMEMBER HOW THE ANGEL OF THE LORD TOLD
JOSEPH IN A DREAM, "YOU ARE TO GIVE [THE BABY] THE NAME
JESUS," WHICH LITERALLY MEANS, "THE LORD SAVES" (MT 1:21)?
WELL, JESUS LIVED UP TO HIS NAME WHEN HE SUFFERED AND DIED
ON THE CROSS FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS AND ROSE AGAIN
ON EASTER SUNDAY TO ASSURE US OF OUR SALVATION. ALLELUIA!
CHRIST IS RISEN! (HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!) AND
JESUS CONTINUES TO HELP US TODAY. EVERY TIME YOU'RE
TEMPTED TO DOUBT GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU, REMEMBER THAT GOD MADE
YOU HIS BELOVED CHILD IN HOLY BAPTISM WHEN YOU RECEIVED THE
BLESSING OF JESUS' NAME. EVERY TIME YOU COME TO THE LORD'S
SUPPER FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS AND STRENGTH TO FIGHT
AGAINST YOUR SINFUL NATURE, YOU RECEIVE THE BLESSING OF HIS
NAME. AND EVERY TIME YOU HEAR THE PASTOR SAY, "I FORGIVE
YOU ALL YOUR SINS IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT," YOU RECEIVE THE BLESSING OF JESUS'
NAME.

NOW, CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT LIFE MIGHT HAVE BEEN LIKE
FOR THAT LAME MAN *WITHOUT* THE NAME OF JESUS? FOR EXAMPLE,
PETER AND JOHN COULD HAVE DONE SURGERY TO REPAIR HIS LEGS,

BUT IN THE END, HE WOULD NEVER HAVE COME TO KNOW THAT THERE WAS A SAVIOR FROM SIN. WHAT IF THE MAN NEVER DISCOVERED THE BLESSING THAT WAS HIS IN THE NAME OF JESUS—THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, NEW LIFE, AND ETERNAL SALVATION? WHAT ULTIMATE GOOD WOULD TWO STRONG LEGS HAVE BEEN IF THE FUTURE HELD ONLY ETERNAL SEPARATION FROM GOD?

OVER EIGHT BILLION PEOPLE LIVE IN THE WORLD TODAY, AND AROUND TWO-THIRDS DO NOT KNOW AND CANNOT CALL UPON THE NAME OF JESUS FOR HELP AND HEALING. IF NOT FOR THE BOLD WITNESS OF PETER AND JOHN TO THE LAME MAN IN THE TEMPLE, HE WOULD HAVE DIED WITHOUT SALVATION IN JESUS' NAME. YET, AS TRAGIC AS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR THAT LAME MAN NOT TO HAVE KNOWN JESUS' NAME, IT'S ALSO TRAGIC FOR YOU AND ME TO HAVE HIS NAME FOR OUR OWN USE AND YET NEGLECT AND MISUSE IT. WE CHRISTIANS KNOW THE NAME OF JESUS, BUT MANY OF US ACT AS IF WE'VE LOST OUR LOVE FOR THE BLESSINGS THAT COME WITH IT.

A FORMER POLICE OFFICER ONCE TALKED ABOUT THE TACTICS USED BY A GROUP OF THIEVES TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR CRIMES.

THEY ENTER THE STORE AS A GROUP. ONE OR TWO SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM THE GROUP, AND THE OTHERS START A LOUD COMMOTION IN ANOTHER SECTION OF THE STORE. AS THE ATTENTION OF THE CLERKS AND CUSTOMERS IS DRAWN TO THE DISTURBANCE, THE ACCOMPLICES FILL THEIR POCKETS WITH MERCHANDISE AND CASH, LEAVING THE STORE BEFORE ANYONE SUSPECTS. HOURS—SOMETIMES EVEN DAYS—LATER THE

MERCHANT REALIZES THINGS ARE MISSING AND CALLS THE POLICE, BUT IT'S TOO LATE.

THE DEVIL, THE WORLD, AND YOUR SINFUL NATURE ALSO USE THE DISTRACTION STRATEGY TO TRY TO TURN YOUR ATTENTION FROM JESUS AND ROB YOU OF THE HELP AND HEALING AVAILABLE TO ALL PEOPLE IN HIS NAME. BUSY SCHEDULES CAN MAKE IT SEEM TOO DIFFICULT OR TIRESOME TO TAKE TIME FOR BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER. EVEN WHEN WE DO WORSHIP, STUDY, AND PRAY, OUR MINDS CAN WANDER AND BE LED ASTRAY BY EVIL FORCES WITHIN AND AROUND US. THE AWFUL TRUTH IS THAT, ACCORDING TO OUR SINFUL NATURE, IT'S EASIER FOR US TO NEGLECT AND MISUSE THE NAME OF JESUS THAN TO WORSHIP AND PRAISE HIM.

WHO CAN RESCUE US FROM THIS WRETCHED STATE OF AFFAIRS? WELL, LET'S LOOK AGAIN AT OUR TEXT. SEE, A FISHERMAN SO EXCITED ABOUT THE NAME OF JESUS THAT HE IS WILLING TO STAND BEFORE SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL AND INFLUENTIAL MEN IN THE LAND AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION IN JESUS' NAME. LOOK, A MAN BORN LAME, LEAPING IN JOY AND PRAISING GOD OVER THE HELP AND HEALING THAT CAME WITH THE NAME OF JESUS. WHEN YOU AND I JOIN PETER AND THE LAME MAN IN TURNING OUR ATTENTION TO THE ONE WHO LIVED, DIED, AND ROSE AGAIN TO BRING US ALL THE BLESSINGS OF HIS NAME, WE

DISCOVER THE JOY AND BLESSING OF THAT NAME AND WANT TO HONOR IT WITH OUR LIVES.

WE HONOR THE NAME OF JESUS WHEN WE BUILD OUR LIVES UPON IT, THAT IS, WHEN CHRIST JESUS IS THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR FAITH AND PRACTICE. IN ANCIENT BUILDING PRACTICES, THE FIRST STONE OF THE BUILDING TO BE LAID WAS THE CORNERSTONE. THAT CORNERSTONE THEN SET OUT THE DIRECTIONS FOR THE REST OF THE BUILDING AS IT ROSE AND WAS COMPLETED. WE HONOR JESUS WHEN WE OBEY HIS WORD WITH REGARD TO WHAT WE BELIEVE AND HOW WE LIVE. WE SHOW THEREBY THAT CHRIST IS THE CORNERSTONE ON WHOM WE BUILD OUR FAITH AND LIVES.

IN FACT, EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS IS "IN CHRIST," A PART OF THE CHURCH, AND HAS JESUS AS THE SPIRITUAL CORNERSTONE OF THEIR FAITH AND LIFE. PAUL WRITES, HOWEVER, "EVERYONE SHOULD BE CAREFUL HOW HE BUILDS. FOR NO ONE CAN LAY ANY FOUNDATION OTHER THAN THE ONE ALREADY LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST" (1 COR 3:10-11). AND CHRIST HIMSELF SAYS:

THEREFORE EVERYONE WHO HEARS THESE WORDS OF MINE AND PUTS THEM INTO PRACTICE IS LIKE A WISE MAN WHO BUILT HIS HOUSE ON THE ROCK. THE RAIN CAME DOWN, THE STREAMS ROSE, AND THE WINDS BLEW AND BEAT AGAINST IT; YET IT DID NOT FALL, BECAUSE IT WAS BUILT ON THE ROCK.
(MT 7:24)

ONCE A FAMOUS HYMNWRITER DISCOVERED LATER IN LIFE THE JOY THAT COMES FROM BUILDING ONE'S LIFE ON THE NAME OF JESUS. ACCORDING TO HIS OWN DESCRIPTION, IN HIS EARLY YEARS, HE HAD BEEN AN "INFIDEL, LIBERTINE, AND SLAVE TRADER." TOWARD THE END OF HIS LIFE HE REMARKED, "MY MEMORY IS NEARLY GONE, BUT I REMEMBER TWO THINGS, THAT I AM A GREAT SINNER AND JESUS IS A GREAT SAVIOR." THE NAME OF THAT FAMOUS HYMNWRITER IS JOHN NEWTON, AND HE WROTE THE FOLLOWING:

DEAR NAME! THE ROCK ON WHICH I BUILD,
MY SHIELD AND HIDING PLACE;
MY NEVER-FAILING TREASURY FILLED
WITH BOUNDLESS STORES OF GRACE. (LSB, 524:4)

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST, THERE'S NO BETTER PLACE FOR YOU AND ME TO BUILD OUR FAITH AND LIVES THAN ON THE PRECIOUS NAME OF JESUS, THAT "BOUNDLESS STORE OF GRACE". IN OUR DEAR SAVIOR'S NAME, THERE'S HELP AND HEALING FOR THE LAME MAN, FOR YOU AND ME, AND FOR THE WHOLE WORLD. JESUS' NAME BECAME THE SOURCE OF GREATEST JOY FOR A MAN WHO COULDN'T WALK, FOR PETER, JOHN, AND THE OTHER APOSTLES, AND FOR THE GREAT HYMNWRITER, JOHN NEWTON. IT'S GIVEN TO YOU IN HOLY BAPTISM TO BE YOUR GREATEST JOY AS WELL, FOR AS ST. PETER SAYS, "SALVATION IS FOUND IN NO OTHER NAME." AMEN.