

## Lesson 4

### An Afternoon at the Temple

When you were born, your life was immediately characterized by relationships. You had a relationship with your mother and father and perhaps some siblings. As you grew, you began to establish more relationships with family, friends, and neighbors.

When you were born into God's Church through baptism, you entered into another kind of relationship—a relationship with others who had been born into His family. The most significant relationship, however, is the one you have with God Himself through the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts shows us how the Holy Spirit affects believers: the power He gives, the faith He imparts, and the wisdom He bestows on men and women of God.

As believers, we need God's Spirit guiding and directing our lives even though sometimes we would rather run our own lives. Mankind did not ask for God to send His Spirit. But God's gift of the Holy Spirit is exactly what we need and a far greater gift than we deserve.

God loves to give gifts. Throughout Scripture, we see God giving good gifts to His children. Read I Kings 3:5-13. King Solomon had a vision in which God said, "Ask what you wish me to give you."

In verse 9, what did Solomon ask for?

*Solomon asked God for an understanding heart, so that he could rule the people wisely.*

What was God's response in verses 12-13?

*God was pleased. He gave Solomon the wise heart he had asked for, as well as riches and honor. God made Solomon the wisest king who ever ruled, and the greatest king ruling during his lifetime.*

Now read Acts 3:1-10. The beggar who was crippled asked for money, but received total healing instead—far more than he had asked for or expected to receive.

Can that apply to us at all? Does the Bible tell us anything that assures us that God still gives generously to His children? We might not need physical healing like the crippled man, but Scripture tells us that God generously provides for our every need.

What does Ephesians 3:20 say about God's ability to provide?

*Not only is God able to provide, but He provides abundantly, beyond what we ask for or even think!*

[TM note: In the Old Testament God provided for the Israelites, food, water, safety, their clothes never wore out during the 40 years in the wilderness. In the New Testament Jesus said in Matt 7:11 that God will provide much more than we can imagine and Paul writes the same promise in 2Cor 9:8 and Phil 4:19]

Sometimes we ask something of God and He doesn't give it to us. There are many reasons we may not get what we ask for. James 4:2-3 has one explanation. What is it?

- We do not have because *we do not ask for it.*
- We ask and do not receive because *we ask with the wrong motives, so we can fulfill our own desire for pleasure.*

Whatever God gives us, we can have joy because we know God's greatest gift of all: "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23b).

## Into the Word: Acts 3:1-4:4

1. Read Acts 3:1-10 and match the following:

- |             |                |                                     |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>d</i>    | John           | a. "I have no silver and gold."     |
| <i>e</i>    | lame man       | b. a popular place to beg           |
| <i>a, d</i> | Peter          | c. a temple gate                    |
| <i>b, c</i> | Beautiful Gate | d. went to pray at temple           |
| <i>f</i>    | temple crowd   | e. so excited, he was leaping       |
|             |                | f. filled with amazement and wonder |

2. In verse 6, Peter spoke to the crippled man at the gate.

- a. What couldn't Peter give him?

*He couldn't give the beggar money.*

- b. What did Peter give him?

*Peter healed the beggar in Jesus' name.*

3. The beggar was healed! Who did the healing? vv.6, 8

*Peter spoke the words to the beggar, but God did the healing.*

4. In verse 12, Peter spoke to the crowd at the temple. What did he say about his own power to heal others?

*Peter made it clear to the crowd that he and John had no power on their own to heal anyone at all.*

5. In verse 16, what did Peter say about God's power to heal?

*God has the power to heal, and God was the one who gave the beggar "perfect health" in the presence of the crowd.*

The healing of the beggar drew a crowd. Peter used this opportunity to preach another sermon. This sermon was a lot like the one he preached at Pentecost in Acts 2.

- Quoted the Scriptures (2:16 and 3:22).
- Pointed out to the crowd that they crucified Jesus (2:33, 36 and 3:14-15a).
- Proclaimed that God raised Jesus from the dead (2:32 and 3:15b).
- Preached repentance and forgiveness (2:38 and 3:19).

The similarities in these two sermons noted above are important elements of all Christian preaching. Pay attention to the sermons in your congregation. Listen for these things as your pastor preaches.

6. It might seem to us that Jesus' murder would have ruined God's plan. What did it really do? Acts 3:18  
*Jesus' death fulfilled God's prophecy that Christ would suffer.*

7. The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees joined the crowd. What was their reaction to Peter's sermon in Acts 4:2-3?

*4:2 They were upset because Peter was preaching that Jesus had risen from the dead.*

*4:3 They put Peter and John in jail.*

What was the crowd's reaction? Acts 4:4

*Many in the crowd believed Peter's message. The number of men who had become believers now was about 5,000.*

## New Ideas: Prophecies fulfilled

Much of Peter's sermon focused on how Christ would suffer and die (Acts 3:18-26). God's prophets foretold many details of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and every single one was fulfilled! Briefly identify below what Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled.

1. Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:13-15

*Jesus went as a child to Egypt as Mary and Joseph fled from Herod*

2. Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 27:12-14

*Jesus did not attempt to defend himself when brought before Herod and Pilate by the chief priests. He was silent*

3. Psalm 22:18, John 19:24

*At the cross after Jesus had died the soldiers cast lots for his clothes*

4. Psalm 34:20, John 19:32-33

*It was customary for soldiers in charge of crucifixion to break the legs of those being killed to hasten their death. When the soldiers came to do this to Jesus they discovered He was already dead so they did not break His legs.*

## Memory Verse

“Therefore, repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. “

Acts 3:19

*Extra Memory Challenge:*

*Luke 24:45-47*

*Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”*

## Discussion Questions

Each teacher should encourage, as much as time permits, discussion and inquiry on the part of students. Not every aspect of the following questions is addressed here, and students may have thoughts related to but not mentioned in this guide. The obligation of the teacher, then, is to understand as deeply as possible the Scriptures that are being discussed, in order to answer as well as possible any questions a student might have.

1. In Acts 3:1-8, Peter didn't give the crippled man any money, but he gave him what he had (see v.6). Note that Peter met a spiritual need *and* a physical need. When we bring the Gospel to the poor, does that mean that we do not have the responsibility to help the poor with their physical needs (like money, food, blankets, etc.)? See also I John 3:16-18 and James 1:22-25.

*[Help students consider the balance between sharing the Gospel and doing good works. If we only do good works, people will never hear about Jesus. If we neglect doing good works, we may miss opportunity to preach about Jesus. We should help and befriend our neighbor with both physical and spiritual needs.]* Without question, it is the Christian's responsibility to help the poor with their physical needs as well as their spiritual needs. Refer students to James 2:15-16, Luke 3:10-11, and Matthew 25:3-40. If God has provided so abundantly for a person that they have more than they need, then they can take it as a privilege to be able to provide for those less fortunate than themselves.

2. Ephesians 3:20 God is able "to do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think" If this is true, why do you think that some of the things we ask for—even good or important things—we may not receive? (For some help, go to James 4:2-3, Psalm 66:18, and I John 5:14-15.)

*Just because we ask for something does not mean it is good for us to have it! Perhaps we ask out of wrong motives, as James mentions. Perhaps God's answer of "no" is part of His discipline of us, as we see in Hebrews. Perhaps God has plans for us we do not understand. In any case, we can trust that God has our best interests at heart, whether He answers our prayers with a "yes" or a "no." [Review the meaning of the First Article, which reminds us of all the good things God daily provides for us. Above all, it is important to remember that God is always with us (Matthew 28:20 and Hebrews 13:5)]*

3. Read Acts 3:11 again. When he had a group of people around him, Peter used the opportunity to tell them about Jesus. In what situations could you tell others about Jesus?

*Students will be able to think of many situations where they could share about Jesus. Although Peter found himself in a situation that we are quite unlikely to repeat these days, many conversations give us the chance to acknowledge God, His goodness, and His abundant provision—whether we are talking about physical needs or spiritual needs, we can always say, "God provides for me!"*

### TM optional question:

1. In last week's lesson, Peter gave a sermon. In this week's lesson, Peter gave another sermon, and it is a lot like the first one. Why do you think he repeated himself?

*[For teacher reference, these are the comparisons in the verses:]*

2:23	and	3:13
2:36	and	3:14
2:32	and	3:15
2:16, 25	and	3:24
2:38	and	3:19

*One obvious reason Peter repeated himself on these points is that he may have been speaking to two entirely different crowds, and each crowd needed to hear the same message. However, if we look closely, the points Peter repeats form the core of Christian belief: Jesus Christ, crucified by the Jews, rose from the dead as the Old Testament prophets proclaimed, and offers us repentance and forgiveness of our sins, so that we may find peace with God. These eternal truths bear repeating, over and over, until every person has heard what God has done for them!*

## Daily Devotions

Monday	II Peter 1:1-9
Tuesday	II Peter 1:10-15
Wednesday	II Peter 2:1-3
Thursday	II Peter 2:4-9
Friday	II Peter 3:1-7
Saturday	II Peter 3:8-13
Sunday	II Peter 3:14-18

## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND ITS CONFESSIONS, CREED, AND CATECHISM

### \* Lesson 4: History and Purpose of the Augsburg Confession

The Augsburg Confession, written in 1530 A.D. It is considered the main statement of faith of the Lutheran Church. The Confession clearly and simply sets forth biblical truth regarding our need to be saved from our sin and God's Word to save us. The Augsburg Confession was written primarily by Philip Melancthon based on writings by Martin Luther and presented in Augsburg, Germany, to a meeting of church and state officials. The Confession is consistent with God's Word and earnestly proclaims to us Christ as Savior and Lord.

1. A confession is a statement of faith. Why is it important that the church has a statement of faith?

[To confess means to say the same thing. E.g. When we confess our sins, we are saying what God's Word says about our sin, etc.]

*It is important to have a statement of faith because by nature we are prone to believe false things. If we do not stand for anything we will fall for everything.*

2. What are we encouraged to do according to Hebrews 10:23? Why? Acts 20:28-32

*"Hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering." Because false teachers will try to confuse us about God's truth.*

3. A Christian's faith must have a firm foundation. What is that foundation? Ephesians 2:20-21

*The foundation is the Word of God. In Ephesians 2:20, the "prophets" refers to the writings of the Old Testament, and the "apostles" refers to the writings of the New Testament.*