



February 25, 2024

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30.

News:

Wednesday Evening Classes at 6:30

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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Acts 3:10–12 ~

The Jews _____ the man and were “filled with wonder and amazement.”

Solomon’s Stoa:

The Shushan Gate:

It is almost certain that _____ passed by that man without healing him. God’s timing...

Peter’s _____ of them was two-fold.

1) Why are you _____?

2) Why are you looking _____?

Peter _____ the people’s focus...

True ministers are always pointing to Jesus not to _____...

Still, we are all commanded to _____...

That’s a key ingredient to unity; honor others, by _____ yourself.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Unity is only ever possible when we hold our _____ as less important than our togetherness.

Only in putting aside your self-importance and busying yourself with God's purposes, will your life have any real _____ and _____.

God chooses to move, technically, God has chosen to move, and we can either get _____ or tilt against windmills.

Acts 3:13–16 ~

The miraculous recreation was the result of the one and only true God, the God of their forefathers, the Patriarchs.

That God made this man whole because He wanted to confirm _____ as His Servant $\pi\alpha\tilde{\iota}\varsigma$ ($\rho\tilde{\iota}s$) Whom He glorified $\delta\omicron\xi\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ ($d\grave{a}-x\grave{a}-dz\bar{o}$). That's referring to the great Messianic section in Isaiah (chapters 49 through 55).

The _____ of the king is the heir and the servant of the king. Israel failed and so God sent His Anointed One to provide Salvation for Israel and for the _____.

When people are used to a system it is incredibly difficult for them to quickly accept a _____ system and the ones with power will resist the most.

They put the "Prince of Life" to death, ironic, but God bodily Resurrected Him. "Prince of Life," is $\zeta\omega\acute{\eta}$ ($dz\bar{o}-\bar{a}$) and $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta\gamma\acute{o}\varsigma$ ($\grave{a}\tilde{r}-\acute{x}\bar{a}-g\bar{o}s$), which is literally the _____ from the _____.

Faith was _____. God was the cause, and a perfectly healthy man was the result, but faith was the _____ through which the Cause worked.

Whose faith? First, we must note that this faith had a very specific _____... _____.

The _____ cause of the Cause acting was Jesus Himself. Beyond that the human faith that Jesus and then God worked through to effect the miracle was a faith that came through and was therefore _____ by Jesus Himself.

It was the faith of the _____ as Jesus _____ him that faith.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____



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Last week we talked about a miracle of recreation where a 40-plus-year-old man who had never once used his legs sprang up onto his feet and stood, walked, and jumped for joy like he'd been a tap-dancing fool all his life.

He was literally “walking and leaping and praising God” beside Peter and John as they entered the Temple Courts where thousands of people were already assembled.

The crowd turned to see what the commotion was all about, and what they saw shocked them – it was the

well-known crippled beggar carrying on like Fred Astaire alongside Peter and John...



Acts 3:10–12, 10 and they recognized him as being the very one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg for charitable gifts, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. 11 While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the portico named Solomon's, completely astonished. 12 But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why are you staring at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him walk?"

The massive crowd of Jews easily recognized the man whom most of them had just tried to slip past and avoid. This dude had been stationed at a major Temple chokepoint imploring thousands of people to give him money, every day, for decades. He was a well-known feature at that gate, who had to be dealt with, one way or another, by all who passed through.

The people were “filled with wonder and amazement,” and as the man wasn’t leaving Peter and John’s side, the crowd ran forward, undoubtedly surrounding the trio, because they were “completely astonished.”

Luke has gone to great lengths to paint a picture of a very large group of people who are excitedly perplexed.



Solomon's Stoa, or porch, or portico, or colonnade, is often thought to be the elaborate and larger portico on the south side of the Temple Mount, but the best scholarship points to that being called the Royal Portico and Solomon's Portico being on the east side of the Mount south of eastern gate. Solomon's Stables is under the southeast section. It was named by the Crusaders well over 900 years ago because they knew that the foundations of the eastern retaining wall dated all the way back to Solomon's Temple, destroyed by the Neo-Babylonians 2,600 years ago.



The fact that the eastern wall's foundations date back to Solomon's original Temple Complex has been confirmed archeologically. A stoa, or porch was a series of tall columns holding up beams for a roof structure above the pavement.



It is likely, although not certain, that the eastern gate which is officially called the Shushan Gate and better known as the Golden Gate is the Beautiful Gate mentioned in verse 2.

The Jewish name Shushan probably pays homage to Cyrus, King of Persia, who sponsored the rebuilding of the Temple. The Gate faces his ancient capital city Shusha – we drop the “h” sounds and say Susa.

You might remember that the best place for a Jew to pray would have been in the Temple facing east – facing the eastern gate. The reason is that the first light of the rising sun would shine its golden light through

that open gate into the Temple itself. The Jewish Biblical tradition was that the Messiah would come into the Temple from the Mount of Olives through that Golden or Beautiful Gate.



The Muslims closed the gate in 810 to prevent the Jewish Messiah from entering. In 1102 the Crusaders

reopened the gate, only to have the Muslims once again close it in 1187. The Ottoman Sultan Suleiman completely sealed it shut, once and for all, in 1541. For nearly 500 years it has been in this state.

Because of that, some Christians think that Jesus will not return until the Temple is rebuilt and the gate reopened. That's ridiculous. I'm confident that a little man-made blockage will pose no difficulty for Jesus if He does choose to walk through that gate once again.

Yeah, Jesus used that same gate that Peter, John, and the formerly crippled man in our story used. That means that not only did the Apostles and other disciples pass by the lame man potentially thousands of times without healing him. It is almost certain that Jesus Himself passed by that man without healing him.



God's timing. Trust that God is in control and that He knows what He's doing. Because God hadn't already healed the man, he could be healed on that day much to the absolute astonishment of the crowd. God's purposes are infinitely higher than ours.

Peter immediately comprehended what was happening and forcefully admonished the crowd for their reaction. His rebuke of them was two-fold.



The first reproach has to do with the simple fact that they were surprised about the recreation of a man. Everyone there was in the Temple to pray to God, Whom they all believed answered prayers. Why then the shock? Peter was essentially saying that we all believe that God created the entire universe and all that it contains from nothing by simply speaking it all into existence. We all believe that God still intervenes in the affairs of man. We all believe that God is benevolent, gracious, merciful, and therefore is a God of healing. Why are you astonished?

It's much the same as a mature Christian who is overcome by fear when death is near. It's difficult to reconcile proclaimed faith with demonstrated doubt.

Peter's first chastisement is for their demonstrated lack of faith. The second rebuke concerns their awe of Peter and John as though they were the cause of this stupendous miracle.

Peter quickly and firmly, in no uncertain terms and with urgency redirects the people's focus from him and John to where their focus belonged. I'm going to make a blanket statement and as such I had many caveats to make sure that no one got too upset with me. Well, that's silly... Here's the statement...



Any ministry, like these, that has the name of the minister in its title is at the very minimum a deluded, ignorant, or misguided endeavor and at worst, is a false, flesh-driven travesty that actually mocks God. The commercialization of Christ for profit – what a deal. We will soon meet Simon the Magician who might have been the first self-serving minister.

I only bring that up to illustrate that ministers who are genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit and who then carefully follow His lead, will never take credit for what He does. True ministers are always pointing to Jesus not to themselves because the Holy Spirit within them is constantly pointing to Jesus not to Himself. If God

the Spirit refuses to take credit, but instead directs people to Christ, what does it mean when a mere human doesn't do that? Well, Peter, the very first Christian pastor was desperate to set the record straight and put all the focus on His Lord and away from himself.

Now, to back up for just a moment, it's not only okay to honor and thank those who devote themselves to Christian ministry – it's commanded. I Timothy 5:17 for an example, 17The elders who lead well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. That is worded in such a way that it would be easy to miss that fact that God through Paul is commanding the church to honor pastors. Not suggesting, or encouraging, but ordering that pastors are to be honored by the people.

This is important, not for my sake, but for your sake, so please... Christians will compliment or thank a pastor and then immediately diminish their gesture by telling the pastor not to get a big head. Your responsibility is to be generous with your honor and let the recipient work out their part with God. It's not your job to make sure that someone else doesn't get a big head.



In the Bible we are also commanded to honor widows, honor your human masters, honor those with weaker faith, and specifically husbands are commanded to honor their own wife as a fellow heir of Grace... Finally, my friends, as if that were not enough, the Apostle Peter who is about to preach us a sermon, commanded in his first Epistle chapter 2, verse, 17, "Honor all people."

Honor everyone and as for yourself, turn all that honor back onto the God Who has enabled you to live and to function and to love and to serve.

That's a key ingredient to unity in the Body of Christ as well as unity in marriage. Honor others, which requires being humble. It's difficult to divorce in either sense if you are truly humble enough to genuinely honor others above yourself as God commands (Romans 12:10, etc.).

I have no idea what the author meant with this message that is defacing someone else's property, but I do know what God meant when He commanded unity over and over again. We think that unity means that we all agree. Unity is only ever possible when we hold our differences, our diversity, as less important than our unity together. There is nothing other than unity in diversity. No two people completely agree and so it's all a matter of degree.

Some people would seek unity among all political perspectives, others would only seek it within their party and as we've seen lately, some only seek unity in a very small fraction of their party. How much can people disagree with you before you hate them?

While I'm on that, let me tell you that big things are afoot here at Alêtheia. It's time for all of us to put aside any remaining self-importance and get busy fulfilling

God's purposes here. It is about working together through our differences in order to accomplish His Will, build His Kingdom, and Glorify His Name.

That's what gives your life purpose and meaning – that's how you build a legacy that lasts for eternity. So, my friends, take yourself, the world around you, and your personal opinions about it, far less seriously than you have... Take what Jesus wants from you in terms of sacrifice, and unity, and devotion far more seriously going forward...

Because if you do that, not only will God be blessed, the Kingdom will flourish, and the lost will be found. That should be reward enough, but there's more. When you lose yourself in Christ and His mission, before you know it, you will be face-to-face with Jesus and He will smile at you, give you a bear hug and declare to the universe, this is my friend and fellow heir, welcome and well done my good and faithful servant.

So again, Peter first blasted the crowd for their lack of faith, and then diverted attention from himself and John chastising them for their fleshly thinking. Basically, why in the world would you look at us as though we are responsible for what only God could do? There is, even

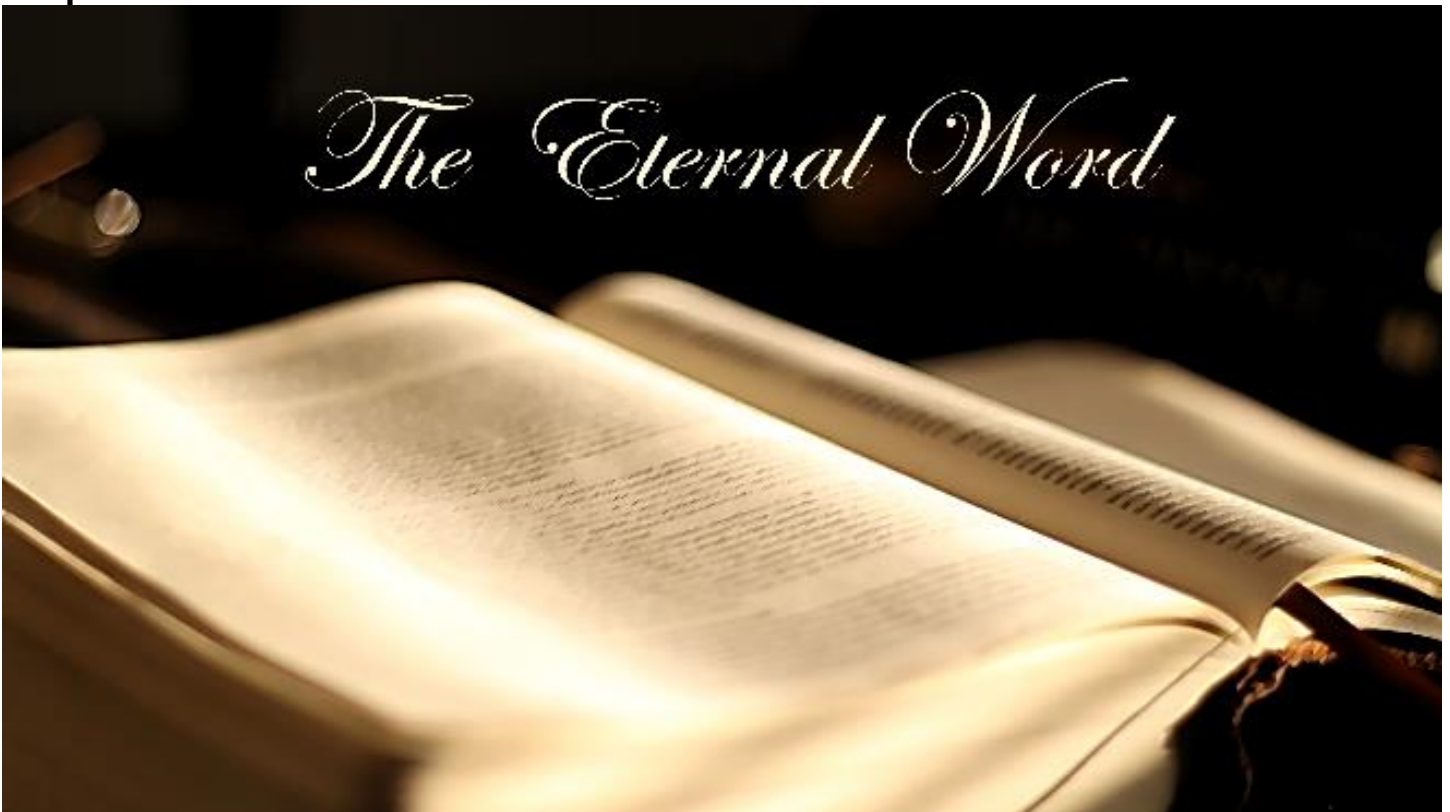
within modern Christianity, a false idea that exists and is difficult to eliminate because it comes from the natural human tendency to assign causation.



Something great has happened... Why, what was the cause, really with the idea of what can we do to replicate the cause and have more of the effect? Peter will answer the unasked question by declaring that the cause of the miracle was ultimately God's sovereign purposes, but in verse 16 will say that specific initial trigger was faith in the name of Jesus.

We will get there, but for now, I just want to point out that our human desire to isolate the cause is misguided as soon as we think that the cause was anything other

than God choosing to act. Human beings, no matter how unified, how dedicated, how strong, how faithful, how righteous, do not and cannot move God. God chooses to move, and if you want to get technical about it, God has chosen to move, and some humans are able to get onboard as He moves. I think that will become clearer as we move forward with Peter's explanation of the event.



Acts 3:13–16, 13The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you handed over and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. 14But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be

granted to you, 15but put to death the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. 16And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

The way Peter said this is slightly confusing because he was making a fairly elaborate point. There are complex interrelated elements layered upon one another so even my explanation will require some thinking.

The miraculous recreation of a walking man where a walking man did not previously exist was the result of the one and only true God of all creation shining a light of glory and confirmation upon Jesus. That's where we start. Peter made it perfectly clear that the God recreating the man's body was one and the same as the God of the Jews, the God they were all in the Temple to celebrate and to praise and to honor, the God of their forefathers the Patriarchs.



Peter was saying that our God, the God of our ancestors and the only true God that there is... has made this man whole. Because... He wanted to confirm Jesus as His Servant. So specifically for the purpose of glorifying His Servant Jesus God remade the man. Peter went to define Jesus to them as being the very Jesus Whom they handed over to the pagan Governor Pontius Pilate. The very same Jesus Whom they, whether actively or passively, were responsible for executing outside the western gate of the city by way of Roman crucifixion.

Peter was extremely explicit in defining the players, God, Jesus, and the true murderers of Jesus.

Peter also defined Jesus in relation to God giving Him the title of God's Servant παῖς ($\text{p\bar{i}s}$) Whom God glorified δοξάζω ($\text{d\bar{a}-x\bar{a}-dz\bar{o}$). Well, there's no way in the world a careful student of the Bible could miss the connection to the great Messianic section in Isaiah. That's several chapters foretelling and prophesying about the future Messiah Jesus.

THE GREAT ISAIAH SCROLL C. 125 B.C.



From Isaiah chapter 49 through chapter 55 the gist is that the nation of Israel who had previously been declared by God to be "My firstborn son," as in Exodus 4:22 for an example, is in Isaiah stated to be God's true servant. Israel as the Jewish nation is called both a child and a servant of God. In Greek one word means

both and it is the word used in Isaiah and in Acts 3:13... παῖς.

In previously calling the Jewish nation “My son, My firstborn,” and here calling her “My servant,” God was moving the common Father-child relationship between God and His people to a much deeper and more profound arena. God not only adopted Israel as His child, but as “His firstborn son” meaning that Israel was adopted as His true Heir. The heir of the king is both the child and the servant of the king. Ideally, the heir is the most trusted right-hand man of the king performing the most important and most sensitive tasks of the kingdom – as the son he loves the king, as the heir he has the most to gain from the kingdom’s success. As the king’s servant he is perfect and the glory of the king flows to and through him – again ideally, he is the παῖς, the child, the heir, the servant, the glory holder of the king.

Now if you know your history, you know that that ideal is rarely, if ever played out in human reality. In fact, the heir is oftentimes the king’s worst nightmare. Well, it is the same with the Biblical account. In that 7-chapter messianic section of Isaiah we see that Israel as a nation was an utter failure at being the παῖς of God and

therefore could not be glorified δοξάζω by Him nor shine His glory upon him.

What was the solution to the problem? God Himself would serve in the role of His Own First-born Son, His Own Child, Heir, and Perfect Servant. That's why it is a messianic section, it's all about the coming Messiah. The Messiah would sort of follow in the footsteps of Israel, but from different causes. Like Israel, the Messiah would suffer and be crushed. Unlike Israel, who was crushed because of their sins, the Messiah would be crushed to pay for the sins of others, rather than any of His Own.

We get to Isaiah 52:13–15, my translation, “Look! My Servant will have understanding, wisdom, and success, He will be lifted up high and will be greatly glorified. Just as many were appalled at you, My people (Israel), so to, will His appearance be marred beyond that which is recognizable, His body twisted beyond human form.” Beyond Salvation for Israel, we have God declaring to the Messiah “It is not enough for you as my servant to bring the tribes of Jacob back to their land. It is not enough for you to bring back the people of Israel I have kept alive. I will also make you a light

for other nations. Then you will make it possible for the whole world to be saved.”

There is a lot going on there, but the overall gist was that God Himself would send to the earth His Anointed One, in Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (mä-shē-ăḥ) so, Messiah. In Greek Χριστός (ḗrēs-tös) so, Christ. His Anointed One as God’s perfect Son, His perfect Heir, His perfect Servant, would suffer, but through His sacrifice, He would be Glorified and provide Salvation for the nation of Israel and for the whole world.

Now, in the entire sweep of God’s dealings with the Jewish people, going all the way back to Abraham, it has always been understood that it is a remnant or portion that is Saved, never the whole. It was Isaac, not Ishmael. It was Israel, not Esau, all the way through to the end of time, God’s people Israel are the part who believe. Those who trust. Those who have faith.



Because people are just people it was a forgone conclusion that a large number of the Jewish people would reject Jesus and that they would include nearly all of the powerbrokers. Why? When people are used to a system it is incredibly difficult for them to quickly accept a radically altered system and the ones with power will resist the most, because they fear losing their power and all that comes with it, under the new rules.

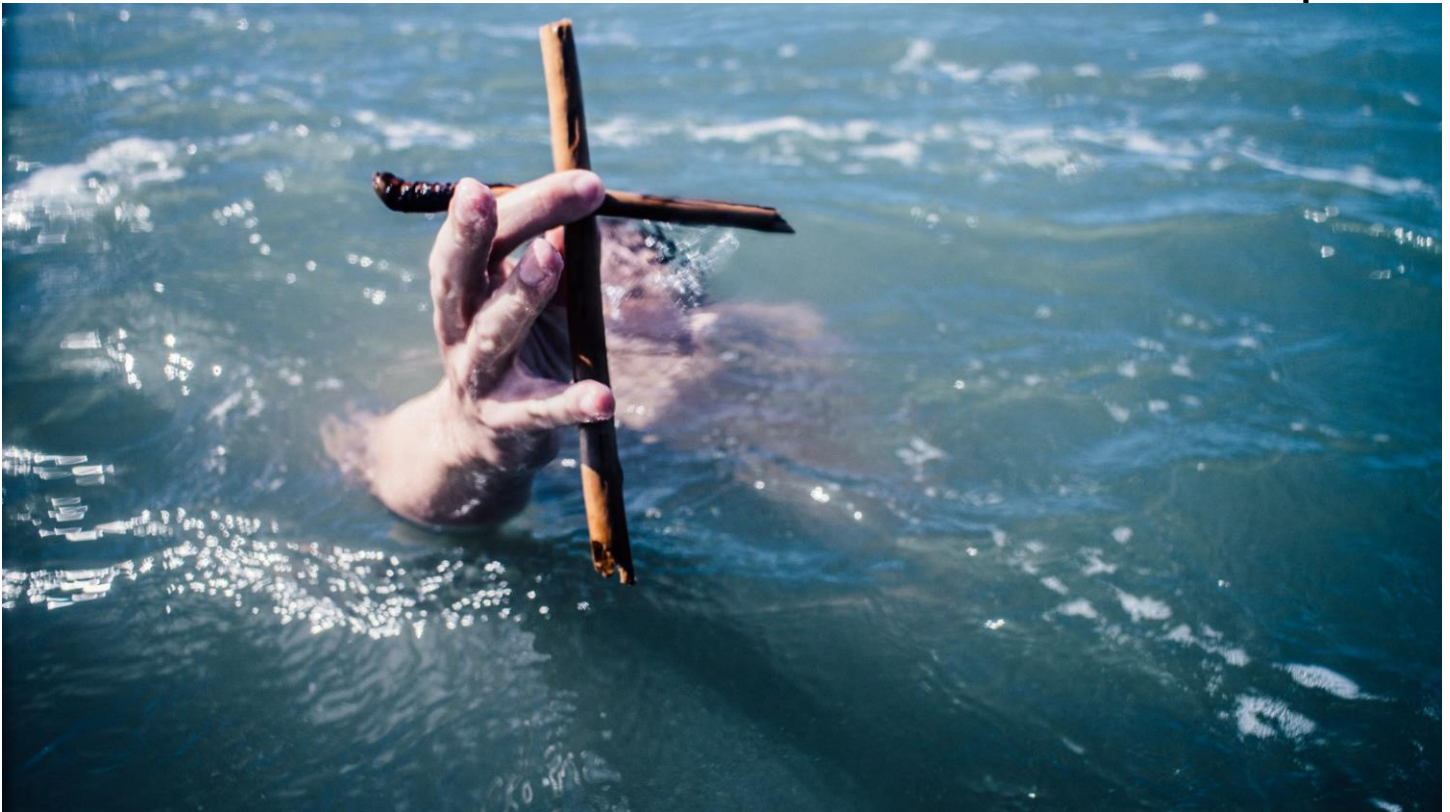
I could give examples all day and some would make you squirm. Look at Iraq or Afghanistan for instance. Both countries that in 20 years would have logically

embraced their chance to be safe, free, and prosperous, democracies, yet...



As a result, Jesus' own people both racially and spiritually murdered Him. Now, while they put the "Prince of Life" to death, ironic right, God bodily Resurrected Him. The title here translated as "Prince of Life," is special. The life part is ζωή (dzō-ā) which emphasizes lifeforce or existence. The first bit is ἀρχηγός (ärr-ḡā-gōs), which is literally the leader from the beginning. We don't really have a single word in English that means all of that, so the word is usually translated as one part of it or the other. We either go with the leader aspect and make it ruler, prince, chief, etc., or we go with the beginning aspect and make it

originator, author, founder, etc. Most modern translations go with the “Author of Life”. I bring it up because “Author” does have a different meaning than “Prince” and translators are forced to make a choice. The solution is to recognize that this is only an issue with our language. What Peter meant was both aspects. Jesus is the founder/originator as well as the leader/director of eternal life. Eternal Life is only found in Him as He both enabled it and leads us on that path.



Faith. Faith, according to Peter here, was instrumental in publicly recreating a perfectly healthy man. God was the cause, and a perfectly healthy man was the result, but faith was the instrument through which the Cause worked.

Whose faith? First, we must note that this faith had a very specific object. It wasn't some nebulous faith in some esoteric theory – it was concrete faith in an existential reality, namely Jesus the Messiah, as previously established. Faith in the name of Jesus, means faith in the person and work and so power and authority of Jesus – true belief in Him as the Messiah Savior, Son, Heir, and Servant of Almighty God.

Who had such faith? Was it the crowd, was it the church, was it Peter and John, was it the man himself, was it the cumulative effect of some combination?

Notice the semi-chiastic structure in verse 16. It goes from, “on the basis of faith... in His name... it is the name of Jesus... which has strengthened this man”. Doubling the name is striking and memorable, but also informative. It is stressed for a reason, and we see it clearly when we couple it with the easily overlooked phrase that follows, which states, and the faith which comes through Him,” i.e., Jesus.

Put it together and what you have is that the instrumental cause of the Cause acting is none other than Jesus Himself. Meaning that God acted because

Jesus interceded... It was the power and authority of Jesus that God worked through to effect the healing.

Beyond that the human faith that Jesus and then God worked through to effect the miracle was a faith that came through and was therefore given by Jesus Himself. Just as the Bible tells us elsewhere, like in... Ephesians 2:8&9, 8For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Now, whose faith? It was the faith of the man himself and that makes this all the more profound. Jesus gave the man, through the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, a tiny little bit of faith and then rewarded that faith in a massively disproportionate blessing relative to the size of his faith at that point. Jesus said, if we had faith the size of a mustard seed... Please get what that means. The faith is in Jesus, not in ourselves or in a particular process, or in a specially anointed person, or in faith itself, as in the amount of faith we possess – it is in Jesus. Belief and trust in Him and in Him alone. Jesus has plenty of faith, we just need to believe in Him.

What's so great is the man's tiny faith in Jesus, that was given to him by Jesus, resulted in God's super overabundant gift to him which then resulted in the man's increased faith in Jesus which then led to him really getting blessed – this time with eternal life in right-relationship with God through Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit and becoming a member of God's united and unified family called the church.



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