ACTS OF THE URBAN PILGRIMS · A PREVIEW · WEEK 18

More Precious Than Gold Bars and Chrome Hearts

Pastor Jeremy Park · November 1, 2026

Acts 3:1–10

> *At three in the afternoon, the hour of prayer, Peter and John were going up to the temple. A man who had been unable to walk since birth was being carried there. Every day people set him beside the temple gate called Beautiful so he could beg from those going in. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter, together with John, looked straight at him and said, "Look at us!" The man gave them his attention, expecting to receive something. Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." He took him by the right hand and helped him up, and at once the man's feet and ankles became strong. He leaped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him as the one who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate. They were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.*
>
> — Acts 3:1–10

Sweeping the Yard and Finding Money

There is a Korean proverb: "Sweep the yard and find money." You do one ordinary thing and get a second blessing along with it. That is exactly what happened to Peter and John. They simply went up to the temple at the appointed hour of prayer, and they ended up witnessing a miracle of healing. Let us step into that story.

At the gate of the Jerusalem temple called the Beautiful Gate sat a man who had never walked. Each day others carried him there, and he lived by begging from people on their way in. At three o'clock one afternoon he saw Peter and John heading up to pray and asked them for money. They stopped and looked at him. "Look at us," said Peter, and the man looked up expecting a coin. But Peter did not offer silver or gold. He offered the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, took the man by the right hand, and lifted him up. Strength flooded his feet and ankles. A man who had never taken a step stood up, walked, and then leaped into the temple praising God. The people who had passed him every day recognized him and were astonished.

Who Is "the Man Lame from Birth"?

1. Powerless

HELPLESSNESS

He could not move on his own. He depended on other people to carry him, and he had to beg every day just to survive. His life points to the helplessness we all feel when we hit a limit we cannot fix by ourselves. People today know this too: poverty that hard work cannot shake, conflicts in relationships that effort cannot solve, and the fear and despair of losing direction in life.

2. Homeless

LOSS OF BELONGING

Day after day he sat at the gate while others went inside to pray and worship. He stayed outside. Scripture never says he had no house, but his picture reminds us of people living on the margins of any community, isolated and left out.

3. Unrighteous

LABELED A SINNER

In that society, illness and disability were often read as God's punishment for the sin of the person or their parents. This is why the disciples asked whose sin caused a man's blindness in John 9, and Jesus rejected that way of judging. A man lame from birth likely lived under the same prejudice and stigma. We still do this today: calling poverty laziness, illness a lack of faith, or misfortune the result of sin.

What Does the "Beautiful Gate" Mean?

1. The Story of the Temple

The temple began as the **Tabernacle**, the portable tent of worship God told Moses to build after the Exodus. Around the tenth century BC, King Solomon built the first permanent temple in Jerusalem: **Solomon's Temple**. Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it in 586 BC and carried Judah into exile. After seventy years, under Zerubbabel, the exiles rebuilt it and finished in 516 BC: **Zerubbabel's Temple**. To those who remembered Solomon's glory, it seemed modest.

About five hundred years later, Herod the Great, who ruled Judea with Rome's backing, began rebuilding and expanding it around 20–19 BC. His reasons were partly religious, restoring the temple's glory, and partly political, winning the people's favor and legitimizing his rule. With its vast temple mount, magnificent buildings and gates, it became one of the grandest religious structures of its day: **Herod's Temple**.

2. The Layout of Herod's Temple

The closer one moved toward the sanctuary, from east to west, the stricter the rules for entry became.

- **Court of the Gentiles:** the outermost court, open to Jews and Gentiles alike.
- **Court of Women:** open to Jewish men and women.
- **Court of Israel:** reached through the Nicanor Gate (the Beautiful Gate) and fifteen steps; mainly for Jewish men.
- **Court of Priests and the Holy Place:** where the priests carried out the sacrifices.
- **Holy of Holies:** the innermost place, which only the high priest could enter, once a year on the Day of Atonement.

So the temple divided people by ethnicity, gender, priestly status and ritual purity. This reflected the Jewish understanding of holiness at the time and is not identical to modern social hierarchies.

3. Splendor Without Life

Luke seems to use the Beautiful Gate to portray a religion that is magnificent but lacks life. Compare it with the pool of Bethesda, where Jesus healed a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years. That place was like Skid Row in Los Angeles, full of the sick and the outcast, all waiting for the water to stir. The man there complained that no one would help him into the pool. Then Jesus came to him. It was not the water that raised him up, but the power of Jesus Christ.

Jesus called himself the gate for the sheep. The gate through which Israel led its sheep for sacrifice was not beautiful. It was a bloodstained place of slaughter. Yet that is where sins are forgiven and new life begins, which

makes it the truly beautiful gate. So what looks beautiful to God? Not a place that appears peaceful, polished and perfect. Quite the opposite: the Sheep Gate stands where there is the smell of real human life, where things are messy and people quarrel and struggle. It is where we meet the life of Jesus Christ, where God's grace arrives and the gospel is proclaimed.

Peter and John Took a Good Look

Jesus had told his disciples they would do even greater things than he did. Now, years later, Peter and John met a man lame from birth at the temple gate, and it became a moment to experience the Spirit's power. Notice that they saw him in the middle of their usual routine of going to pray. "Peter, together with John, looked straight at him." The Holy Spirit teaches us how to look at the small problems of daily life, the conflicts in our relationships, and our anxiety about the future. We should not wave them off as nothing, or assume they will simply pass. We should look at them closely and take hold of today's problems as moments for change.

"Silver and Gold I Do Not Have"

The man asked for gold and silver. (If getting rich were the point, you could just sleep on the street in Dubai.) But Peter and John gave him not the gold and silver he begged for, but the name of Jesus Christ. Love is not squeezing out something you do not have. The gospel is giving what you do have, and what we have is the name of Jesus.

We tend to believe that if we only had gold and silver, we would be happy even while sick. But the answer to our problems is never a better set of conditions. It is Jesus and the cross alone. Run every difficult situation through Jesus and the cross, and it is resolved. New things begin to unfold.

A Gold Bar Story

Years ago I received an Instagram DM from an elderly foreign woman. She said she was near the end of her life and wanted to donate what she had to a meaningful cause. She had come across our church's Love Block ministry and wanted to give to it. Her story was desperate: her second husband was trying to take her wealth and had even beaten her badly, so before she died she wanted to give her gold bars to our church. I looked up the gold price. One kilogram was worth about 150 million won, around $100,000.

I was skeptical at first. But the more of her letters I read, the more sincere she seemed. I counseled her by email about her faith questions and prayed for her. My wife, who is realistic and cautious, found it suspicious from the start. I, on the other hand, hoped this might be a surprise opportunity God had prepared for our church. Just think: $100,000 would have paid off half our church's debt. It was hard to let go.

Then she sent the details of a vault company in Dubai where the gold was stored, with photos of rows of safes and specific company information. My vague hopes began to feel real. She said she needed our church's official information to transfer the gold. So far, it all seemed plausible. But at the last step came an unexpected demand: to ship the gold from Dubai to Los Angeles, I would first have to pay the shipping fee, so she needed my bank information. In that instant I realized: this was a scam. All of it, the letters, the desperate story, the faith conversations and the Dubai company, had been a careful process built to get money.

After that I asked myself a question: how easily am I shaken by something as hollow as money? Unlike my wife, who doubted from the start, I was losing my judgment because of the hope of paying off the church's debt. I had even tied that hope to God's will. The experience showed me again how weak we are. How often do we give our hearts away to what the world calls the conditions for happiness: money, fame, power? The problem is not owning money. It is when money begins to own our hearts.

What He Needed, Not What He Wanted

Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” He took the man’s right hand and lifted him up. The man who had never walked stood and walked. He who had only ever begged outside the gate finally went into the temple, leaping and praising God.

He did not get what he wanted. He got what he needed. This is heaven, and this is why the temple exists.

The True Temple

In John 2:19–21, Jesus told the Jews that if they destroyed this temple, he would raise it again in three days. The temple he meant was not the building but his own body. Jesus died on the cross in the likeness of the old temple, and the curtain of the temple was torn. By that grace, we can come boldly to the throne of God and receive help in our time of need. Then, rising on the third day, he opened the age of the true temple. And now we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. **Do not try to be the Beautiful Gate. Be the Sheep Gate.**

In Jesus there is power, restoration, healing and salvation. The true temple is the place where people grab the hem of Jesus’ robe as he passes by, the well where they meet the Jesus who comes looking for them, the pool of Bethesda, and the boat in the middle of the storm.

In every situation, put Jesus in. That is where restoration happens, and where lives are turned around.