***Acts 4:8-10 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.***

The Holy Spirit changes us. When we receive the Holy Spirit, the person we were is not the person we are, and the person we are is not the person we are becoming. God sanctifies us, changes us, to be fit for His use. Peter is a prime example. In Matthew 16, Peter rebukes Jesus for predicting His crucifixion. In Matthew 26, Peter denies Jesus, standing in the courtyard of Caiaphas – remember that, it’ll be important later. In Acts 2, Peter receives the Holy Spirit. 50 days after the Resurrection. Sometime soon after that he heals a lame man in Acts 3, causing people to rejoice and believe. How did Peter move from rebuker, denier, weeping in guilt and shame to this bold proclaimer of Jesus, unafraid of anyone or anything? The Holy Spirit, sent by God. How do we become bold proclaimers of Jesus to all that will hear? The Holy Spirit, sent by God. The recipe hasn’t changed.

This morning, imagine that we are there in the Temple, listening to Peter boldly proclaim the name of Jesus. We have seen the miracle, this once lame man is standing there with John and Peter. We’ve seen this man. He has been carried to the Temple each day to beg alms. He’s been lame since he was born! Yet, here he stands! People are rejoicing. 5000 believe. God is moving.

Then, against this backdrop of a miracle, Peter and John are arrested… not by the Romans, but by the priests, captains of the Temple, and the Sadducees. What for you ask? For speaking the name of Jesus. They are arrested for being the vessel of a miracle. They are arrested for serving the purpose of God. If there were ever anything that I’d want a criminal record for, I’d want it to say – Felony Proclaiming the Name of Jesus. It is only when the Holy Spirit enters in that people are changed and become on purpose and intentional for God. Are we on purpose for Jesus this morning?

Peter and John find themselves in front of Caiaphas. This is the same Caiaphas Peter stood in his courtyard denying the Savior just two months ago. ***By what power or by what name have you done this?***  Verse 8 - *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel****.*** He is filled with the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 10:19-20, Jesus says - *But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.* As we are being changed, the Holy Spirit takes control of our entire being, including our speech. Caiaphas kicked off the trial of Jesus, tortured Him, blasphemed Him, delivered Him to the Romans, no doubt stirred up the crowds as they yelled Crucify, Crucify! Yet, Peter speaks with respect, leaving the judgement of Caiaphas in the hands of God.

Verse 9 *If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well,*Jesus was crucified, yet committed no sin. Peter and John are arrested for doing a good deed for a helpless man. What possible reason could there be for rejecting this act of pure Light done by Peter and John? In John 1:5, we read *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.* Darkness hates light. It cannot control it, it cannot kill it, and it cannot possess it. When Light arrives, darkness flees. Make no mistake, the dark hearts of those examining Peter and John, like their positions and their power. They don’t want to flee; therefore, they must try to douse the Light. It was that way in Peter’s day and it’s that way today.

Peter now gives the name in Verse 10*Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.* All glory is given to God. God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit is the only One worthy of glory. This helpless man, crippled from birth, has been made whole by the name of Jesus.

And Jesus still saves helpless men and women today. We arrive lame in this life, slaves to sin, living for self, as spiritually helpless as this man was physically helpless. Without this Name Jesus, we’re destined to die in darkness. Without the Holy Spirit, we’re destined to die a sinners death after living a meaningless life. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we become vessels of Light and Truth, blessed to proclaim the great things He has done to a world mired in lies and drowning in darkness.

This week consider - In the life of this lame man, many saw him, walked by him, some pitied him, but Only One saved him and made him whole– Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Likewise, in each of our lives, there are those we see, walk by, and even pity. Let’s be bold as Peter and introduce them to Jesus of Nazareth, showing them the Way to be made whole.