



The Acts of the Spirit

GATHERING THE CHURCH

ACTS 9:32-43

"THE HEALINGS"

OCTOBER 29, 2023

CONTEXT

The Book of Acts is the theological history of the Church. In previous weeks, we explored how God's people (the Church) have become where heaven and earth meet. The Church is multiplying rapidly, with it, opposition from the outside and obstacles from within. Despite the opposition, these followers of Christ are sown, not scattered, into areas and people groups in need of hearing the Gospel.

However, the expansion of the Church is at another turning point. Peter and other apostles and teachers are moving out from Jerusalem and establishing and shepherding churches nearby as they move to "the ends of the earth." They are taking the Gospel to cities full of Jews AND Greeks, all hungry to hear about the good news of Jesus. Today, no matter how big this moment is growing, it is not too big to see and serve the least of these.

SERMON SUMMARY

Pastor Joey reminded us this week that no insignificant people exist in God's kingdom. However the BIG the story of Jesus and His movement grows; it is never too big to see and treasure people the world sees as insignificant, with nothing to contribute.

We examined this truth in the healing stories of Aeneas and Tabitha. Aeneas is a paralytic who is entirely dependent on other people for his basic survival, and Tabitha is a pillar of the community who takes care of the widows (who in the ancient world could not care for themselves); both small people in small towns who are considered BIG in the heart of God and his people. Peter goes out of his way, on his otherwise busy schedule of teaching/shepherding, to visit these small-town communities with these small-town people to heal them and remind them of their significance in God's kingdom.

Like these people, we live in a world that judges us based on our performance, which tempts us to define ourselves within the pecking order. These stories and this truth are good news for our weary souls to rest and rejoice in, knowing we are seen and loved just as we are by our faithful savior. This renews our strength and commitment to our seemingly small, authentic acts of faith and love in our SMALL slice of God's BIG story.



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DISCUSSION



This document can be used for either personal or group reflection.

Group facilitator: you do not need to ask every question but can select the best ones for your group dynamic.

Expand Your Awareness

Pastor Joey explained that the world evaluates people's worth by their performance. Between our jobs, our relationships, and our societal standing, how you perform equals your acceptability and marketability. This is the world we have been "disciplined" into. Let's evaluate how we experience this and how it subtly shapes us.

- Where in society do you experience this performance pressure the most? Why?
- For those winning in life, how does that stereotypically impact how they view themselves and others?
- For those "losing" the game of life, how does that stereotypically impact how they view themselves and others?
- How do you observe this pressure impact society?
- How do you observe this pressure impact you?

Explore Your Experience

When it comes to the "performance mindset," it tempts us all to view ourselves/others in one of two ways:

Winning: Above Other

Losing: Below Others

Neither is what God has for us. Being honest and aware of what we are prone to and in what scenarios will allow us to replace that perspective with a proper view of self and others.

- Which one of those two mindsets are you most prone to? Why? (This is a vulnerable question, but be encouraged. Honesty is how we grow and change. Because of the grace of God, we are safe to be vulnerable)
- In which areas or scenarios do you notice that mindset is most prevalent?

Knowing Jesus moves us from being "above" or "below" others to no longer competing with them. Because of Jesus, we are all equal and significant regardless of our performance.

- How does being a non-competitive equal change how you live out your life and faith?



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Extract the Truth

Read the text: Acts 9:32-43

- What jumps out to you from the text?
- Why do you believe these stories are significant in the story of the early Church?

In the ancient world, weakness was intolerable. Those unable to care for themselves were best left to die or get out of the way. The point of life was to be as significant and influential as possible.

- How does Jesus and his Gospel shine bright in that society?
- How does that society compare to our own? What are the differences and similarities?
- How does Jesus and his Gospel shine bright in our society?

Experience Transformation

To move from an "above" or "below" approach to ourselves and to others, we must:

Repent: Turn from seeing yourself according to the world's standards (above/below)

Receive: Acceptance and significance because of Jesus and according to God's kingdom rules.

Rejoice: You are significant because God says you are!

Rest: Move out into the world with an equal/non-competitive posture towards others.

- Which of the above most resonates with you as a step you must take today?
- What is one thing you can do this week to practice that step?

Engage the World

How we view ourselves directly impacts how we view and interact with others; the Gospel, like Peter in this story, impacts us, so we move out and impact others, no matter their earthly significance.

- Who is one person in your life you are prone to think is below you or less significant than you?
- How can you practically practice loving that person with the love of Jesus?

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Pray for:

Repent: Turn from seeing yourself according to the world's standards (above/below)

Receive: Acceptance and significance because of Jesus and according to God's kingdom rules.

Rejoice: You are significant because God says you are!

Rest: Move out into the world with an equal/non-competitive posture towards others.

Keep Growing

Pastor Joey recommends reading “Dream Small: The Secret Power of the Ordinary Christian Life” by Seth Lewis and “Just Show Up: How Small Acts of Faithfulness Change Everything (A Guide for Exhausted Christians)” by Drew Dyck.



**PREPARE FOR
NEXT WEEK:**

Read Acts 10:1-33