

THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

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Today is Wednesday, September 11 and we are learning what the Bible says about Cornerstone.

OPENING PRAYER

My Lord and my God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I pause to rest in Your love this morning and seek Your presence in the stillness of a new day. As I strive to stand on Christ the Cornerstone, give me the firm foundation I need for my faith and build me into a living temple for Your Holy Spirit to dwell. Fill me with the love, joy and peace only You can provide. Undergird my thoughts, emotions and footsteps throughout the course of my day. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:8-12

REFLECTION

In the book of Acts, Peter and John went to the Temple for prayer at three o'clock in the afternoon. There was a man there at the gate called Beautiful who was lame from birth. He was forty years old. Every day for forty years he went to the same place to beg. He was a familiar face at the beautiful gate. The man asked Peter and John for money. Peter told him that he had no money to give, but offered something else. He said, “In the name of Jesus Christ walk.” Instantly the man’s feet and ankles strengthened. He not only stood up, he jumped to his feet. He not only walked, he leaped about the temple courts praising God.

The surrounding crowd recognized the man who was regularly seen sitting on a filthy mat begging for coins. Healed. Leaping for joy. They were amazed. Peter took the opportunity to tell them about Jesus. He preached a powerful sermon to the onlookers and told them how Jesus was the promised Messiah. Five thousand people heard Peter’s message and believed the truth (Acts 4:4). The religious authorities got word of this and were greatly disturbed by the popularity of Peter’s words. They seized Peter and John and put them in jail overnight. The next morning the high priest and elders had Peter and John brought before them for questioning. “By what power or what name did you do this?” they asked Peter. Peter responded with the words of the text we read today. Peter declared, “It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.”

Quoting Psalm 118:22, Peter declared Jesus to be the stone the builders rejected who has become the cornerstone. Jesus' suffering and humiliation became His authority and exaltation. His death became His divinity. His cross became His throne. Thorns became a crown. Shed blood became salvation. Salvation is found in no one else, Peter declares. For there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. We know that name - Jesus. Grasping the enormity of this truth makes me want to leap like the lame beggar, rejoicing in new life, set free from past infirmity, released from sin and death and able to stand in truth and walk in love.

Ask: From what has Jesus Christ of Nazareth set me free? How can I rejoice today in my healing, wholeness and salvation?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy and loving God, I am filled with the power of Your goodness. I jump for joy, I leap in love, I walk with hope. I praise You for Your gracious loving kindness. You have blessed me with the promise of a future, the gift of salvation, and a life of redemption. Thank You for seeing me, begging on a similar mat at a beautiful gate, lonely in my sorrow and stuck in my sin. Thank You for restoring me to life and speaking truth over me. I praise You for the gift of life - life abundant and life eternal. Amen.