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There's a YouTube video that has been out for a while inviting you to Me Church. It's a spoof, a take off around the modern church where the consumer sentiment has taken over and it is not about God or Jesus or even the Church community any more but Church becomes all about me.

It begins with a lady who says, "I live a very busy life and so by the time the weekends roll along, I'm tired... How about a church that would begin when I get there?" And the voiceover says, "Can do, when you arrive, we begin." Next there is a young couple with a baby, and the husband says, "We just want a Church that when our baby begins screaming, we are not the bad guys." And the voiceover says, "If your baby starts screaming, everyone else will leave, but you can stay." Another one says, "When I am in the church service can my car get a buff and a wax?" A young college student asks, "I'd like tickets for the Big Game." And a little boy says, "I'd like a pony." And to each request the voiceover gives people not just what they want but even more. And at the end, the tag line? "Me Church. Where it's all about You." [Me Church | Igniter Media | Church Video - YouTube](#)

Now with so many different Churches competing for the same group of Christians, Church can become all about me. My wants. My needs. My family. My faith. And if I am not getting what I want, I can just leave and find another Church that will cater specifically for me. But as Jesus leaves earth and the early Church begins, we see a different emphasis. Church is not about me, but He. Jesus. Jesus might not be physically here in Church but he is still the head of the church and the Church should all about Jesus, especially

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1. The power of Jesus. (verses 1-10)

3 *"One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon."* Last week we saw that the Holy Spirit had come upon the Church at Pentecost. That 3000 people were added to their number and they spent their time in worship, fellowship, Bible studies and caring for one another. But here we see that in the midst of all their busyness they still found time for prayer.

So, its 3pm. Time to stop everything and head to the Temple so that they can pray. So that they can remain connected to God. So that they can worship and praise God for all that He is doing and all that He is. So, in our passage, the emphasis seems to be on Peter and John as they walk that familiar road to the temple, when something happens.

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² *"Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter & John about to enter, he asked them for money."* Wait a second maybe its not about the apostles but about the lame man. Because Luke zeroes in on this one man. Now there would have been hundreds of people begging at this time & the Temple would be the best spot, for someone who believes in God, should care for the sick as well, shouldn't they?

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“Then Peter said, “Look at us!”⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

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Well Peter opens his mouth and talks to the lame man. “Silver and gold, I do not have.” Is that really true? At the end of the very last chapter, we heard that the believers in the Jerusalem church that Peter was a leader in, some of them had sold homes and provided money for those in need. Surely there is no more needy person than this lame man? So, Peter does have money, maybe not on him but he would have access to it.

Silver and gold, I do not have but I have something even more valuable with me, I have the name of Jesus. The healer, the Saviour, the Lord of life and death. So, I give you his name and, in his name, you may rise up and walk. Now I bet you could hear a pin drop. I’m sure John took a sideways glance at his friend who by this time is reaching out to the beggar.

But the hand is Peter’s but the power is Jesus. Remember Luke told us in Acts 1:1-2 that this was an account of what Jesus **continued to do** after he went up to heaven. So, it’s all about Jesus. Remember this man had never walked. So, Jesus is the one who gives this lame man the muscles he needed to walk. He instructs the brain to tell his legs to do something they had never done before. Without an operation, without physio but armed just with the word of God, Jesus gives the lame not what he wanted but what he needed. The ability to walk.

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In Isaiah 35 when God's steps in to restore his kingdom, he says you'll know it's the time... when the lame will leap like a deer. And now here's this guy. Walking and leaping and praising God. You see God’s Kingdom is here. And the King of that Kingdom, Jesus has the power even to get a man who has never walked in 40 years to not just walk but jump.

The result of this power, is praise. The man goes into the temple to praise God. The people who see it are astonished at the power of God. That’s what happens when you see that sort of power. You praise the one who is the source of that power. It’s not really about the lame man or the apostles it’s about Jesus. He gives the Church the power it needs to represent Him. The point of this story is that the apostles have access to the same power that Jesus had to perform the gracious & healing acts that we have already seen him do in the gospels.

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If the Church is about me, then all we have is our own power. Which at times might be sufficient but often is going to be hugely inadequate. But if the Church is about Jesus, we should see Jesus power all around us. Healing. Transforming. Forgiving. Restoring. And I see that happening amongst us & you will too if you look in the right places. The power of Jesus &

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2. The Person of Jesus (verses 11-16)

¹¹ *“While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished & came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.”*

You see the miracle displaying the power of Jesus led Peter to tell everyone about the person of Jesus. He is God's chosen servant who has come in the manner of the suffering servant of the book of Isaiah. But he is more.

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He is the King who reigns forever anticipated by King David. For even though the people of Jerusalem *"disowned the Holy and Righteous One... and killed the Author of Life, God raised him from the dead."* God has made it abundantly clear that Jesus is the descendant of David who, it was said, would set up a kingdom that lasts forever. If you're going to do that, and you are subsequently crucified then beating death is actually a prerequisite, and that's what Jesus did.

He is also the Prophet who Moses said would come. That's spelled out in verses 22-23. Referees don't come any better than Moses. So, if the nation of Israel had listened to Moses in the past, they certainly need to listen to Jesus right now. For he is also the descendent of Abraham promised in Genesis. You see the whole of the Bible has anticipated what is currently taking place. God will rule his kingdom through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Now I'm sure you have heard of the Danish ruler King Canute who once told the sea to stop coming in on the tide. But do you know that he did that on purpose? Canute was actually a pretty godly king, and got so fed up with the flattery of his courtiers that he moved his throne onto the beach, commanded the waves not to wet his feet and then jumped up and shouted *"Let all men know how empty and worthless is the power of kings, for there is none worthy of the name, but He whom heaven, earth, and sea obey by eternal laws."*

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For Canute it was about me but about Jesus. He is the source of all power. He is the person God has appointed and because of that Peter would say we need to put our faith in Him. ¹⁶ *"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."*

The correct response to the person of Jesus needs to be faith in Jesus. Not faith in the Church or in the individual or even faith in myself. It is faith in Jesus. He is the one who changed the lame man's situation. He is the one who can change our situation. He is the one whom the power of God flows through and friends, God's power still flows through His Son and through His Spirit. The person of Jesus should still bring us to faith in Jesus.

And the Church only has power because it has faith in Jesus name. The me Church where it is all about me has no power but the true Church, the Church where Jesus Christ is head, has access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. And that power is a bit like static electricity. It rubs off on the people around you. It can be seen and felt when you are in fellowship with those who have access to the power of God.

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As Kent Hughes once said, *"If we could assemble the great missionaries of the cross, we would have the most extraordinary collection of idiosyncrasies the world has ever seen. They would not understand each together. Some would not like each other. But there would be one common exciting characteristic in them all - a flaming earnestness of belief in the power of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."*

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And where do we get that sort of faith from? Romans 10:17 says *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”* And Hebrews 11 and 12 says we learn faith from the great crowd of witnesses of those who have demonstrated faith in the past as well as those who are putting their trust in Jesus in the present. And we can do both of those things in Church. Hear God’s word and see the results of God’s word in the people around us.

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3. The power of Jesus, the person of Jesus and thirdly **the prophecies about Jesus.**
¹⁷ *“Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.*

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You see God predicted that Jesus the Messiah would suffer and die. God prophesied in the OT that God would do something remarkable through His Son Jesus. ¹⁹ *“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.”*

This Jesus who has the power to get the lame to walk also has the power to clean up your act and wipe away your sins, without any soap or washing powder! This Jesus has the power to give you times of refreshment. ²¹ *“Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”* This Jesus will one day restore the entire world. Take it back to what it was in the beginning. Before sin and selfishness took over.

Now there is a message about me here. I can be forgiven, I can be refreshed, I can have my life restored. But as Peter preaches it is not really about me at all. It’s still all about Jesus.

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²² *“For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; **you must listen to everything he tells you.** ²³ Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.’ ²⁴ “Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. ²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’ ²⁶ When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.”*

If you place your emphasis on me, then you won’t have access to the power of God that can be transferred to all parts of our lives. But if we look to him, if we listen to him, if we repent and follow Him, then Jesus power begins to flow from Him to me.

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It is a bit like your mobile phone. You keep looking at it, texting, surfing the net from it and the power over time drains away from it until there is nothing left. At that point in time, you need to plug it into the power source that was there all along. And once it’s connected there, the wonders of the mobile phone return.

You see this sermon of Peter has almost nothing to say about the lame man. It has nothing to say about the apostles themselves. Instead, it is totally Christ centred. All the promises of

sins forgiven and refreshment come through Christ. All the prophecies concerning Jesus point to the power of Christ. And the call is to listen to him rather than your own desires, to connect with Him, to repent from our own selfish ways & now to follow him completely.

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Once again it is all about Jesus. As John Calvin said in his Institutes, *“We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ. We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else. If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name Jesus that it is “of him.” If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in his anointing. If we seek strength it lies in his dominion... If we seek redemption, it lies in his passion; if acquittal in his condemnation, if remission of the curse, in his cross; if satisfaction, in his sacrifice, if purification, in his blood; if reconciliation, in his descent into hell, if mortification of the flesh, in his tomb, if newness of life, in his resurrection, if immortality, in the same, if inheritance in the heavenly kingdom, in his entrance into heaven, if protection, if security, if abundant supply of all blessings, in His Kingdom. .. In short since a rich store of every kind of good abounds in him, let us drink of our fill from this fountain and from no other.”* The power of Jesus, the person of Jesus, the prophecies about Jesus &

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4. Lastly the persecutions arising from Jesus.

So, it’s all good, isn’t it? Come to Jesus and life will be one of walking and leaping and praising God? Well, let’s see what happens next, shall we? **4** *“The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ² They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³ They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.”*

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What’s next? Its persecution. Its jail. Its people rejecting the person of Jesus, turning their back on the power of Jesus, not believing the prophecies concerning Jesus. You see the message of Jesus might have brought great joy to the lame man but it has greatly disturbed the Sadducees, the religious leaders of the day. And because they have already killed Jesus, they now seek to silence Jesus followers.

You see with the coming of the Holy Spirit the church has the power to be witnesses in God’s world. But behind the scenes another spirit is working. The spirit of darkness, the spirit of Satan and he is now marshalling his troops to stop the proclamation of Jesus. To stifle the Church. To ensure that the power of the name of Jesus is put to bed once & for all.

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And you would think that he has before him the perfect strategy. Remove the leaders. Get rid of the preachers. Intimidate the key workers. So, they cut off the head of the snake so to speak. And what happens? **4** *“But many who heard the message believed; so, the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.”*

You get that? It’s not about the apostles. Its not ultimately about Peter and John. You can get rid of them. You can imprison them but you can’t stop Jesus. Why they killed Jesus just a couple of months ago and that didn’t stop him from doing his work at all. For when Jesus died there was about 120 people, men and women still classified as his followers. After Pentecost there was 3000 and now after the healing of the lame men there are 5000 men.

5000 men plus the women and children. So how many more are there? There is no stopping God's kingdom. There is no way you can put on the hand break when God is calling the Church to go full steam ahead. But I want you to notice how it all came about?

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Through the healing of one lame man. Now let's speculate for a second. Our passage says that this man had been carried to the temple gate every day to be near those going into the temple courts. But wait a second Jesus regularly went to the Temple, so surely, he had walked past this man. But it wasn't his time for healing. But now the Church was continuing the work of Jesus. And now it was his time. And because Peter and John cared for this man so much and had not given him what he had asked for but what he really needed, his healing, his transformation, his conversion led to another 2000 people joining the church.

What is the old saying? Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves. As a Church cares for, reaches out to, and points one person to Jesus, then that action opens the door for others, in this case thousands of others, to also come to Jesus.

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Is that something that could happen again today? Could a follower of Jesus heal someone with a major illness? Could others see the work of Jesus and come into the kingdom? Well funnily enough where these things are happening today the most is where also there is the persecution that Jesus predicted would also be happening. For example, one of the countries where the Church is growing the most rapidly is in Iran and yet repression and imprisonment of Christians and Christians leaders is also widespread.

Friends the power of Jesus has not changed. The person of Jesus is still the only way. The prophecies of Jesus are still coming true. And the persecution of Jesus followers is now more widespread today than any other time in the Churches' history. So, it could happen. Sins are still being forgiven. Times of refreshment are still available. And Jesus kingdom is still coming. But **not** when we place the emphasis on me, on my needs, on forming Me Church. But when we look to Jesus. When we listen to Jesus. When we learn from Jesus.

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There's a true story about Thomas Aquinas. He was visiting Pope Innocent IV in Rome & the Pope showed him the vast treasure in the church's vault. Pointing to all that great wealth, the Pope said, "No longer can the church say, 'silver and gold have I none.'" Thomas Aquinas replied, "It's true, nor can the Church say to the lame man, 'rise up and walk'"

In other words, the church can be rich...financially; but it can be powerless because the people are not following Jesus. On the other hand, the church can be dirt poor; but it can have great power; because the people are pointing others to the powerful name of Jesus.

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What about our Church? Can we say to anyone 'rise up & walk'? Would we be able to say to anyone 'repent then & turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out & you might receive times of refreshment'? Are we people who will serve God despite the difficulties, despite the inconveniences, despite any persecution? In this place we are not growing Me Church, we are growing the Church, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Join us. We may not have much but we do have the power of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ & that's enough! And we do have faith. Faith that what Jesus once did in Acts 3, he could do again today in 2021.

