

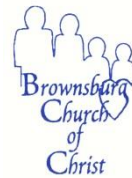
Walk Like a Healed Christian

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

Grace. Amazing grace. Wonderful grace. Marvelous grace. Erroneous grace. What? Why would I say that? Interestingly, anytime we sing about grace, Christians just love it. But anytime someone starts teaching about grace, folks come out of the woodwork to explain how they are wrong. No doubt, many do teach error on grace. But just because the word “grace” is used doesn’t mean error is being taught. And just because someone says, without equivocation or caveat, that we are saved by grace doesn’t mean they are teaching error (see **Ephesians 2:8-10**). Sadly, whenever someone teaches we are saved by grace, someone else will assume the teaching automatically means people don’t have to respond to or obey God. Certainly, I understand some false teachers do teach this. But salvation by grace, properly understood, doesn’t mean this. There are plenty of pictures of grace found in Scripture to help us understand, but one that demonstrates this beautifully is found in **Acts 3:1-10**.

The healing of the lame man in **Acts 3:1-10** is a beautiful analogy to salvation by grace. Be aware that Peter, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, demonstrates this account is an analogy to salvation. In **Acts 4:8-12**, Peter uses the healing of the lame man as a foundational account to teach about the salvation of all men. In **Acts 4:9**, Peter claimed the man had been “healed” by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The root term translated “healed” in this passage is “sozo.” Then Peter makes the connection to all the saved in **Acts 4:12** by saying “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (ESV). The same root word is translated “saved” in this verse as “healed” in vs. 9. In other words, just as the man was physically healed/saved by the name of Jesus, we are all spiritually healed/saved by the name of Jesus. Once we grasp this parallel, we see a beautiful picture of our healing/salvation by grace. I believe there are seven clear principles we can see from this passage to help us.

Discussion:

I. The goal of our healing/salvation by grace is to walk.

- A. I believe that one of the reasons there is so much error on salvation by grace, on all sides, is because of a misunderstanding of what salvation is. Too many of us believe that the saved equals going to heaven. No doubt, the saved will be in heaven for eternity. However, that is not what saved means. Saved means being healed, made whole, preserved from danger and death. That is exactly how the term is used to talk about this healed man. What was this man’s problem? He was sick, lame, unwell, unwhole. Because of that he couldn’t walk. Think about Peter’s goal in healing the lame man. Was Peter’s intent to get the man home whether or not he walked? Of course not. Peter’s goal was getting the lame man to walk. A walking man can, of course, get home. But when this man was saved/healed by God’s grace, it didn’t mean he would get home despite whether or not he walked. It meant he walked.
- B. In like manner, many have the idea that saying we are saved by grace means we get to go home whether or not we walk. That is simply not true. The goal of Jesus saving us is for us to walk. In **Ephesians 2:8-10**, Paul claims that we are saved by grace through faith in order to walk in good works. Then in the last half of Ephesians, he talks about that walk five times (**Ephesians 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15**). I’m not saying that unsaved people can’t ever do anything that is good. But as Paul demonstrated in **Romans 6:16**, when we sin, we become slaves to sin. It takes over. Then he continues in **Romans 7:15-24** to explain that without salvation he could not walk in good works. No matter how much he wanted to, he would eventually revert back to sin. Healing/salvation for us doesn’t mean taking us home whether or not we walk as God wants us to. Salvation means empowering us to walk as God wants.
- C. Understand what this means. If salvation by grace is properly understood, it cannot possibly mean going to heaven while continuing in rebellion to God. The salvation is the very act of being healed in order to walk as God has directed. The goal of our healing/salvation is to walk.

II. Healing/salvation requires a faith-filled response.

- A. In **Acts 3:6**, Peter told the man to rise up and walk. But why would this guy do that? He can’t walk. If you had been lame from birth and some joker told you to get up and walk, what would you say? “Shove off, joker.” Or perhaps, “Don’t be a jerk, man.” Or maybe, “Dude, I’m just asking for a little help, why do you have to make a joke out of this?” But that isn’t what the man did. In **Acts 3:7**, Peter reached out his hand to the man. What did the man do? Slap Peter’s hand away? Stare at it like Peter was crazy? No, he reached out and took

Peter's hand and let Peter lift him up. This isn't a dead-lift against the lame man's will. This is cooperation on the lame man's part. He reached out to Peter in faith. Then in **Acts 3:7**, after the man had responded in faith, his feet and ankles were made strong. According to **Acts 3:16**, it was by faith in the name of Jesus that the man was healed. The man responded in faith.

- B. Do you want healing/salvation? Do you see your awful sinfulness and your captivity to the sins you've committed? Are you shackled with the guilt of the past and think you can't escape? Do you long to walk with God, but think you can't possibly do it? God is telling you to walk. Respond to Him from faith in the name of Jesus Christ and walk. What is your faith-filled response? God is reaching His hand out to lift you up. Jesus said, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved..." (**Mark 16:16**, ESV). In **Acts 2:38**, Peter had said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (ESV). As Ananias told Paul to arise and be baptized in order to wash away his sins in **Acts 22:16**, that is our faith-filled response.
- C. Now this is a point where some see the parallel break down. If you don't see this man reaching out to grab Peter's hand and cooperate with the lifting up as a faith-filled response, then I would agree that the parallel breaks down here. After all, salvation does require a faith-filled response. **Romans 5:2** says we gain access to the grace of God through faith. But I think I see a faith-filled response in this man, and I hope you do too.

III. God's power accomplishes the healing/salvation.

- A. Now here is the powerful question. Did this man heal himself by his faith-filled response? When he saw Peter's outstretched hand and he put his faith in the name of Jesus Christ, did the lame man heal himself? Absolutely not! There is not one single person who considers this man's story that thinks he was healed/saved by his faith-filled response. There was absolutely nothing about reaching out and having Peter pull on his arm that was powerful enough to heal the lame man. There is no way that he could go around boasting in the great work he had done of taking Peter's hand. It's just silly. Though this man had to reach out and take Peter's hand, he was not putting his faith in his ability to take Peter's hand. He was putting his faith in the name of Jesus Christ.
- B. In like fashion, we do not save ourselves by our faith-filled response in baptism. There is absolutely nothing about being dunked under the water that mandates, requires, or effectively accomplishes our healing/salvation. **Colossians 2:11-12** drives this point home for us. We must not put our faith in our getting baptized, but in what God does in baptism. We are not raised up by faith in our action, but by faith in God's power to save us in this faith-filled response as He has promised. Thus **Ephesians 2:8-10** explains that salvation is not of our works so we can't boast. Not because we didn't do anything, but because what we did was not powerfully effective to accomplish the healing. And if our faith and trust is in what we did, we are in trouble because it couldn't get the job done. Only God can.
- C. Why was the lame man healed? Because God healed him. Why are we saved? Because God saved us.

IV. Walk like you've been healed/saved.

- A. Now we get down to the important point I want us to see in this story. Do you remember what the goal of healing the lame man was? The goal was to get this lame man walking. What did he do in **Acts 3:8**? He went walking and leaping. But what do you think he did the next day? Do you think he came back to the temple gate, laid down like a lame man, and started begging for charity again? How ridiculous would that have been? He had been healed and he needed to walk like a healed man.
- B. What about you? Have you entered Christ? Have you been saved by Him? Have you been healed by Him? What are you doing with that? His goal wasn't to heal you so He could take you home whether or not you walked. His goal was to heal you so you could walk. **Ephesians 2:10** says God saved us so we could walk in the good works He created beforehand. In **I John 1:7**, John talks about those who walk in the light as Jesus is in the light. In **I John 2:4-6**, John drove this even further home. God saved us in Jesus so we could walk in accord with His commands. If you entered Christ just so He would take you home whether you walked or not, you missed the point. We enter Christ so we can walk.
- C. So, are you walking like a healed/saved Christian? Or are you acting like a lame person?

V. Give God the glory when you walk.

- A. When the lame man became the healed man and walked, he not only went walking and leaping, he went about praising God (**Acts 3:8**). He didn't attract attention to what he could do. He didn't attract attention to what he was accomplishing. He pointed the attention to God. Can you imagine how this man viewed every step he took from this point on? Think about the next day and the next and the next. What about a week later, a month later, a year later? Every step he took was a reason to praise God because He was certain that

he wasn't walking based on His own power but based on God's healing power. Sadly, after years of walking, he might forget his lameness and cease to praise God. We don't know about this fellow, the story doesn't tell us how he responded later. But as we hear the story, we know how he should respond. Not a single step he ever took after this was a reason to praise himself or trust in his own ability to walk. Every step was a reason to praise God. The healed man didn't praise God with each step because he believed God had predestined him to take the step or because he only took the steps that God made him take. He praised God because he knew that without the power of Jesus Christ, he would be unable to take the steps he wanted to.

- B. The same is true for us. We have been saved in order to walk. We are not now walking in order to be saved. Therefore, we need to walk like saved people. But every step is a reason to praise God. You are here in a congregational assembly, obeying God's direction to assembly. Who should be praised for your presence here today? You, because you are so awesome? No. God should be praised. I'm not saying that you are here because God has predestinated you to be here or because God is pulling strings to get you here beyond your control or without your involvement. Rather, you need to grasp that you would not be able to walk in a manner worthy of your calling (**Ephesians 4:1**), if it weren't for the power of Jesus Christ in your life (cf. **Ephesians 3:14-21**). Therefore, with every step you take walking hand in hand with God, praise Him, glorify Him, magnify Him. He is the one who should be glorified for your walking, not you.

VI. Don't atrophy.

- A. What would happen if this lame man got scared of the new responsibilities he would have? Think about it. He had spent his life living off the generosity of others because he couldn't walk. Now he's going to be expected to work to provide for himself. That could be a little frightening. I can imagine at the first sign of hardship, he might look longingly back to his spot at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. Some days, he might not be sure he could measure up to the responsibilities for the rest of his life. He might be tempted to lay down and live like a lame man again. What would happen to him if he quit walking? What would happen if he went back to laying down at the gate and begging? His healed legs would atrophy. He would lose his ability to walk by the power of Jesus Christ.
- B. The same thing can happen to us. As Peter proclaimed in **II Peter 2:20-22**, if we go back to living like lame people, we'll be enslaved again. The spiritual strength we had gained by our trust in the power of Jesus Christ will atrophy. We'll be severed from Him and lose our ability to walk. Of course, if we can't walk, we won't get home. Please, don't atrophy. Walk like the healed/saved Christian you are.

VII. Get back up when you fall.

- A. Do you think this man ever stumbled and fell after this day of walking and leaping? No doubt he did. Everyone falls sometime. Put yourself in this man's shoes. You spent most of your life unable to walk, then by the power of God you were able. But for some freak reason, you now find yourself on your back. You stumbled and fell. You miss-stepped and wound up on your knees, or worse your face. Perhaps someone tripped you. What might go through your mind? Do you think you might question if you had lost the ability to walk? I'm sure of it. For a moment you might question whether you could get back up again. What did this man need to remember when that happened? He needed to remember that he had been healed by the name of Jesus Christ. He was a healed man. If he stumbled and fell, he needed to get back up and walk like the healed man he was. He didn't need to lay on his back like the lame man he used to be. He needed to put his faith in the healing of Jesus Christ and get back to doing what Jesus healed Him to do.
- B. What about when you stumble and fall? All of us stumble and fall sometimes. Stumbling, tripping, and falling is not the same as atrophying. There is a difference between the rebellious impenitent who has gone back to begging for charity at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and the healed/saved Christian who trips up while walking. But the trip, stumble, and fall are dangerous. Satan wants to use that to get you to think you aren't really a healed/saved person. He wants to get you to give up on walking. He wants you to question why you ever even tried walking. But you need to do exactly what the healed man needed to do. Get back up and get back to walking. Not because you are so good at walking. But because the one who healed you is powerful enough to keep you walking. This is exactly what Paul taught in **Philippians 2:12-13**. Your salvation isn't because of your awesome work; it is because of God's working. When you stumble, don't give up. Put your faith in His saving power, get back up on the feet He has strengthened, and continue walking.

Conclusion:

Grace! Amazing grace. Wonderful grace. Marvelous grace. Matchless grace. Have you been healed by it? Or do you keep trying to heal yourself? If you have been healed, are you walking like a healed person? Quit going back to the temple gate. Get up on the legs God has strengthened and walk like a healed Christian.