

An Ugly Problem at A Beautiful Gate

Acts 3:1-8

We often judge people by their outer appearance, without any thought as to what maybe happening inwardly. Many are judged negatively due to their outer appearance while others receive praise. I remember my mother cautioning me not to put too much faith into what appears to be something or someone of value without close observation, saying, "Everything that glitters is not gold." That's why we should not rush to judgment regarding someone's character without taking a closer look. You may be surprised at what you will discover.

In our text we find the Apostle Peter and John on their way to the Temple at the hour of prayer to worship. When they arrived, they encountered a man sitting at the entrance asking for money. The gate where the man lay was called Beautiful, but the man had an ugly problem. He had been lame since birth and had to be carried by others. Because of the man's condition, he was unable to enter the temple to pray on his own.

In his book, *"Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire"*, Pastor Jim Cymbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle Church shares a story I will never forget. At one time their place of worship was located in an area known for prostitution, drugs, alcoholism, homelessness and panhandlers. One day after preaching he sat exhausted on the steps of the sanctuary when someone who looked and smelled as though he was homeless approached him. Thinking that the man only wanted money, he reached into his pocket to give him something, because he was tired, and didn't want to be bothered. The man looked at him and said, **"I don't want your money, I want that Jesus you were talking about!"** The man had been standing unnoticed in back of the sanctuary where he could hear the Gospel message being preached.

Pastor Cymbala admitted that he was both ashamed and humbled by the man's request. He repented and promised God that he would never jump to conclusions again regarding anyone or anything without close examination. Later he discovered that it was the same man that had been lying in a pool of urine in front of the sanctuary for some time. Pastor Cymbala reported that the man was truly converted and became one of the best servants in that congregation.

The man in our text at the Beautiful Gate though looking for money, received salvation and physical healing, which is of greater value than silver and gold. The Apostle Peter reached down to help him rise, the man received strength in his legs and began leaping joyfully and praising God.

Sisters and brothers, let's not ignore those who maybe laying at a Beautiful Gate with an ugly problem, waiting to enter the House of Prayer. Let's lend them a hand, help them to rise, so they may receive the gift of God.

Happy Resurrection!

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