

Fix It, Jesus!

Acts 3:1-10 (NIV)

¹ One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 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 and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. 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.” ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Every day the routine’s the same. Wake up. Sit yourself up. Someone brings you food. They get you dressed, carry you to the temple gate called Beautiful. They place you down. You look around for people coming, but you don’t keep your gaze fixed on them. If they look at you, you quickly look down lest you look people in the eye and make them feel uncomfortable or guilty. You cup your hands together and hold them out. You give your cardboard sign of a pitch for people to be charitable to you with their money. Maybe someone would bring you food, help relieve you. Day in and day out this man who could not walk begged to survive.

Religious life looked differently for Jesus’ disciples than it does for us. We generally come to this building one time a week for worship. If you lived in Jerusalem, you would be heading to the temple 3x times a day just to pray: one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and one at sunset. Imagine that when you came to church each of those three times during the day for God-pleasing worship, you always would see the same poor beggar who couldn’t walk. What would you think?

Would you think: Why doesn’t someone fix this? I mean, I would prefer that he get a job. Surely he can do something with his hands even if he can’t walk. Maybe he can sew, mend clothes. But how would he get the startup essentials? Who would trust him with their business? How would he get the product back to people? How much could he really make doing that? Would it be enough to pay for his caretakers? Maybe the people who bring him are doing this out of charity, maybe family members. What if they get tired and worn out and stop the caregiving? There’s no welfare system, no government aid. It’s on us as religious people, Christian people, to help this man be taken care of. I mean, I gave him what I had the first time around, but I don’t have enough income to support another person every day. Can someone actually fix this broken situation?

Our world is broken in so many ways, things not being the way that they should. There are people who can’t walk, who live every day with their disabilities, like this beggar. There are other people right now in ICUs and hospitals with COVID, cancer, other disease and illnesses, struggling to find help, relief, healing, not sure if they will ever get back to normal. There are people struggling in their marriage, living in misery, hurt, maybe separated with the word divorce on their minds and maybe on their lips. They’re struggling to find reconciliation, understanding, protection. People are struggling with loneliness, feeling like no one knows what they’re going through, feeling like an outsider in a room full of people with no one taking the time to care. Maybe that lonely person gave you a smile today, but it was hard for them to muster it up as the darkness of depression crushes them. Can someone please fix this?

Our world is crying out not just into the void to be fixed, but to you. “Fix it!” “Fix what I see is wrong with this world.” “Take action!” Or maybe you’re not asked to fix these things, but maybe you’re like me and when you hear a problem or see someone hurting, you immediately want to fix it for them, just like we want to fix the life of this man who can’t walk.

I have had to realize over and over again in the last few weeks and months that I can’t fix the world and its problems, let alone the problems and hurts going on in people’s lives. That admission makes me feel so powerless, useless. Maybe it sounds like I’ve resigned myself to inaction, to not even trying. Maybe you’re experiencing the same thing. You see someone going through hard times, through loneliness, depression, health issues, relationship problems, and you want to fix it. You want to help, but you don’t have the means, ability, or time to do so. And so you feel pretty useless. What can I actually fix? Does it all just stay broken and we have to live with it? All the while we think this, the world indicts us, shames us, for not acting and not fixing.

In a way, the man born unable to walk asked Peter and John to fix his problem. **“When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.”** (verse 3) Peter and John did not avert their eyes and ignore the brokenness of the man they saw when they came to worship. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, **“Look at us!”** So the man gave them his attention, **expecting to get something from them.** 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.” (verses 4-6) Peter and John knew that they did not have the money to fix this man’s problem. They also knew that they themselves could not create a life where this man’s troubles would go away. But what they did have, they gave. They had Jesus, and Jesus could fix this, even though they couldn’t.

“Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.” (verses 7-8) All the people who had been seeing this beggar every day they came to church now were filled with wonder and amazement. Someone actually fixed this man! Praise the Lord!

We can’t fix all the problems that we see in the world and in the lives of others, let alone in our own lives. What we need to do is to stop putting it on ourselves to fix it, trying to do something we can’t, and instead give what we do have, like Peter and John did. We have Jesus. Jesus can and does and did heal people, as all our Bible readings today told us. We can give him to others, someone who can actually fix what’s wrong.

So, just tell people that Jesus fixes this, that he can make you walk again, make you healthy, that he’ll fix your marriage, your loneliness, your depression? What if doesn’t happen? What if that person never gets better, never leaves the hospital? What if the depression never leaves? What if you continue to feel lonely? What if your marriage only gets worse and falls apart completely? Have I just given this person a false hope? Have I given the impression to this person that if they really believed in Jesus and were really good, then all this brokenness would go away? Have I made it worse by telling someone Jesus will fix it?

This is where we say more than simply Jesus will fix it. It’s a true statement, but we serve others in the name of Christ by helping them see how Jesus fixes this. After listening to their hurt and acknowledging their pain, don’t take on the fix-it mentality and try to remove it. Instead, give them what you have: Jesus, and Jesus to fix every situation.

For the person not able to walk, sick and in the hospital, health failing, we acknowledge: I wish I could fix your body for you, but I can’t. However, I know that God has good things in store for you. I know this because he gave his one and only Son in place of you and so your sins are forgiven. He’s not punishing you with this disability, this sickness. I know this because, in baptism, God washed away all your sins, clothed you with Jesus’ perfection, and made you an heir of heaven. He has promised to take you there. And on the Last Day when he raises all the dead, he will raise your body and perfect it to be like his resurrected body - one that never gets sick, cannot break down, and has no disabilities. Jesus will fix this. Until that day, let’s pray that God would heal you like he did for so many people, including this man born being unable to walk.

For the couple with a marriage on the rocks: Yeah, I wish I could fix your marriage and make all the problems go away, but I can’t. I can’t change what has been said or how it was received. But what I can give you is a God who is faithful to you as well as his promises, no matter what happens in life. God has married himself to us. He is a faithful husband who never cheats on you and always puts you first. He lives to serve you. No matter how messed up your marriage is, even if it falls apart, God will always faithfully love you. Knowing that God will always be faithful to us, let’s pray that your marriage would be reconciled and healed.

For the lonely: I wish I could take the loneliness away, but I can’t. What I can give you is the one being who is a constant companion, who is always there for you, always listening as you struggle seemingly by yourself. God is with you always to the very end of the age. He is never preoccupied with other things, never too busy to listen. He’s daily checking up on you, watching over you while you sleep, guarding and protecting you. The world and everyone in your life may leave you but God never will. Let me pray with you right now that God take the loneliness away.

For the depressed: I can’t get you out of those dark places but I know that one day those feelings will end, they won’t last forever – even though it feels like they will. In the dark times, I give you what I have: a God who is your light as he loves you unconditionally and without end. You can be so down in the dumps that maybe no one else wants to be around you, but God and his light remain in your life. You may question if you’re worth anything, and God says you are worth my whole perfect life, a life given in death for you. You mean that much to him. Let’s pray that God keep his light shining in your life and bring you out of this depression.

Like Peter and John, we give what we have, and we have Jesus. Sometimes, this doesn’t feel great because outwardly it doesn’t look like we’re fixing the problem, the pain, the suffering. We may not see outward results, but you gave something better. You gave Jesus, the one being who knows the best way to fix any and every problem and can and does actually fix them, no matter how big or impossible they seem. We give people Jesus to fix whatever is broken in our lives. Amen.