

Acts 3:1-26

Outward Church: Our True Need

Jonathan M. Romig
CornerstoneWestford.com

As I was thinking about you this week, **imagining** you sitting in these **chairs**, I was thinking that we all have a **need**. Your need is that **thing** or **issue** that's on your **mind**, and that's **weighing** on you but you don't know how to **solve**. If we were to **each stop** and **publicly identify** our need, we'd be here a while.

- Some of us would **identify money** as our need. We need a **job**, or a **raise**, or help paying off our **student debt**, or **mortgage**, **car payment**, or **medical bills**. We would identify our need as **financial**.
- Some of us would identify **relationship** as our need. We're having **marriage problems** or **family problems**. We have a **problem** with a **parent**, **sibling**, or **coworker** we don't know how to fix. We need **reconciliation** or **another try** or to **feel loved**. We would identify our need as **relational**.
- Some of us would identify **time** as our need. We're just too busy with **our schedules** and our **kid's sports** and **activities**. We don't have enough time with our **family** or to get our **job** or **homework done**. If only we had **more time**, everything would be **easier**. We would identify our need as **time**.

I'm sure we would identify other needs—**medical**, **emotional**, **social**. As we open the **Scriptures** we encounter a God who **cares** for the needs of his people. Jesus came to preach the **gospel**, the **good news**, but also to **heal** and **restore** the **lame** and the **blind** and set the **oppressed** free (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus cares for our **spiritual needs**, but also our **physical**, **mental**, **emotional**, **social**, and **economic** needs (Matt 6:25-34). We **shouldn't** be **surprised** that once **Jesus** sends out his disciples on **mission**, they do the **same**.

Peter and John, two of Jesus' closest disciples, are going to the temple for a **3pm prayer meeting**, and as they're walking into the **temple compound** they encounter a man who has **never walked**. He was born **lame** and has had to **depend** on the **generosity** of **others** his **entire life**, to be **transported** to the **temple**, maybe to get into his **bed**, **eat**, and go to the **bathroom**. His need is **obvious**, right? But he actually **underestimates** his need and so do we.

We underestimate our need. (Acts 3:1-8a)

The man didn't ask them for healing. He didn't have a clear **perception** of his need. Instead, he asks them for money. "If I can just have **more** money, it will **solve** all my needs, or at least most of them." Have you ever **told yourself** that? This man became so **locked** into a way of **thinking** he **couldn't imagine** what **God** might do. We also can become so **locked** in a way of thinking we **can't imagine** what God can do.

I read an **article** this week that spoke of the difference between the **left side** of our brain and the **right side**. Maybe you know this already but **creativity** and **imagination** are attributed more to the **right side** of our brains and **order** and **logic** more to the **left side** of our brains. I think we can get stuck in a **left-brain understanding** of our need, the **basics**, and today I want us to **right-brain imagine** what the **Scriptures** might **really say** our need is.

This man thinks he needs **silver** and **gold**. I need **food** and some place to **sleep**. Very **left brain** thinking. But **Peter** and **John**, **right-brain disciples**, look at him and imagine **God's possibilities** for him.

Acts 3:6-8a (NIV) 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...

Peter performs this amazing **miracle** and heals this man’s legs. This must be his **real need, right?** But even when **Jesus** heals people, it often carries a **greater point**. When a **paralyzed** man is lowered through the **roof** to see him Jesus first says, “Your **sins** are **forgiven**.” Then he says “take your mat and go home” (Mark 2:9-11). He heals the man **to prove** he **can** forgive sins. **Forgiveness** was his **greater need**. Now Peter and John heal this man to **open the door** for them to tell the **crowds** their **greater need**.

Only God can satisfy our true need. (Acts 3:8-10)

The lame man **thought** he needed **silver** or **gold**, and once Peter **healed** him maybe he thought that was what he really needed, but Peter and John know he needs **God himself**. He needs God to **reach down** into his life and **touch** him and that’s what **we need**. When God does, it **changes everything**.

Acts 3:8-10 (NIV) 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.

He **jumps up** and begins telling everyone how good God is! He has encountered the **life-giving power** of God. **When God meets** our **needs**, let’s tell others. When God keeps **providing** for you **month** after month even though the **budget** is **tight**, tell others. When God gives you **peace** in the midst of **loss**, tell others. When God is there for you at your **darkest moment**, tell others! We think our need is one thing, **money, relationship, time, health**, but in reality our need is so much **bigger**. We need **God himself**. We each need to **experience** the **living God**. But let’s **clarify** what that means.

How do we need God? (Acts 3:11-26)

It’s one thing to say we need him, but another to **explain** what that means.

1) We need to experience him. (v11)

Acts 3:11 (NIV) While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade.

I want to focus on two words. The people were “astonished” and they came “running.” That word for astonished also means “amazed” or “alarmed.” That’s what happens when we encounter the **living God**. He’s **amazing** but **alarming, scary**. You would think this would have **driven away** the people from Peter and John, but instead it **attracts** them to them. The word for “running” describes them **flocking** together like a **flock of birds**, or **running together** like the **Chelmsford road race**. Instead of running away everyone comes running **to** because they want to know what happened. They’re **attracted** to this **supernatural display** of **God’s power**. When we’re **experiencing God** in our **lives** and **church**, we should expect that others will be attracted to him. They’ll want to experience God too.

Like the crowd and like the crippled man we too need God. But we don’t come to God so that we can have more money, or better relationships, or more time, or better health. We come to God so we can experience him **working through those things**. *Sometimes God gives us what we **think** we **need**. Sometimes he **doesn’t give** us what we think we need. **All the time** he wants to give us our **actual need**, **Jesus**. God works through the giving or the not giving to give us himself.*

A couple years ago Monica and I needed a **house**. There wasn't a lot out of options but one day we got together with our **realtor** and looked at **six houses** our first day of searching. As we were driving to the very first house I pointed out one on the street, a **cape**, and told Monica I liked that house. The first house we drove up to happened to be a **green cape**. We liked it, but had planned to go to see other houses that day. As we looked at them we kept **comparing** them to that **first house**. Even though there wasn't a lot of options, we made an offer **below asking price**, and later that day our realtor called us to tell us he'd **never experienced** anything like it but the owners had **accepted** our offer. When we spoke to the **owners** they didn't have a **clear reason** for moving—no job change or retirement—they had just felt it was **time**.

Monica and I **hold onto** this story as a reminder that God has us **exactly** where he wants us. He kicked a family **out of their house** so we could have it! What I **thought we needed** was a **home**, but what we **really needed** was to **experience God providing for our needs**. Remembering this story has **ministered** to my **soul** ever since. Sometimes I ask the Lord, "Lord, is this **where** you want us?" And he brings this story to mind to remind me this is **exactly** where he wants us. God giving us the house is no longer just about the house, but about God showing us his **goodness** and **will through the giving** of the house.

What's **your story**? Maybe it wasn't a house purchase, but it was money coming in at the **last moment** to pay your **bills**, or **meeting your loved one**, or some **other way** God has provided for your need. Really, he was **providing himself** for you in your need. *1) We need to experience him.*

2) We need his conviction. (v12-15)

Peter and John began to explain to the crowd why this man can walk. It's not their power that has done this, but Jesus' power working through them. You can imagine the **conviction** of their **sin** that begins to **roll over them** as they hear this message—they just **crucified** Jesus to **death**.

Acts 3:13 (NIV) The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

Peter identifies the God of their **ancestors**—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—as the same God who chose Jesus. This would be great news—the **God** of our **forefathers** is on the move again!—but it's not because they **killed** the one God chose.

Acts 3:14-15 (NIV) 14 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. 15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

You killed God's holy and righteous one. You killed the "author of life!" Imagine how convicting that would be. We need conviction too. We need to become **aware** of our **own sins** and for it to **grieve our hearts**. We're not guilty for killing the author of life but we can each be **responsible** for "**disowning**" the Holy one.

If you've ever seen the movie *Silence* it's about two **Catholic priests** who go into **Japan** to share **Christianity** in the midst of **severe persecution**. They encounter **Kichijiro**, a man who **repeatedly denies** his **faith** but again and again **repents** and **returns**. Over the course of the movie you become more and more **frustrated** with Kichijiro. Why would he do this? Why would he deny Christ and his fellow Christians again and again? But **perhaps**, in some ways, we're just **like him**. We deny Jesus too, but when we're **embarrassed** to say his **name** at work, or when we **hold onto lust** or **greed** in our **hearts**, or when we **divide** our lives into **sacred** and **secular**, giving **some things** to God and **keeping others** for ourselves. Just like Kichijiro we need to **repent** and **return**, again and again. The **priest** keeps **forgiving** and **accepting** him just like **God** keeps forgiving and accepting us.

We need Jesus to not only provide for us **financially**, but to **radically transform** the way we see money. We need Jesus to build up our **relationships**, but on him as our **foundation**. We need Jesus to not give us **more time**, but to **love him** and **love others** with the time we already have. The thing that we **think** we need is **not** actually what we need. We need **Christ** and we need him to **transform** us from the **inside out**. 1) *We need to experience God.* 2) *We need his conviction.*

3) We need faith in his Son, Jesus. (v16)

Now Peter and John explain how they healed the crippled man.

Acts 3:16 (NIV) 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.

Peter and John have **faith** in Jesus and Jesus gives them the **power** to heal this man. We need that **same kind of faith** in Jesus. It says that "the faith that comes **through** him." That kind of faith actually **comes through Jesus**. **Jesus** gives us the faith we need to have faith in him. That sounds **counterintuitive** but in order to believe in Jesus you need Jesus to **give you belief**.

If you're here and you don't believe in Jesus, you **don't trust him yet**, or your faith is **weak** and **not really** part of your life, you need Jesus. **Pray** that Jesus would give you faith in him. Pray that Jesus would **open up** your heart to see your need for him. Pray, "Jesus, I need you to give me faith in you. Amen."

The **gospel** is the **good news** that **Jesus died** and **rose again** so that by **faith** in him you might **know** and **experience God**. *How do we need God? 1) We need to experience him. 2) We need his conviction. 3) We need faith in his Son, Jesus.*

4) We need his refreshment. (v17-20)

Peter admits they were "**ignorant**." They didn't know, but this **doesn't excuse** them. It doesn't excuse us either. We can live our **whole lives** doing one thing and **ignoring** Jesus because "we didn't know" but that **doesn't** make it **okay**. God **uses** their **mistake** to bring salvation.

Acts 3:18 (NIV) But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.

The Messiah came to suffer to pay the penalty for our sins. What should our **response** be?

Acts 3:19 (NIV) Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

We see here that **repentance** means to turn your **being from sin to God**. That **doesn't mean** you'll **never sin again** (disobey God), but you're turning your **mind**, **will**, and **affections** to Jesus. Repentance **isn't** a **one time act**, but a **lifestyle**, a **daily act** of turning to **Jesus**. **When** we repent **two things** happen:

1. **Our sins are "wiped out."** "...ancient writing was on papyrus and the ink had no acid in it. It therefore did not bite into the papyrus like modern ink, but simply lay on top of it. To erase the writing a man simply wiped it away with a wet sponge." (NIV Application Commentary Acts)¹ Jesus shed his **blood** and used it to wipe away our sins. If we repent and trust in Jesus he forgives us completely.
2. ..."times of refreshing" come from the Lord. Remember your **need**? If you need refreshment, if you need **long-lasting rest** and **renewal**, Jesus has it. He wants to **renew** your soul. He wants to **heal** you.

He wants to **deal** with those parts of your **soul** that is **anxious** about **money**, or **relationships**, or **time**. He wants to deal with those **hidden parts** that are afraid. *We need his refreshment.*

5) We need his restoration. (v21-26)

Peter promises that Jesus is going to come back and “**restore everything**” (v21). That’s what **Abraham** and **Moses** and **Samuel** and all the **prophets** believed. Through the Messiah, through Jesus, “all peoples on earth [would] be blessed” (v22-25). Jesus is going to come back and restore the world to the **perfect paradise** we lost in **Eden**, only **better**. There’s going to be **perfect peace** and **harmony** and you won’t feel the **pain** of your **unmet needs** anymore. Jesus will **supply** all your needs **forever** and ever.

Now we’re presented with a **choice**. We can either **believe in Jesus** and **receive blessing** (v26) or we can **reject** him and be “**completely cut off**” (v23). Life comes down to a **choice**. You can choose to **pursue your needs**, money, relationships, time, health, whatever else, but in the end that will only lead to **more and more need** until you **perish** in your need. Or... you can **choose to be in relationship with God through Christ Jesus** and he will take care of all your needs, spiritual and material. God won’t give you everything you think you want, but he’ll give you everything you actually need, **himself**.

Only Jesus can satisfy your true need.

When the crippled man looked at Peter and John, Peter says, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” (v6) He’s saying, “I can’t give you silver or gold, but I can give you Jesus” and that’s all I have for you too. I can give you Jesus. Do you want him? Maybe you can think of other things you want but what you really need is Jesus. ***Only Jesus can satisfy your true need.***

Pastor [Jonathan Romig](#) preached this message at Cornerstone Congregational Church. You can download a PDF copy of this sermon above, which includes endnotes and references, or share it through [Apple podcasts](#) or [Google Play Music](#). Read the [story of our church here](#).

Discussion Questions:

Good for small groups, community groups, life groups, Bible studies, Sunday school, or personal and family times of devotion and prayer.

1. What would you identify as your biggest need right now? What's taking up your mental energy?
2. If you were to imagine what God sees as your biggest need, what do you think God would identify?
3. Do you believe that God can satisfy your needs? Is it possible to ever feel fully satisfied in this life?
4. When you read the story of Peter healing the crippled man (Acts 3:1-10), what do you think was his most pressing physical need and most pressing spiritual need? How does Peter address both?
5. What do you think it means to experience God? When was the last time you experienced God? What was it like?
6. Do you think those listening to Peter's message were convicted of their sin, their rebellion against God (Acts 3:11-26)? Why sin is the Holy Spirit convicting you of?
7. What does it mean to repent and believe in Jesus? How often should we do this? Is this a one time event or an ongoing lifestyle?
8. Do you believe Jesus can forgive you of your sins? What does it mean to be refreshed spiritually? How does that relate to sin and forgiveness?
9. What is Jesus ultimately restoring? Read Revelation 21:1-4.
10. Do you want to repent and believe in Jesus and be part of this? Or do you choose to reject him? Do you agree with this sentence? "Only God through Christ can satisfy our true need."

¹ Fernando, Ajith. Acts (The NIV Application Commentary Book 5) . Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.