

June 6, 2021 by Steve Brandon



The Healing of Aeneas

Acts 9:32-35

1. Peter (verse 32)
2. Aeneas (verse 33)
3. Healing (verse 34)
4. Turning (verse 35)

This morning, we are looking at a short and simple text in the Scripture, only four verses. It's a simple story that has a simple lesson for simple folks. It's a story of a paralyzed man being healed through the power of Jesus Christ. And this simple physical healing of a man leads to the spiritual healing of many.

The title of my message this morning is "The Healing of Aeneas." Let's read our text:

Acts 9:32-35

Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

We have four verses this morning. I have four points to my message, one for each verse. The first two are people, who set the stage. The second two are the actions of what happens, first between these two people. and then, the response of those in the city. So, first off, we see ...

1. Peter (verse 32)

He is introduced to us in verse 32.

Acts 9:32

Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.

At this point in the book of Acts, we haven't heard from Peter in quite some time. He was the main focus of the book of Acts in the first five chapters. Then, he practically disappeared from the narrative. Peter appeared briefly again in chapter 8 (verses 14-24) when he traveled to Samaria to visit those who had received the word of God. But then there was nothing until our text.

We will be with Peter for the next three chapters of the book of Acts. Acts 7 was all about Stephen. Acts 8 was all about Philip. Acts 9 was all about Saul. And now, beginning in chapter 9 and continuing on through chapter 12, it will all be about Peter.

This is the mighty Peter! This is the Peter who preached at Pentecost, and 3,000 people were saved! This is the Peter who said to the lame man, Acts 3:6 "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" and the lame man rose and entered the temple, "walking and leaping and praising God" (Acts 3:8). This is the Peter who spent a night in jail for boldly preaching the gospel (Acts 4:3). This is the Peter who preached boldly to the Sanhedrin that put Jesus to death only weeks before, "This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12). This is the Peter who was rebuked for preaching in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18), but continued on preaching, so much so that he filled Jerusalem with the preaching of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead! (Acts 5:28). This is the Peter who was beaten with rods for preaching in the name of Jesus (Acts 5:40). This is the mighty Peter!

Now, it says in verse 32 that Peter "went here and there among them all." In chapter 8, we saw Peter in Samaria, praying for the Samaritans. It says in Acts 8:25 that Peter returned to Jerusalem "preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans." The picture we get here is that Peter, traveling from place to place meeting with those who received the word of God and the message about Jesus. he's coming with some authority from Jerusalem, as a representative of the apostles. and he's coming to affirm what God was doing in all the places where the gospel was spreading.

I would suspect that he was traveling all throughout the surrounding regions around Jerusalem, wherever he hears of people receiving the word of God. In verse 32, we find him in Lydda. Lydda is to the southwest of Samaria. it's toward the Mediterranean Sea. By the end of chapter 9, we will find Peter in Joppa, which is, actually, on the sea.

So, Peter has come to this place (Lydda), where there are a fair number of believers. They are identified in verse 32 as "the saints." That simply means that they are "holy." That is, washed in the blood of Jesus. This is how the Bible often describes those who trust in Jesus. They are seeking the things above. I'm sure, that as Peter entered the village, that word got around that the mighty Peter was in town.

But there's more to this story than Peter. We find the second person in this story in verse 33, a man named Aeneas. This is my second point:

2. Aeneas (verse 33)

For as much as we know about Peter, we know equally as little about Aeneas. In all the Bible, he is only mentioned here in this passage. Here's all that we know:

Acts 9:33

There [in Lydda], [Peter] found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed.

His name indicates that he was Greek man, not a Jew. For Aeneas wasn't a common Jewish name. But it was a common Greek name. He was one of the mythical Roman gods, mentioned in Homer's Iliad. Verse 33 also tells us that this man had some sort of accident or sickness that contained him to his bed. For, he was a man, twenty, thirty, forty years of age. We don't know. So, when he was 10 or 20 or 30, he had some sort of life-altering event, that held him in his bed.

Like I said, it may have been an accident, like falling off the roof, or having a tree fall on him. or being trampled by a horse. or being injured in a battle. It may have been in illness. something slowly began eating away at his muscles, so that eventually he had no strength. The result is that he was in bed for eight years.

Being in such a state means that you are dependent upon everyone for everything. You need people to fix your meals. You need people to wash your clothes and change your sheets. If you would go anywhere, you would need others to carry you.

I have been overseas on a numerous occasions. And I have seen disabled people. The contrast between their life and the life of a disabled person in America is vast. Here in America, we have nice vans, With elevator lifts, So the paralyzed can be transported, lowered down, that they might scoot on their motorized wheelchair. and enjoy the easy access to buildings. Not so in Nepal and India and in other developing nations. There are no vans. There are no wheelchairs. There are no wheelchair ramps and easy access. No, life is hard as a disabled person in a third-world country today. And life was hard for this man.

If he ever went from one place to another, he was carried by his friends, who carried his cot. It took great effort. I'm not sure he went much of anyplace. Surely, this led him to a life of depression and hopelessness.

I think that many of you know the name of Joni Earekson Tada. On July 30, 1967, she was injured in a diving accident as a teen. She broke her neck, and has spent the last 54 years of her life in a wheel chair. She has traveled the world in the name of Jesus to minister to other disabled people! Many people have been inspired by her radiant joy in the Lord! But it was not always so. In the first years after her injury, she was in the pits of despair. She wrote in her autobiography, ...

I desperately wanted to kill myself. [But] I couldn't move anything except my head. Physically, I was little more than a corpse. I had no hope of ever walking again. I had absolutely no idea of how I could find purpose or meaning in just existing day after day--waking, eating, watching TV, sleeping.

Why on earth should a person be forced to live out such a dreary existence? How I prayed for some accident or miracle to kill me. The mental and spiritual anguish was as unbearable as the physical torture.

But once again, there was no way for me to commit suicide. This frustration was also unbearable. I was despondent, but I was also angry because of my helplessness. How I wished for strength and control enough if my finger to do something, anything, to end my life. Tears or rage, fear, and frustration only added to my despondency. [\[1\]](#)

And she doubted God. "Who, or What, is God? Certainly not a personal Being who cares for individuals, I reasoned. What's the use of believing when your prayers fall on deaf ears?" [\[2\]](#)

I have no doubt that Aeneas had similar feelings. of hopelessness and despair! But then came this encounter between the mighty Peter and the lowly Aeneas. It says in verse 33 that Peter "found" Aeneas.

You don't simply "find" a man, who is bedridden in his house without some help. Either this man was brought by his friends to the street to beg. Or, Peter was told about this man who lived up the street. At any rate, they met each other.

Then, we see the action beginning in verse 34. I'm simply calling this, the ...

3. Healing (verse 34)

Acts 9:34

And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose.

Catch the significance of this event! This is a flat-out miracle! Now, I know that some of you parents might be thinking about the wrong miracle! Especially you parents of teenagers. You might be thinking about the miracle of the fact that Aeneas made his bed. You have been trying to get your teens to do this for years! And here, this stranger comes along and tells Aeneas to make his bed! You might think that's a miracle! But that's not the miracle of the story! The miracle of the story is this bed-ridden man, who rises up, gets out of his bed,

As verse 35 indicates, he goes out into the streets to that "all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him." No longer was he confined to his bed. No longer was he confined to his home! He was able to go out into the streets, without any help from his friends! He was able to go to the store! He was able to care for himself!

If you remember at all from the book of Acts, we saw Peter do something similar to the lame beggar in chapter 3. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" (Acts 3:6). When Peter healed this lame man in Acts 3, he went about "walking and leaping and praising God" (Acts 3:8).

We are not explicitly told in our text this morning that this man went about "walking and leaping and praising God," but I would not be surprised at all if he did. Because, when God heals, he heals completely! But when God heals, he heals with a purpose! We see that purpose in verse 35,

Acts 9:35

And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

I'm calling this point, the ...

4. Turning (verse 35)

"Turning" is the word used in verse 35 to describe the actions of those who saw. They "turned to the Lord." Obviously, that means that they weren't walking toward the Lord in their life, but they "turned to the Lord."

This is a great picture of salvation. Where once they were walking away from the Lord. But now, having seen the power of God, they were walking toward the Lord. This implies a faith and trust in Jesus. This implies an obedience to the Lord, certainly in baptism.

I go back to the story of Joni Eareckson Tada, the seventeen year old who was paralyzed in a diving accident. A few years after her accident, she turned to the Lord. Again, I read from her autobiography. She tells of how a man named Steve came and studied the Bible with her. She says this,

"As Steve shared basic Bible doctrine with us, I began to see the shallowness of my own faith and spirituality. My spiritual ups and downs could be charted as my own faith and spirituality. This became something I wanted to overcome, something I wanted to deal with in a positive way. I began to look to the spiritual principles and revolve my life around them for a change.

Alone with God, I recalled how I'd withdrawn from reality and turned my back on Him so often. I confessed, 'Lord, I've been wrong—wrong to try and shut You out. Forgive me, God. Thank You for this new understanding of Your word which Steve has shared. Please forgive me and bring me back to you—back into fellowship with You once more.' The Holy Spirit began to convict, then teach me. With each succeeding week, spiritual truth became more real, and I began to see life from God's perspective." With God's help and forgiveness, I repented. I prayed for His direction and the mental will power to think His thoughts and not wallow in self-pity and lustful memories and fantasies. I concentrated on the fact that, once and for all, I had to forget the past and concentrate on the present, trusting God, claiming the promise of Scripture that God separates our sins from us forever (Psalm 103:12).

I decided to rid myself of as many reminders of the past as I could. I gave away my cherished hockey and lacrosse sticks, sold my horse, Tumbleweed, and got rid of all the other things that tied me to the old memories.

Now I was forced to trust God. I had no alternative but to thank Him for what He was going to do with my future.

As I began to pray and depend on Him, He did not disappoint me. Before, I'd say, 'Lord, I want to do Your will—and Your will is for me to get back on my feet or, at least, get my hands back.' I was deciding His will for me and rebelling when things didn't turn out as I promised.

Now I wept for all those lost months filled with bitterness and sinful attitudes. I prayed for an understanding of His will for my life. What was God's will for my life? To find out, I had to believe that all that had happened to me was an important part of that plan. I read, 'In everything, give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you.' God's will was for me to be thankful in everything? Okay. I blindly trusted that this was truth. I thanked God for what He did and what He was going to do."^[3]

That's a great picture of what it means to "turn" to the Lord. It means to forsake your past. It means to trust in the Lord for your future.

In the case of Joni Eareckson Tada, it meant trusting the Lord for her circumstances in life. And she has done wonderfully well, proclaiming her faith throughout the world, using her disability to her advantage. For those in Lydda and Sharon, it meant trusting in the Lord. It meant following in his ways!

Now, note, from the best we can tell, only one man was healed. But "all" turned to the Lord.

Acts 9:35

And *all* the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

It was a full-scale revival! Not only in Lydda, where Aeneas lives, but also in nearby Sharon! as they heard the news of what took place! For them, seeing the miracle and hearing about the miracle was enough. They understood the power of God and how they must turn from their sin and follow Jesus.

Now, I have never witnessed a miracle like this. where a paralyzed man was healed instantly. And I trust that you haven't seen this either.

But you have heard about it. I have told you about it today.

If you believe the Scriptures, that they are true. Then, you should respond as they did. This is the call of our text today. To repent! This is the great application of our text! Repent!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on June 6, 2021 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] Joni Eareckson Tada: Her Story (Inspirational Press: New York: 1994), pp. 46-47.

[2] Ibid., p. 51.

[3] Ibid., p. 95.