

## **Deacons: They're Here to Serve Jesus, the Servant**

For now, we have wrapped up our study on what the Bible has to say about Eldership and today, we are going to be laying a foundation to begin a study on Deacons. The Greek word that we translate into the English word deacon, is diakonos, and that word literally means servant. So a deacon is an office in the body of Christ that exists for the purpose of serving. So to better understand the role of deacon, as a servant, let's set our hearts on pursuing the best example of a servant, and that is Jesus Christ. So, today we'll be discovering some exciting stuff about Jesus, the Servant...let's turn to Acts 3, verse 1...

Now this is a passage of a lame man, who was born that way, that was begging for financial assistance at the temple. On a day that he will remember forever, and the encounter has been recorded for all mankind to remember, 2 Spirit-filled, born again believers crossed his path with no money in their pockets...let's read what happened...

*Acts 3:1-18* 1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. 2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. 4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" 5 And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene — walk!" 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. 8 With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God; 10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. 11 While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. 12 But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? 13 **"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. 14 **"But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer (Barabbas) to be granted to you, 15 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. 16 "And on the basis of **faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus** which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. 17 "And now, brethren, I know that **you acted in ignorance**, just as your rulers did also. 18 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, **that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.** NASU****

I'd like you to notice a phrase in verse 13 that is the center or the core of this passage, the

very foundation of these 18 verses that we are going to be looking at today. Let's hone in on the phrase, "**His servant Jesus**." With the help of the Holy Spirit, as we understand the Father's intent of these three words in this passage, it will open up the rest of this passage. You see, God could've described Jesus in this passage we just read as "the Teacher Jesus" or "the Leader Jesus" or "the Holy One, Jesus" or a whole host of other valid names, but for a very specific reason, the the Holy Spirit uses the term "His servant Jesus" specifically in this passage about a man healed from a physical ailment he had from birth. God is wanting us to fix our eyes on Jesus, and especially Jesus being a servant to Him, in this passage.

This concept of Jesus Christ being the servant of God, or God's Servant. What is that all about? How is it that Jesus successfully filled His role as the "servant of God"? Why is Peter describing Jesus as a Servant? You know, it was just as degrading in the eyes of the world to be seen as a servant back in Biblical times as it is today...so this is a pretty tall order for God to humble Himself and be a servant, right? It's completely contrary to our culture and the culture of the Jews 2,000 years ago. And because it is contrary, because Jesus wants His disciples to know the difference between the world's ways and His ways...Jesus makes a point to tell His disciples...

*Matt 20:26-28 26 **whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,** 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." NASU*

You know, you've got a calling on your life to be great! Do you know that? Absolutely, every one of you have a calling to be great, but listen to this...

## I. To Fulfill Your Calling to Greatness, Requires You to Become a Servant

### **A Man With a Servant's Heart**

A large group of European pastors came to one of D. L. Moody's Northfield Bible Conferences in Massachusetts in the late 1800s. Following the European custom of the time, each guest put his shoes outside his room to be cleaned by the hall servants overnight. But of course this was America and there were no hall servants.

Walking the dormitory halls that night, Moody saw the shoes and determined not to embarrass his brothers. He mentioned the need to some ministerial students who were there, but met with only silence or pious excuses. Moody returned to the dorm, gathered up the shoes, and, alone in his room, the world's only famous evangelist began to clean and polish the shoes. Only the unexpected arrival of a friend in the midst of the work revealed the secret. When the foreign visitors opened their doors the next morning, their shoes were shined. They never know by whom. Moody told no one, but his friend told a few people, and during the rest of the conference, different men volunteered to shine the shoes in secret. Perhaps the episode is a vital insight into why God used D. L. Moody as He did. He was a man with a servant's heart and that was the basis of his true greatness.

*Gary Inrig, A Call to Excellence, (Victor Books, a division of SP Publ., Wheaton, Ill; 1985), p. 98*

Have you noticed, this Biblical model of pursuing greatness through servanthood is

completely at odds to the world's view of greatness and success? Their view of greatness and success would be written this way...

**"Whoever wishes to become great among you  
must rule over the greatest number of servants."**

It was that way in the world then, and it is that way in the world, today, because of the influence of the ruler of this world, Satan.

## II. Jesus is More than Just Teaching Theory, He Leads, as God's Servant, By Example

Well, if we're going to get a thorough grasp of Jesus as God's Servant, I believe there is no better place to look than in the book of Isaiah, and we are going to go there next, so if you'd like to turn there to Isaiah chapter 52, verse 13...go ahead and start making progress in turning to there.

Now, there are 4 passages in the book of Isaiah that contain these prophetic references, references to a future "God's Servant", but due to time constraints we aren't going to be able to read and study all 4 of these "God's Servant" passages, today. I WILL list the 4 passages for you, so you can write them down and you can take some time to look them all up later. These 4 passages referring to Jesus, God's Servant, are found in Isa chapters 42:1-7, 49:1-6, 50:1-10 and 52:13 through Isaiah 53:

Today, let's turn to Isa 52:13 and pick up from there and read through Isa chapter 53:3, and learn together, with the help of the Holy Spirit, what the Bible says about God's Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ:

*Isa 52  
13 Behold, **My servant** will prosper,  
He will be **high and lifted up and greatly exalted.***

Notice, it says here, in this reference to Jesus..."Behold, **My servant** will prosper..." Before we read any further in Isaiah, let's read what happened historically that established the need for what we'll read in Isa 53...

So, hold your finger on Isa 52, verse 14...let's turn to Gen 3:14-15...this is essential here...

This account in Genesis is where Adam & Eve have sinned as the result of giving in to the wicked, deceitful, murderous Devil. Satan tempts Eve to eat from the forbidden fruit, Eve does it, she then invites Adam to do the same and he follows along, though God had clearly established that eating the fruit would bring horrible consequences. And so, God, responded in righteous anger towards Satan for bringing his nature into the world...bringing death, sickness, disease, physical disabilities, physical weaknesses, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, deformities, down's syndrome, autism...you name it...Satan brought this into the world through the open door provided by Adam & Eve.....and, immediately after the sin of Adam and Eve, which opened the door to our world for Satan to release all his evil, God

establishes the consequences for Satan for his part in bringing evil to the world....God establishes the ground rules which include His plan to bring an end to Satan's rulership in the world...so God speaks the following statement to Satan...

*Gen 3:14-15*

*14 The LORD God said to the serpent,*

*"Because you have done this,  
Cursed are you more than all cattle,  
And more than every beast of the field;  
On your belly you will go,  
And dust you will eat  
All the days of your life;*

*15 And I will put enmity (hostility)  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her seed;  
He (Jesus) shall bruise you on the head, (death blow)  
And **you shall bruise him on the heel.**" NASU*

### III. The Promise of the Suffering Servant of God

Here, in this passage, immediately after the crisis created by Adam & Eve's invitation for Satan to bring sickness and disease and physical weaknesses, and ailments of all varieties into the world, roughly at least 3,000 years before Christ is born, the perfect God establishes His perfect plan to deal a perfect death blow to Satan, and the plan by necessity, includes someone from the lineage, or the seed, of Eve, receiving a painful blow, a bruising, from Satan. Here we have a prophetic declaration directly from the mouth of God to the ears of the enemy, to Satan himself, that Satan **will bruise** this human being from the lineage of Eve, the seed of Eve, on the heel, we know Him to be Jesus Christ, in other words, Satan will bring a harmful, painful, bruising blow to Jesus, but **it will not be a victorious blow** because a blow to the heel is not the final blow in a battle. Soldiers who are shot in the foot, keep shooting back. They're not done fighting!

The good news for us being God promises that Jesus will deliver the victorious, fatal, final blow to Satan's head and destroy the evil works of the Devil, destroy sickness and disease and physical ailments of all kinds. So what will this harmful blow from Satan to Jesus look like? And how will Jesus deliver His fatal blow? And what will He accomplish with His blow?

Well, now, let's flip back to Isaiah chapter 52, verse 14, to discover that...

*Isa 52:14*

*14 Just as many were astonished at you, My people  
So **His appearance was marred more than any man**  
And His form more than the sons of men.*

*15 Thus **He will sprinkle many nations,** (a reference to the shedding of His blood)  
Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;  
For what had not been told them they will see,*

And what they had not heard they will understand. NASU

Isa 53:1-4

1 Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2 For He (Jesus) grew up before Him (the Father) like a tender shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground;

He has no stately form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

3 He was **despised and forsaken of men,**

**A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;**

And like one from whom men hide their face

**He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

4 Surely **our griefs (sickness) He Himself bore,**

And **our sorrows (pains) He carried;**

#### IV. As God's Servant, Jesus Served God & You by Receiving Your Sickness, Your Disease, & Your Physical Weaknesses

Testimonies of Alton & Harry...

"Surely our griefs..." The Hebrew word for griefs here is *choliy* (kolee). 24 times the Hebrew word, *choliy* (kolee), is found in the Old Testament. 24 times. And of those 24 times, the word is accurately translated to our English word, sickness, 22 times. There are only 2 times when the word is inaccurately translated "griefs". And that is in verse 4 here and verse 3. Now, that's quite a bold statement to make that there might be a translation problem here. So, how do we know that the word "sickness" should be written here rather than "griefs"?

Well, because I believe if there are any questions about something in the Bible...the Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible...so, if this passage "Surely our \_\_\_\_\_ He Himself bore, and our \_\_\_\_\_ He carried" we could discover what this passage really should say. Fortunately, it exists someplace else in the Bible, let's find this same passage quoted in Matt 8:17....turn to Matt 8:17...and actually to get the context of Matt 8:17, let's read a couple of verses before that...let's pick up with Matt 8:14...

*Matt 8:14-17* 14 When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. 15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. 16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through ***Isaiah the prophet***: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR ***INFIRMITIES*** (physically weak) AND CARRIED AWAY OUR ***DISEASES.***" NASU

Now, let us go back to the passage that we originally started with...

*Acts 3:1-19* 1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. 2 And a man who had been lame (physically weak) from his mother's

womb (a condition from birth, that he had grown accustomed to living with) was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. 4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" 5 And he began to give them his attention, **expecting to receive**

How is it that you "receive" forgiveness? Well, the work has been accomplished on the Cross by Jesus already....He said, "It is finished!" But for you to receive it...you must absolutely receive it by faith. If you don't expect to receive forgiveness, you won't be forgiven. It is the faith of expecting God to be true to His word...to do what He said He would do...

*he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but **what I do have I give to you:**...*

What does Peter have that he can give away? Faith? Yes, Peter has faith, but he can't give his faith to someone else. You can't give faith away. Faith comes from hearing the word of God. So, what could Peter give away? Well, Peter and all those baptized in the Holy Spirit have Holy Spirit power...

Remember the woman with the issue of blood for 12 years? She reached up to touch Jesus, who like some of you, had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, and she received her healing, and the Bible says, "Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that **the power proceeding from Him** had gone forth..." What did Jesus have that He could give away? Holy Spirit power!

The Bible says in Acts 1:8, "...**you will receive power** when the Holy Spirit comes upon you..." Jesus promised as recorded by Luke in chapter Luke 24, verse 49, "I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until **you are clothed with power** from on high."

*Acts 3:6 ...but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene — walk!" 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. 8 With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God; 10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. 11 While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. 12 But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? 13 **"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you** delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. 14 **"But you** disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer (Barabbas) to be granted to you, 15 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. 16 **"And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus** which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. 17 "And now,*

*brethren, I know that **you acted in ignorance**, just as your rulers did also. 18 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, **that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.** NASU*

If you were here a few months ago, you may remember me saying that when you are born again, the Holy Spirit comes in you. But when you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, a separate experience entirely, He comes upon you. And you may remember me saying that the Holy Spirit is in me, for me, but He is upon me for you. The same is true for you. For those that are born again, the Holy Spirit is in you for you. But if you'd like Him to be upon you for others, you need to be clothed with the Holy Spirit, you need Him upon you so that you can bless others in supernatural ways.