

THE WAY, SESSION 3

What I Have I Give You

The Acts of the Apostles 3:1-4:31, The Beautiful Gate, the Name, and the Boldness of Common Men

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim. Participants discover that the first miracle Luke narrates in detail is a portrait of the Church's whole mission: Peter has no silver or gold, but he has Christ, and he gives Him, in Christ's name, with his own hand. The group then wrestles honestly with Acts 4:12, salvation in no other name, and discovers where Christian boldness actually comes from: not credentials, but having been with Jesus and having prayed for courage.

Catholic Touchstone. Christ acts through His ministers. Peter is emphatic that the healing is not his own power or piety (3:12); it is the name of Jesus, and faith in that name, that made the man strong (3:16). Yet Christ chose to heal through Peter's word and Peter's grasping hand (3:7). This is the sacramental pattern: God's power, man's instrument. It is why a priest can say "I absolve you" and it is Christ who absolves (CCC 1421, 1441), and why the exclusive claim of Acts 4:12 and the Church's mediating ministry are not rivals but the same truth seen from two sides.

What You Need to Know

The scene is precise: the ninth hour, three in the afternoon, the hour of the evening sacrifice, and the hour at which Christ died (Luke 23:44-46). Peter and John are going up to the temple *to pray*; this first detailed miracle of the Church happens on the way to liturgy. The man lame from birth is laid daily at the gate called Beautiful, close enough to worship to beg from it, never able to enter into it fully.

Watch the choreography of 3:4-8. Peter fixes his eyes on him and says "Look at us," demanding personal encounter before anything else. Then the line that names this session: "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And Peter does not merely speak; he takes the man by the right hand and raises him up. Word plus touch plus name: the sacramental pattern in miniature.

The healed man goes into the temple "walking and leaping and praising God" (3:8). The word *leaping* is a deliberate flag. Isaiah 35:6 promised that when God Himself comes to save, "then shall the lame man leap like a hart." Luke is not quoting Isaiah outright; he is alluding to it, and the allusion is hard to miss. He is running the checklist of the messianic age past us and marking it fulfilled. Let the group find Isaiah themselves in question 3.

Peter's second sermon (3:12-26) deflects all credit, indicts the crowd honestly ("you denied the Holy and Righteous One"), softens with mercy ("you acted in ignorance"), and calls for repentance so that "times of refreshing" may come. He cites Deuteronomy 18, the prophet like Moses, and Genesis 22, the blessing of all families of the earth through Abraham's seed, preaching Christ from the whole of Israel's story.

Chapter 4 brings the first arrest. Before the Sanhedrin, the same court that condemned Jesus months earlier, Peter, "filled with the Holy Spirit," preaches Psalm 118 (the rejected stone) to the builders who rejected it, and declares that there is salvation in no one else (4:12). The council's diagnosis of the apostles is one of the great backhanded compliments in Scripture: uneducated, common men, "and they recognized that they had been with Jesus" (4:13). Prepare the steelman on 4:12; modern Protestant apologists use this verse against Catholic practice, and your group should meet that argument at full strength.

Do not rush the ending (4:23-31). Released under threats, the community prays with one accord, quoting Psalm 2, and asks not for safety but for boldness, and the place is shaken. Boldness (*parrësia*) is a gift obtained by prayer, which is the session's final and most practical discovery.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

Isaiah 35:5-6. The signs of God coming to save His people: blind eyes opened, deaf ears unstopped, "then shall the lame man leap like a hart." The healed beggar leaping in the temple is Isaiah 35 performed live. The messianic age has begun, and the Church is where its signs now appear.

Deuteronomy 18:15-19. The prophet like Moses to whom Israel must listen. Peter cites it directly (3:22-23): Jesus is the new and greater Moses, and heeding Him is not optional.

Genesis 22:18. In Abraham's seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. Peter cites it (3:25) and aims it at his hearers: you are the sons of the covenant, and the blessing has arrived; receive it first.

Psalms 118:22. The stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. Peter quotes it to the builders themselves (4:11), the council that rejected Christ. The psalm sung by pilgrims entering the temple becomes the indictment of the temple's own custodians.

Psalms 2:1-2. Why do the nations rage and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and His Anointed? The praying Church quotes it (4:25-26) and recognizes her own moment inside it: Herod, Pilate, Gentiles, and Israel gathered against Jesus, and now against His Body. Persecution does not surprise the Church; the psalter predicted it.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Bede the Venerable, Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles (8th century)

St. Bede reads the man lame from birth as an image of fallen humanity: laid daily at the door of worship yet unable to walk into it by his own strength, until he is raised by the hand of the Church acting in the name of Christ. What silver and gold could never do for him, the Name does, and his leaping becomes the joy of every soul lifted by grace into the liturgy it could only watch before.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles (4th century)

Chrysostom lingers on the council's astonishment at uneducated, common men. The apostles' power, he says, was not eloquence or rank but the evidence that they had been with Jesus: boldness joined to gentleness, conviction without contempt. He tells his hearers that the same company is available to them, for the man who is much with Christ in prayer will not be able to stay timid about Him in public.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyprian of Carthage, On the Lord's Prayer (3rd century)

St. Cyprian taught that God, who made us one, hears best the prayer of the Church at unity with itself: we say Our Father, not My Father, because our prayer is public and common, offered as one body. The believers of Acts 4 lifting their voices together with one accord, and the room shaking, is for Cyprian the picture of what united prayer is and does.

Catechism Connection

CCC 1421. The Lord Jesus, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave sins and healed the paralytic, has willed that His Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, His work of healing and salvation, even among her own members.

CCC 2666. The name of Jesus contains the presence it signifies; to invoke His holy name is the simplest way of praying always. The name that made a lame man walk is the name the Church still breathes.

CCC 775-776. The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation, the sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all men (CCC 775), the instrument Christ uses for the salvation of all (CCC 776). Salvation is in no other name, and the Church is that Name's chosen instrument in the world.

CCC 425. The transmission of the faith is aglow with the joy of witnesses who cannot keep silent; the Catechism quotes Acts 4:20, "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

Thread Watch

THREAD WATCH

Thread 1, The Name. A twist tonight: the movement still has no name, but *the* Name dominates both chapters. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (3:6); "by what name did you do this?" (4:7); "no other name under heaven" (4:12). Note the irony aloud only if the group notices it: the community without a name carries the only Name that saves.

Thread 2, The Map. Still Jerusalem, now specifically the temple itself. The Gospel is confronting the old center before it moves outward.

Thread 3, Peter First. Peter speaks at the gate, in the portico, and before the council. The tally grows; keep it silent.

Thread 4, The Breaking of the Bread. Quiet this session. Let it rest.

Session Goals

1. Participants can describe the healing at the Beautiful Gate as the pattern of the Church's mission: giving Christ, in His name, by word and touch.
2. Participants discover Isaiah 35 behind the leaping man and can explain what the healing announces about the messianic age.
3. Participants can articulate how Acts 4:12 is fully Catholic, and answer the strongest Protestant use of the verse against the intercession of the saints.
4. Participants can explain where the apostles' boldness came from, and what the community prayed for under threat.
5. Participants each identify one concrete act of giving Christ and one prayer for boldness for the coming week.

Time Note

Planned for 90 minutes: Win 15, Build 55, Send 15, prayer and memory verse 5. If running long, cut in this order: (1) the second Win question, (2) the Dig Deeper on the ninth hour, (3) compress question 5 (Deuteronomy 18 and Genesis 22) into a brief summary. Do not cut the steelman on 4:12 or the closing prayer scene (4:23-31).

Part 2: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, your Name is power and your Name is mercy. We have no silver or gold worth bringing you, but you ask only that we look at you and be raised. Fix our eyes on you tonight. Heal what in us has been lame from birth, and when you have set us on our feet, give us the boldness of men who have been with you. Amen.

Win (15 minutes)

1. Tell us about a time someone gave you something money could not buy, presence, time, forgiveness, a second chance. What did it do to you?
2. Where do you feel least qualified to represent your faith, and what would need to change for you to speak anyway?

Build (55 minutes)

1. Read Acts 3:1-3. Collect the details Luke gives us: the time, the destination, the man, his position. What do you notice about where this man spends his life?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

It is the ninth hour, three in the afternoon, the hour of the evening sacrifice and the hour Jesus died (Luke 23:44-46). Peter and John are on their way to pray; the Church's first narrated miracle happens en route to liturgy. The man, lame from birth, is laid daily at the gate called Beautiful: at the very threshold of worship, close enough to beg from it, never able to walk into it. He is a picture of every soul stuck at the door of the sacred, and he has been there so long that everyone has stopped seeing him.

2. Read Acts 3:4-8 slowly. Walk through exactly what Peter does, step by step. What are the components of this healing, and what does Peter's famous line in verse 6 teach the Church about her real treasure?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Peter fixes his eyes on the man and demands encounter: "Look at us." Then the word: "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Then the touch: he takes him by the right hand and raises him up. Word, name, and touch together. The healing is not itself a sacrament, but it shows the logic the sacraments will follow: divine power conveyed through perceptible signs, audible words joined to physical gesture (CCC 1084). And verse 6 is the Church's permanent bank statement. Her treasure has never been silver and gold, and whenever she has acted as if it were, she has healed no one. What she has is Christ, and what she has she gives.

3. Live discovery. Luke says the man went into the temple "walking and leaping and praising God." *Leaping* is an odd, specific word. Turn to Isaiah 35:4-6 and read it aloud. What is Luke telling us happened at that gate?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Isaiah promised that when God Himself comes to save, the blind will see, the deaf hear, "then shall the lame man leap like a hart." The leaping beggar is Isaiah 35 fulfilled in front of eyewitnesses. Luke seems to be marking the checklist of the messianic age: God has come to save, and the signs of His age now appear through

His Church. The man does not just walk; he leaps, because Scripture said he would.

4. Read Acts 3:11-16. The crowd stares at Peter. What does Peter immediately correct, and what does he say actually healed the man? Why does that distinction matter so much?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Peter refuses the credit on the spot: "why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?" The healer is the God of Abraham glorifying His servant Jesus; the instrument is faith in His name. Yet notice that God chose to work through Peter's voice and Peter's hand. Both truths stand together: the power is entirely Christ's, and Christ delights to exercise it through His ministers. This is the logic of the whole sacramental order. When a priest says "I absolve you," it is Christ who absolves (CCC 1421, 1441); when Peter says "walk," it is Christ who raises. The minister who forgets this becomes a fraud; the Church that remembers it becomes Christ's own hands.

5. Read Acts 3:17-26. Peter indicts the crowd and then immediately opens a door. What does he cite from Moses and from Abraham, and what tone do you hear in this sermon?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

He tells the truth without flinching, "you denied the Holy and Righteous One," then softens it with mercy, "you acted in ignorance," and preaches Christ from their own story: the prophet like Moses whom Israel must heed (Deuteronomy 18:15-19), and the seed of Abraham through whom all families of the earth are blessed (Genesis 22:18), adding that they, the sons of the covenant, are first in line for the blessing. The tone is a model for every hard conversation about faith: total honesty about sin, total confidence in mercy, and the offer made first to the very people who did the wounding.

6. Read Acts 4:1-12. Peter stands before the Sanhedrin, the court that condemned Jesus months before. He quotes Psalm 118:22 to them. Look up the psalm. Why is this quotation almost unbearably pointed?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Psalm 118 was sung by pilgrims entering the temple: "the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner." Peter stands in front of the builders, the custodians of the temple, and tells them they are the ones the psalm meant. They rejected the stone; God has made Him the cornerstone of a new temple. And then the verse this session turns on: "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (4:12).

Build the steelman. Acts 4:12 is a verse Protestant apologists frequently aim at Catholic practice, and the argument deserves its full strength: if salvation is in no other name, why does the Catholic Church surround the faithful with other names, Mary, the saints, priests, the Church herself? Does asking Mary to intercede, or confessing to a priest, or calling the Church necessary, not quietly add other names to the one Name? Scripture says there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). The Reformation's charge is that Catholicism, whatever it says officially, functionally dilutes the sufficiency of Christ. Let the group feel the force of that before answering.

7. Press question one. Stay inside tonight's own chapter. When the lame man was healed by no other name than Jesus, whose voice and whose hand did that Name use? What does this scene itself teach about how the one Name works?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Peter's voice and Peter's hand. The exclusivity of the Name and the instrumentality of Christ's servants appear in the same scene, taught by the same apostle. The one saving Name chose, from this first narrated miracle, to operate through members of Christ's Body. So the Catholic claim is not that there are other names beside Jesus; it is that Jesus wields His one Name through His Church. The Church is not a rival mediator but the instrument of the one Mediator (CCC 776). If mediated grace compromised Christ, Acts 3 would be a compromise of Christ.

8. Press question two. Then what about asking the saints to pray for us? Read James 5:16 and 1 Timothy 2:1-5 together, carefully, in context. What is Paul actually saying about the one mediator, and what does he ask for two verses earlier?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Two verses before naming the one mediator, Paul *commands* intercession: supplications, prayers, and intercessions for all men. He does not see asking others to pray as competition with Christ's mediation; he sees it as participation in it. James says the prayer of a righteous man has great power. Asking St. Mary or St. Peter to pray for us is the same act as asking a friend at this table to pray for us, directed to members of the Body who are more alive, not less, for being with Christ (cf. Mark 12:27). All intercession, on earth or in heaven, is a share in the one mediation of Christ and draws all its power from it. The saints are not other names under heaven; they are trophies of the one Name, and their prayer is that Name's own overflow. An honest note: Catholics can and sometimes do practice devotion badly, and where devotion obscures Christ instead of magnifying Him, the Protestant instinct is warning us of something real. The answer to bad devotion is true devotion, not no devotion.

9. Read Acts 4:13-22. What is the council's actual assessment of Peter and John, and what is the one explanation they land on? What does verse 20 tell us witness feels like from the inside?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Uneducated, common men, *agrammatoi*, no rabbinic training, no status, and the council is left with one explanation: "they recognized that they had been with Jesus." That is the entire secret of Christian boldness, then and now. Credentials did not produce it and threats could not remove it. And from the inside, witness is not a duty but a pressure of joy: "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (4:20), a verse the Catechism holds up as the very spirit of handing on the faith (CCC 425).

10. Read Acts 4:23-31, the first communal prayer Luke records after an apostolic arrest. They quote Psalm 2. What do they ask God for, and what, tellingly, do they not ask for?

ANSWER, SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

They do not ask for safety, for the threats to be lifted, or for their enemies to be scattered. They locate their moment inside Psalm 2, rulers raging against the Lord's Anointed, and then ask, above all, for one thing (alongside healing signs to accompany it, 4:30): "grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness," with healing and signs to accompany it. And the place is shaken, and they are all filled with the Holy Spirit. Boldness, *parrësia*, is not a personality type. It is a grace, and it is obtained by the united prayer of the Church.

Anyone here can ask for it.

DIG DEEPER: THE NINTH HOUR

Three in the afternoon was the hour of the *Tamid*, the daily evening sacrifice, and the hour at which Jesus gave up His spirit (Luke 23:44-46). Luke, always precise with time, sets this first narrated miracle at the hour of sacrifice. The Church commends Divine Mercy devotion at this hour: the Divine Mercy devotion prays at three o'clock precisely because it is the hour mercy was won.

DIG DEEPER: SOLOMON'S PORTICO

The colonnade where the crowd gathers (3:11) was where Jesus Himself walked and taught at the feast of the Dedication (John 10:23). The apostles preach Christ on Christ's own ground, and the early chapters of Acts will return there (5:12). The continuity is deliberate: same courts, same message, new voices.

Send (15 minutes)

1. "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have." What do you actually have to give this week, and who at your own Beautiful Gate, someone you pass so often you have stopped seeing them, needs it?
2. The council explained the apostles with one phrase: they had been with Jesus. If someone audited your last seven days, what evidence would they find that you had been with Jesus, and what is one change that would strengthen the evidence?

Live It This Week

Two assignments, both small and both real. First, pray for boldness by name: choose the one situation in your life where you consistently go quiet about your faith, and every day this week pray the Church's prayer from Acts 4:29, "Lord, grant to your servant to speak your word with all boldness," naming that situation out loud. Second, give what you have: one act this week of giving Christ rather than things, and the simplest form is an offer to pray with someone, not just for them, on the spot, briefly, by name. It will feel like stepping off a ledge. That feeling is the beginning of *parrësia*.

Closing Prayer

Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, look upon our timidity and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness. We have looked at you tonight; now raise us to our feet. Stretch out your hand to heal, and make our ordinary lives the evidence that we have been with Jesus. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Memory Verse

"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 4:12)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Every passage used in Session 3, in order of appearance. Flag these before the session.

PRIMARY TEXT

1. Acts 3:1-10 (the Beautiful Gate)
2. Acts 3:11-26 (Peter in Solomon's Portico)
3. Acts 4:1-12 (arrest; no other name)
4. Acts 4:13-22 (uneducated, common men)
5. Acts 4:23-31 (the prayer for boldness)

OLD TESTAMENT DISCOVERY PASSAGES

6. Isaiah 35:4-6 (the lame man shall leap)
7. Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (the prophet like Moses)
8. Genesis 22:18 (blessing for all families)
9. Psalm 118:22 (the rejected stone)
10. Psalm 2:1-2 (rulers against the Anointed)

NEW TESTAMENT CROSS REFERENCES

11. Luke 23:44-46 (the ninth hour)
12. John 10:23; Acts 5:12 (Solomon's Portico)
13. 1 Timothy 2:1-5 (intercession and the one mediator)
14. James 5:16 (the prayer of a righteous man)
15. Mark 12:27 (God of the living)

CHURCH DOCUMENTS

16. CCC 1421; CCC 1441; CCC 2666; CCC 775-776; CCC 425