

"TIME TO DANCE"

(Acts 3:1-26)

(Chuck Swindoll)

I am intrigued that the disabled beggar had been lying at the gate called Beautiful long enough for everyone to know him, probably long enough to have been there during Jesus' ministry on earth. We don't know for certain the man was around when Jesus visited the temple, but to me it seems like a strong possibility. Yet Jesus never healed him. It seems that, like the blind man of John 9:1-3, the man's healing awaited a foreordained time when God's work would be manifest in a new way.

When Peter and John healed the man, it set off a remarkable chain of events, beginning with Peter's second great sermon. As we'll discover in later chapters, this healing became a pivotal moment in the history of the church, triggering events that would not have occurred otherwise. So, the disabled man lay at the intersection of the world's affliction and God's design for the future, waiting for Peter and John to turn his adversity into an occasion for rejoicing; he lay waiting for the preordained moment when the apostles would 'happen by' and then do as they had been commanded—make disciples.

I see two principles at work in this passage, each with an implied response.

First, *your impossibility is God's opportunity; turn to Him*. The disabled beggar couldn't work to overcome his adversity, and creativity would do nothing to help. He needed help beyond the realm of human ability. He needed God to do what no one else could do. He had no way of knowing what his day would bring at the beginning of his pilgrimage that morning when the sun rose and friends carried him to the temple. He sought nothing more from the day than a few coins to keep him fed, clothed, and sheltered. But God had something supernatural—something personally wonderful—planned.

The man's impossible circumstances had always been God's opportunity to accomplish His plan. While we don't know the precise cause of the man's disability, we do know that the Lord had given the man's affliction a divine purpose before anything had been created. The same is true of your adversities.

I'm not suggesting that you will get what you want or that you will receive a miraculous reversal of misfortune like this man. I know too many wonderful people who have gone bald from chemotherapy or who hobble through life with physical challenges or who are confined to wheelchairs. I never want to presume upon God's sovereign design and make promises I have no business making. But I can say that God will not ignore you. Rather, He will do what is best for you and everyone connected with you. Therefore, turn to Him. Tell Him what you desire, but leave your expectations behind. Surrender to His will, accept His way, and trust His timing.

He will hear, and He will respond as He chooses; that's His sovereign right.

Second, *God's mercy is your opportunity; return to Him*. The Lord used the disabled man's healing and his joyful dance around the temple to give Peter an opportunity to preach. Peter then proclaimed a message for first-century Jews—and for people of all races throughout all time. It's a message of mercy, inviting all who have sinned to repent, turn toward God, and receive forgiveness.

Take this opportunity if you have not already. When you do, it will be your turn to dance.

