

# Sermon Discussion Questions

“LEAP, YE LAME, FOR JOY”

## Discuss

Our Bibles contain no words that are underlined or written in bold, but if some words were given emphasis, surely Peter’s stark statement “You killed the author of life” would be one of those chosen to highlight. It is a startling proclamation even now, 2000 years later, to those of us who are aware of the entire Christian story. It’s not hard to imagine the earth-shaking effect it had on Peter’s listeners, nor what overwhelming comfort they must have found in Peter’s reassuring next statement: “(B)ut God raised him from the dead.” Let’s take some time to consider what exactly Peter was trying to convey to those who surrounded him in amazement after the lame man, healed in an instant, began leaping for joy.

- 1) In his book, *A Severe Mercy*, author Sheldon Vanauken shares an ultimately misguided explanation he once put together to try and help a friend understand the idea of God the Son coming to earth. What if, he said, I decided to write a novel, and I put myself in the novel as one of the characters. “Don’t you see? I am incarnate in my book. I am out here writing it, so I’m like God the Father. But it’s really me in the book, too, isn’t it? So that’s Jesus the Son, right?” Vanauken continues on with this idea of himself both *outside* the book and himself *inside* the book and ends with saying, “(S)uppose the characters run away with the story — authors are always saying that that happens. It might be necessary, whatever I had originally intended, for me to get killed — um, crucified.”
  - Vanauken claimed to believe in orthodox Christianity, but is his explanation in any way like the one Peter gave of the work of the Father and the Son? Was the killing of the author of life a surprise to the Father or to the Son? (See Luke 24:44-47)
  - What difference does it make to the way we live as Christians or the way we evangelize if we understand the incarnation and crucifixion Vanauken’s way or Peter’s way?
- 2) Peter began his speech by making clear that the power behind the miracle did not come from John or himself. What followed his strong disclaimer is a powerful example of Christocentric — Christ-centered — preaching.
  - Peter was addressing an audience of Jews who knew the prophecies of the Old Testament, and he used their knowledge — what they knew and were interested in — to point people to Jesus. Most people today aren’t as interested in the prophecies of the Old Testament as Peter’s listeners were, but they have burning questions of their own. What are they?
  - How do we answer those questions in a way that is just as Christ-centered and Christ-exalting as Peter’s preaching?
- 3) Discuss the ways in which both the story of the miracle and Peter’s message itself can help guide us as we share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. Consider both what Peter says God has done for us and what Peter was willing to do as he went about his ordinary daily life.



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

DATE: September 22, 2019

SPEAKER: Joe/Frank

SERIES: Acts

PASSAGE: Acts 3:1-26

## Pray

OUR MIRACLE-WORKING GOD,

We marvel at the miracles you have done: a man who had never once walked from the day of his birth suddenly being able not only to walk but leap! Like the eye-witnesses to this miracle, we, too, are filled with wonder and amazement.

We are so grateful for your inspired Word that encourages and guides us in our faith. Thank you for these accounts of the early church that make clear to us that the earliest teachings about Jesus were accompanied by so many authenticating signs and wonders. Thank you that we have evidence of the power of Jesus’ name.

We know that we need help as much as the beggar at the Beautiful Gate. Forgive us when we are so focused on something little that we hope to gain, like a few coins, that we fail to ask for the abundance of life that you have to offer. As your needy servants, we ask for the times of refreshing that you alone are able to give. In the name of our Savior, Jesus. Amen.

**PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS**  
Chattanooga Sports Ministries

**PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS**  
Tom and Jane serving in a sensitive area