

What do you do when asked for money?

- What do you do when asked for money?
 - beggar on the street? someone turning up at church, and you happen to be the one who meets them? maybe even someone at your door?
- Most of us will have a variety of reactions:
 - may feel generally uncomfortable, not sure how to respond, perhaps a bit threatened
 - a bit of us will want to be generous, to meet the need we see before us
 - a bit of us will **not** want to be generous, but wants to keep the money for ourselves!
 - and there will probably be a bit of us that will argue that giving money isn't the best response, since it doesn't really solve the person's problems (most people who ask for money may have a drink or drug dependency problem...)
 - *so maybe we give nothing, maybe we give something, maybe we seek to give something practical - food, electricity card, etc*
- That was something of the situation that Peter and John found themselves in as they approached the Temple:
 - asked for money, wondering how to respond
- Lets find out how they did respond!

Responded to the felt need

- What was the beggar looking for?
 - money, obviously! Not healing....
- No social security system; pious pilgrims on their way into the Temple; duty of alms giving would make the Temple entrance a prime spot!
- Peter and John responded to his felt need:
 - when he asked for money, they didn't brush him off, they didn't walk past
 - rather, they engaged with him, gave him their attention, and so invited him to engage with them, give them his attention
- They listened to him, gave him their attention.
- This was the first stage in all that subsequently unfolded:
 - and a stage we perhaps need to think about;
 - do we listen to the needs that there are around us?
 - do we hear what folk are concerned about in our community?
 - do we know what issues there are here in Fintry?
 - not what we think there are, but what issues there actually are?

Proffered a truer help

- But Peter and John didn't simply give the beggar the money he was looking for:
 - they did not meet his felt need.
- For they saw that his truer need was for healing
- He probably couldn't conceive of that need being met, he couldn't envisage a situation where he would ever be anything other than a crippled beggar!
 - but such healing was possible in God's power, and would transform his life
 - no longer bound to sit and depend on other people's generosity;
 - able now to fully participate in the life of the community, socially, physically, economically, perhaps also spiritually
 - *(certainly some exclusions from Temple, priestly service, etc for the disabled)*
- In this case that offer of a truer help to meet a deeper need was accepted, with gladness and joy!
 - the power that heals is Jesus' (*"in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!"*)
 - and that praise that is given is to God - entered Temple as first response
- In like fashion we will offer to meet people's true needs:
 - maybe as simple as the food or power card for the person asking for money;

- maybe the discernment to see that a difficult neighbour is actually lonely, and offering friendship;
- maybe a project that meets a particular need that is not felt by the person involved (eg Family Learning Flat in Grampian Gardens? Felt need won't be learning, but that learning has the potential to deeply impact lives!)
- We may be working as individuals, as a church, or as those working in or alongside "secular" projects, but in each case we seek to meet a truer need, in the name of Jesus Christ!
 - *sometimes rejected... eg food not wanted, when offered instead of money*

Opened the door on his truest need

- But Peter and John didn't stop there:
 - that's why we read the whole of the chapter, through to v.26 and not just up to v.10!
- The healing of the beggar, his praising of God, and the crowd that gathered opened the door for the deepest need of everyone present to be met:
 - notice what Peter did not do when the crowd gathered: he didn't say, "who else is in need of healing?"
 - *that is absolutely not to belittle any ministry of healing, whether through services or praying with individuals*
 - but Peter saw that there was now an opportunity to speak not just of felt needs, nor even to meet real needs, but to deal with fundamental needs.
- The groundwork had been done, the opportunity was there, and so Peter spoke of people's need to respond in faith to Jesus.
 - as we saw when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, the real answer is Jesus, whatever the question!
 - the prompt is that the faith that healed the beggar was faith in the name of Jesus Christ;
 - and so Peter asks the gathering crowd to respond themselves to this Jesus
- They perhaps don't have need of physical healing - though perhaps some did:
 - but they certainly all had need of spiritual healing;
 - they had all disowned Jesus, God's Holy and Righteous One;
 - and as a result of that rejection they were cut off from God, sick in their souls.
- The only true healing is a restoration of relationship with Jesus:
 - and that comes through **repentance**
- Peter notes **three consequences of repentance** (v.19/20):
 - 1. **sins wiped out** - salvation
 - 2. **times of refreshing may come from the Lord** - life in all its fullness
 - 3. **return of the Lord** - waiting period, allowed for in God's providences so that we may repent and return to him; points to fulfilment and finality that he will bring when he returns!
- All these go together to make for rounded healing to meet our most fundamental need!

Conclusion

- So:
 - respond to people's felt needs - listen, learn
 - offer help to their truest needs
 - never neglect to offer the opportunity to have truest needs met in repentance and faith in Jesus!
- If you've never responded to that offer of real healing, of a personal faith in Jesus, don't put it off!