

April 14, 2024 Third Sunday of Easter

*Psalm 4*

*Acts 3:12-19 "The People We See and Know"*

*Focus verse 16: By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see."*

Psalm 145:3

God in God's mercy gives us opening to repent by doing good within the circle of people we know, especially in a committed congregation. God seems to love to surprise us with God's mercy and tenderness when we deserve judgment.

1. Each of us following Christ experience answers and help as we cry out to God. Still, it is hard to evaluate how realistic we are about what is happening in our own lives. *v. 13-15* The people of Jerusalem believed that they were doing the right thing by rejecting Christ.

2. We also experience the power and glory of God in a more objective way when we see how those we know well are helped and healed as they cry out to God. We know when they have truly changed and are free. *v. 12, 16* A man who they knew well and could not walk becomes able to walk. Despite the lack of faith and rejection by the community, the apostles extend the healing of Christ to that same community. (4,000 people responded that day to God's goodness. *Acts 4:4*)

3. Applying this story to our own situation, it is in the community of faith, not alone, that we see best what God is doing. We can affirm the healing and changes that God brings in the lives of others. We know each other's background, whether the story rings true, when someone is exaggerating or not facing up to themselves, or when they don't see that they have truly changed by the grace of God. God's presence with us is in repentance, healing and restoring, giving refreshment *v. 19*; in joy, peace, sleep and safety *Psalm 4:6-8*.

The work of Christ today is a continuation of the relationship that YWH has with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the covenant people. *v. 12, 13* The healing and power are from the God of the covenant, not from other people, not even from the Apostles Peter and John.