



# EXPOSITION

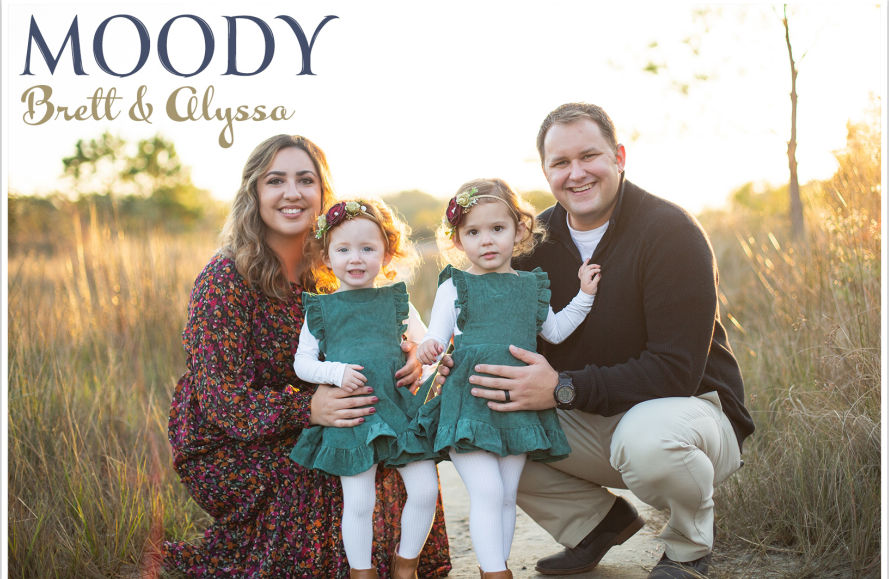
Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



## From My Window

Andrew Bonar was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on May 29, 1810. At the young age of 28, he became a pastor in Perthshire and immediately began an aggressive visitation program in his city. His goal each day was to visit people from 1–5 pm. Two years later he painfully wrote, “I believe I am to blame [for no revival]. I work more than I pray.” He later assessed, “I was living very grossly...laboring night and day in visiting, but with very little prayer. I did not see that prayer should be the main business of every day.” Once he corrected this flaw, he saw many souls saved and disciplined in each of the churches he pastored. Pastor Bonar’s words instruct us today: “The best part of all Christian work is that part which only God sees!”

## MOODY Brett & Alyssa



After graduation from college, Brett and Alyssa were married in 2009. While teaching in a small Christian School in western NY, Brett took an online class from VBTS in 2013. Through this experience and the encouragement of a former VBTS grad, Brett and Alyssa took a bold step of faith and moved to Virginia Beach to begin resident studies for the ministry. During their time in seminary, God blessed them with twin girls who are the delight of their lives. The testimony of Brett and Alyssa has been one of compassion and humility, and they clearly manifested this in Brett’s final year of seminary as he volunteered to minister in a jail ministry. Brett says, “During this time, my heart was drawn by the impact that jail ministry can have in reaching our community with the Gospel.” Upon graduation with his MBSC in 2019, he was accepted as a missionary with the Good News Jail and Prison Ministry where he serves as the full-time Chaplain for the Hampton Roads Regional Jail. Brett unashamedly delights in serving “the segregated and outcasts of our society, very much like those people highlighted in Scripture that Jesus reached.” God bless you, Brett and Alyssa, for your example of grace!



## Caring for the Hopeless (Acts 3:1–10)

Chaplain Brett Moody (MBSC, 2019)

We may not always be able to financially assist the hopeless and destitute; however, what we do have to offer—by God’s grace—should compel us to act. The healing of the lame beggar in Acts 3:1–10 is the first recorded miracle performed by an apostle after the ascension of Jesus. In addition to being a descriptive narrative, this miracle serves as an example of compassion—I *have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you* (v. 6). Peter’s words provide a ministry framework for us today. We may not come face-to-face with a lame beggar sitting outside our places of worship, but there are certainly hundreds, if not thousands, of hurting and impoverished people within our communities. I am aware that it can be overwhelming to consider the needs of others in desperate situations. However, this narrative informs us that, like the Apostles, we are to have compassion on the hopeless and minister God’s grace to them (cf. 4:12).

**True compassion does not ignore those in a desperate condition.** Peter and John would have known the OT guidelines which provided a pathway to assist those who were oppressed, slaves, or unable to work their way free from their condition (Deut. 15:7–11). God’s desire is that relief be compassionately offered to those in destitute positions—you *shall open your hand to him...whatever it may be* (Deut. 15:8). God commanded his people not to ignore the plight of the needy. In Acts 3, the man at the temple gate was looking for financial assistance, something Peter and John did not have. Nonetheless, they were able to discern with compassion a deeper need, and they sensed God’s direction to make a difference in this man’s life.

**True compassion provides effective relief.** Peter and John may have had a conscience free of offense if they hurriedly walked past the lame man and went into the temple to pray. This man was *lame from birth* (v. 2) and no doubt was a regular beggar outside of the temple. Perhaps others passed by him that day and did indeed help him financially; however, Peter and John stopped and said, “Look at us” (v. 4). This may have been done to give the beggar a chance to see and examine for himself that Peter and John had neither *silver nor gold* (v. 6). Or, Peter simply desired to draw this man’s attention away from other potential donors and cause him to focus on what Peter had to say. Peter then made a definitive declaration of his own inability to help him out, one which he would again highlight later in the story (v. 12). Yet Peter was not interested in leaving this man in his present condition. Like Peter, God has given believers today every resource necessary in the gospel to provide relief needed for the oppressed and downtrodden, and it may not necessarily be finances. It is God’s desire to bring great joy to the sinner’s heart through the power of the Gospel, which is the ultimate purpose of our ministry to the destitute (cf. Rom. 1:16).

**True compassion results in praise and glory to God.** The Greek word translated *leaping* (v. 8) is also used by the Septuagint in its translation of Isaiah 35:6—*then shall the lame man leap like a deer*. The nature of the miracle in Acts highlights Christ’s unusual power as anticipated in the OT. The purpose of Christ’s power on display at this moment is meant to challenge the unbelievers to view Christ as Lord (4:10). Clearly, this miracle was a shockwave (4:16) and also a poignant proof of the salvation needed by Israel and the Gentiles (4:8–12). In sum, the exercise of compassion by Christ’s disciples toward people in need brings with it great potential for productivity in gospel ministry and brings great glory to God. I pray that our God will receive glory by the way we exercise compassion to the hopeless in our communities.