

# The Powerful Name of the Risen Jesus

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[ 0 : 00 ] So, let's turn back together to Acts chapter 3, if you're using a church Bible on page 1094. And we're going to think today about the powerful name of the risen Jesus.

! If I was to ask the question, what's in a name? Then probably anyone ever who studied in a UK high school would be able to think about where that phrase comes from.

Remember Romeo and Juliet's balcony scene? We have the drama that's played out, two houses at war, Juliet's the Capulet, Romeo's the Montague, and we find Juliet in the balcony. What's in a name?

That which we call a rose by any other would smell as sweet. We have them each professing their love, each would gladly give up their name for the sake of the other. This civil war is keeping them apart.

But of course, the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet is that their names do have power. Their names are what makes them star-crossed lovers, and their story is doomed to disaster. Spoiler alert. Names have power.

[ 1 : 13 ] And Shakespeare shows it in the negative way. Maybe we know something of that. You know, what's in a name? There's a lot, I think, when we stop and think about it. A name, having the right name, can get us onto the guest list and get us into the party. Names can also be attached to us that wound and damage us. Cruel nicknames applied. We use names that speak about our belonging, our origins, our families. If we were to ask Peter, what's in a name? And particularly, significant about the name of Jesus, you say, well, in the name of Jesus, there is the power to heal and to save and to transform. And this is the crucial truth that we need to hear today, that faith in the name of Jesus, who Jesus is, His person, His character, His work, it lies at the center of this miracle that we read about in Acts 3, and it lies at the center of every miracle of salvation that has ever happened ever since.

Since, as the Bible says to us, there is no other name given under heaven by which we can be saved, recognizing and responding to the powerful name of Jesus is massive for each one of us individually.

So, our focus today is going to think about the impact of Jesus back then in the temple, in the life of the lame man and in the crowds. But we're going to think about what it means today, and especially we're going to think about it in regards to how do we talk about Jesus today?

How do we share this powerful name with others? So, let's begin looking in the first 10 verses at the event. So, we see what happens in verse 1. The location is the temple. Here are Peter and John, two of Jesus' apostles, and they're going to worship as they had, but now they're going to worship in Jesus' name. Now they know Jesus is a Son of God. He is their Lord. And the power of Jesus is going to be seen in the temple on this day so that people on that day and ever since would know that worship is directed towards Him. But as they come towards the temple, they are immediately met with needs.

There is a man who is lame from birth. He's being carried to the temple gate, and he is put there to beg day after day. He has no resources. He has no access to worship. He has a daily struggle to survive.

[ 4 : 11 ] And into this situation steps Peter. Now, remember, Peter has spent three years with Jesus, and Jesus was known for His compassion and His mercy. And what we see is that His followers become more and more like Him. Here is how we see it. He asks for money. Peter looks straight at Him, and Peter said, look at us. So the man gave his attention, expecting to get something from them.

There's power in eye contact, isn't there? It's so easy to walk past those who seem kind of less than us, perhaps somebody like a beggar. To make eye contact is to say, I see you. You matter to me. And in so doing, Peter raises hope. Peter said, silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. So the man's need is met not by money, but by a name, the powerful name of Jesus. And what we see in this scene is that Peter has faith in Jesus' power to heal, to transform, and to save. And he is calling the man to place his faith in the powerful name of Jesus. And as he does, the miracle happens. Those joints, those muscles, those tendons that had been useless up until now and from birth, they find strength. His body is restored. And what does Luke highlight as the miracle takes place? Verse 8, the man jumped to his feet, began to walk. He went with him into the temple courts, walking and jumping and praising God. And I think Luke records that to remind us of Isaiah 35, that when redemption comes, when rescue and restoration comes, so too does joy, the lame leaping like a deer. And he is praising God for this physical healing, but also this spiritual restoration. Now he too is beginning to discover Jesus Christ as Lord.

It's a very dramatic moment. And it emerges that there's fresh need that comes from it. Look at verse 9. People see it, obviously. They see him walking and praising God. They recognize them as the same man. And they were filled with wonder and amazement. So the need now becomes, Peter must give an explanation. He doesn't want to leave them with just a vague sense of wonder.

[ 7 : 08 ] Isn't this an amazing but surprising thing that's happened to the beggar? Peter. Peter wants everyone to know it's the power and authority of Jesus that has done this.

A remarkable moment for the man, a remarkable moment for the crowd, and a wonderful situation for us to reflect on. Because it is a reminder, an act is so full of this, that the life-giving spirit of Jesus is still working. The weak are made strong in Jesus' name.

Maybe some of us have come here today feeling weak, maybe weak in our faith, maybe weak in our abilities. And what was true for the man is true for us. We need to learn to look to the Lord for our strength. There's a verse that Peter gives us in his second letter, reminding us that God has given us everything that we need for life and godliness. As the people of God, when we feel weak, God loves to supply strength and grace. There's something about this story as well that reminds us that personal testimony to the transforming power of Jesus. It creates interest. It is powerful.

No one on that day could possibly deny the change that Jesus has brought. Maybe for many of us, we have friends, colleagues, family members, and maybe they're quite apathetic about the idea of truth. Maybe even hostile to the idea of absolute truth. But one thing that people can't deny, and one thing that people remain instinctively interested in, are personal stories.

And the great thing, when we've been saved by God's grace, we have a story, an ongoing story, of God's work in our lives. I was reminded of the remarkable life of John G. Payton, a very dramatic story. He was a missionary in the 1800s to New Caledonia, a place where cannibals were still living, and he lost children to fever. He lost his wife to disease. And part of his testimony was this, were it not for Jesus and his fellowship, I would have gone mad and died.

[ 9 : 49 ] And it was a great testimony of a man who clung to the promise of Jesus, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Now, our stories won't have that drama and power, but our story and our life can still make a difference. Just in the last couple of months, I heard the story of a student down in England who found faith in Jesus after watching a story on Instagram. And having watched the short story, she said, I want what they have and I don't. And what they had was Christian joy. And it led her to seek out Christians in her city and then to discover Jesus in His Word. Our stories, when they give glory to Jesus and when they're accompanied by prayer, can create a sense of wonder and longing.

And maybe you've had that experience. You're telling someone, I wish I had your hope or your peace or your joy. Our story is also a wonderful little picture of what Jesus does in the gospel. Here is a man who is by nature lame. He is paralyzed. He is unable to move. And that reflects what the Bible teaches about all of us. And that is, by nature, we are unable to walk before God in the obedience that He looks for.

And because of that, we are unable to walk with God in the relationship that we are made for because of our sin. And we cannot do anything about that ourselves.

But God sent Jesus, His own Son, into our world to deal with that sin. He came to live a life of perfect obedience. He laid down His life as a perfect sacrifice. And by faith in His name, trusting in Jesus for salvation, you and I, we can be saved. And we can have the joy of this lame man walking

and leaping and praising God. So, we've had the event. Secondly, let's think about, with Peter, the explanation of the event. So, it becomes clear, as Luke recounts the story, that this man is creating a scene. There is growing interest. Look at verse 11.

While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colony. Grown men generally didn't run. The lame man's been running about, and now everybody's running and rushing to see what's going on. That fear of missing out isn't a modern thing.

[12:58] And as this crowd gathers, Peter wants to take the opportunity to effectively say to them, the Jesus you rejected, that Jesus was raised by God. He is the source of salvation. He's the cause of what's happened to the man. It's one of the remarkable things about Peter. You know, he was so timid.

He kind of denied even knowing Jesus before the cross. But once he'd met the risen Lord Jesus, once he'd been given the Spirit to live in his heart, he can't, and he won't stop talking about Jesus. He has this new understanding of how the death of Jesus gloriously fits into God's plan of salvation. He died for me. And as he reads his Bible, now he sees Jesus everywhere in the Old Testament. And so in the next few verses, Peter wants to shine a light on the event. He doesn't want to leave anyone in the dark as to cause and effect. He wants to shine the light, and really to shine his spotlight on the glory of Jesus. You think about those theater spotlights. He wants to floodlight the glory of Jesus. And so he very clearly says to them, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us?

It's not on us, never about us. Rather, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has glorified his servant Jesus. So he's going to shine a spotlight on Jesus, but he's also going to do something else as well.

He's going to shine a searchlight on the hearts of people, exposing the guilt of those who rejected Jesus. But let's see how he shines the spotlight on Jesus. So we see in verse 13, the God of Abraham has glorified his servant Jesus. How did he glorify his servant Jesus?

[14:59] Verse 15, you killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. In the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, God the Father glorifies his Son. And the Father wants the world to know, to use the language of verse 14, that Jesus truly is the holy and righteous one.

Jesus never sinned. And because Jesus never sinned, death had no claim on him. The wages of sin is death. That Jesus is none other than the holy and righteous Son of God. And so when Jesus dies in our place for our sin, not for his own, when God raises him from the dead, God is delivering his verdict on Jesus, I am pleased with my Son. He has completed my plan of salvation in a holy and a righteous way. We discover another title of Jesus, verse 15, you killed the author of life. It's a really interesting phrase. You know, the Bible tells us that Jesus was there at the beginning, that he was God's agent of creation, that he is the life giver. But here it means something particular. It means that Jesus is the trailblazer, the pioneer. Paul puts, you know, the idea that Jesus is the first of the resurrected people. We go to mountains for a moment. He's the lead climber who goes up and puts all the holds in place, secures the ropes so that everyone can follow in his way.

Jesus is the first to enjoy resurrection life. Jesus is glorified by the Father, making it clear to us that the only way for you and I to enjoy resurrection life is to trust in him. And when we do, there is certainty that we enjoy life with God right now and life with him forever. He glorifies Jesus. Look at verse 16, by faith in the name of Jesus. This man whom you see and know is made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him. This lame man placed his faith in Jesus as the answer to his helpless condition, to be strength for his weakness. The key to this moment is faith in Jesus' name. Trusting everything that God says about Jesus, trusting all that the Bible teaches about

Jesus as the Son of God, as the Savior, the one who lived and died and rose again. Trusting in his perfect character, his promises, his work. Coming to see who Jesus is, placing our hope in him. That's the key to salvation. And notice too, as Peter wants to shine a spotlight on Jesus' glory. Faith comes through Jesus.

[18:20] It is Jesus who gives the gift of faith. It is Jesus who makes a person willing to believe. It is Jesus who can break through the hardest hearts, who can make the most unwilling willing.

It is Jesus who can rescue physically and spiritually lame people, causing them to walk with joy with God. And so Peter shines the spotlight to say, Jesus is glorious. Jesus is good. You need to trust

him to be saved and to enjoy true life with our God and our Creator. But at the same time, there is a different light that's shining. As he begins to preach to the crowd, he shines a searchlight on the human heart.

It's a very different kind of light. Picture, you know, a police helicopter on a manhunt for criminals. When that spotlight, when that searchlight shines, that's designed to expose and to catch the criminal.

And so as much as a light has been shining on the glory of Jesus, now Peter turns his attention to the crowds to expose their guilt. Listen to how he does it. Verse 13, you handed him over to be killed. You disowned him before Pilate. We have no king but Caesar.

You disowned the holy and righteous one and asked that a murderer be released to you. We don't want Jesus. We want Barabbas to be released. You killed the author of life. This catalog of crime is placed before them so that they have nowhere to run. Peter, as he's led by the Spirit, he uses that spotlight to lay bare human guilt and shame. God has kept his promise. God has been good. God has sent his own son to save, and they rejected him. God has been so kind as to send a good king to enter into the chaos of society, to invite us to live under his good and loving rule. And people said, no, thank you. We don't want him.

[ 20 : 45 ] Jesus came, the bridegroom in love, coming for his bride. And he was shunned. And so Peter turns to the crowd. That Jesus you treated as a nobody, the one you gave no attention to except to cry, crucify him, the one you celebrate because you think he's now out of your life. God has glorified him. God sent him so you would be saved.

And yet you wanted none of him. When our verdict on Jesus disagrees with God's verdict, I think we understand that we have a big problem. We know that principle in small ways. If my answer disagrees with my teacher's answer, I know I'm going to be regarded as being wrong. If my actions disagree with the laws of my country, then I will rightly be prosecuted. And if my verdict on Jesus disagrees with the God who created me, the Bible says, and I stand condemned. And that provokes the urgent need to reassess. Maybe you're here today and you need to reassess your view on Jesus, to consider Christ Jesus and his claims. Think about what's at stake.

But we need to recognize too, a lesson for ourselves about how we share the gospel. That we share the gospel to shine the spotlight on Jesus as good news. That's the goal when we share our faith. Isn't so that people would come away and think, wow, what great faith that person has. I wish, I wish I could be like that person and have that kind of faith. We want people to go away thinking, what an amazing God and Savior they have. And to be invited to know that God and Savior for themselves. Again, Peter, in his first letter, invites Christians always to be ready to give a reason for the hope that we have, to do that gently and showing full respect to other people.

But if someone asks us, how is it that you can face that diagnosis without falling apart? How is it that you go through those hardships without bitterness and you seem to have a real solid joy? Those are the moments when we pray and we want to give people Jesus. He's the answer. If it was left to me, it'd fall apart. But he is for me, he's with me, he loved me, he gave himself for me, and he's promised never to leave me.

[ 23 : 50 ] So we've seen the event, and we've heard the explanation. But there's one other really important message that Peter wants to deliver to the crowd and to us, and it's the encouragement, the encouragement to believe. So think about what happens, and some of us we've had this experience, when everything you thought that was true about a person turns out to be a lie. Perhaps you have been caught out in one of the many sort of email scams. Somebody claims to be a friend or, you know, a distant relation. They're in desperate need, and they say that you need to give them some. And it turns out it was a hoax. It was some scammer. Perhaps you've had your identity stolen, and you understand the stress and the distress that's caused when somebody else is claiming your name and identity and does all kinds of things. Maybe you've had a situation the other way. Maybe you've jumped to a conclusion about someone, or you've accused them of wrong, wronging you in some way, or you've thought the worst of them, but it turns out they defended you and supported you. Well, that provokes a crisis of its own. But it's into this kind of identity crisis that Peter now turns back to the crowds, and he changes his tone. You have been wrong about Jesus, profoundly wrong. Your verdict up until this point has not matched God's, but there is hope. There is an invitation to find God's mercy. Verse 17, now, fellow

Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance. The greatest crisis in our life is being wrong about the name of Jesus, being wrong about the name of Jesus. Being wrong about the name of Jesus.

Being wrong about his identity and his work. But the wonderful reminder from this text is that even up until this very minute we've been wrong about Jesus, that does not need to be the end of our story, because the same Jesus comes to offer us mercy.

Look how Peter urges response in verse 19, you have done all those things. You've killed the author of life, you acted in ignorance. Repent then and turn to God. They have done the very worst in crying, crucify the Lord Jesus, but still there is this wonderful invitation to turn from sin, the sin of rejecting and ignoring Jesus, to turn to God, to faith in Jesus, and to have eternal life.

So why should we? Why should we heed Peter's encouragement to turn from sin and turn to God? Well, one reason is because of who Jesus is. So as we said earlier, Peter loves to read his Bible and to find Jesus as the hero of the story, to find Jesus on every page. There's a few examples of it here.

[ 27 : 04 ] Verse 18, in the killing of Jesus and then his resurrection, this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Who is Jesus? He is the Messiah, the appointed king, who suffers to save his people. The promise of the Old Testament fulfilled at the cross. Isaiah 53, 5. He was pierced for our transgressions. He was punished for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. God had eternally planned for his son to die in order that we might live. He is the Messiah who must suffer. Verse 22 and 23, he is the true prophet who brings us home to God. He introduces Jesus as greater than Moses.

Moses said, the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. You must listen to everything he tells you. Remember Moses, sent by God to set people free from slavery, to lead them to know God at Mount Sinai, to be brought towards the promised land. Jesus does that for us.

Deals with our slavery to sin, brings us into living relationship with God, gives us the promise of eternal life. Jesus has come as the mediator to bridge the gap between a holy God and sinful people.

And he is also, verse 25, the source of blessing from God for all nations. You are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, through your offspring, all people on earth will be blessed. Way back at the beginning of the Bible, a promised child who would come, who would bring ultimate blessing, peace with God, life with God. And he can say on that day, that promised child is Jesus.

[ 29 : 06 ] So we're encouraged to turn from sin to trust in Jesus because of who Jesus is, but also because of what Jesus brings. Look at verse 19. Repent then and turn to God, firstly so that your sins may be wiped out. In Jesus, there is the promise of total forgiveness. The hard drive containing all of your wrong thoughts and words and actions and attitudes. That permanent record there before God, Jesus would wipe that memory clean. There at the cross. By trusting in Jesus, we can therefore stand before God without fear and without shame. But there is also the promise of spiritual refreshing. Still in verse 19, repent and turn to God that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. Imagine the most refreshing cold drink you've ever had from a can of Coke. From a can of Coke or from a mountain stream. Multiply it infinite times.

And that's the refreshment that God through Jesus would bring to our lives, to our souls, as the Spirit is poured out within us, as God comes to be present, as Jesus is always working for us. And He's still not done. Because He also wants them to know that trusting in Jesus brings the promise of future restoration. Verse 20, that He may send the Messiah who's been appointed for you, even Jesus.

Heaven must receive Him until the time comes for God to restore everything. So we saw that beginning of Acts 1. Jesus is received back into heaven, but there's the promise that He'll come back again, judge and king. And when He comes back again, God's going to restore all things. The world that we all want, a world free of suffering and injustice, a world free of death. That's the world that we'll be.

And the way to enjoy that life with perfect relationships for all eternity, time without end, with Jesus at the center, is to place our faith in Him.

[ 31 : 41 ] Here's why we should trust in Jesus. He is the only one who can deal with our guilty conscience. He is the only one who can give us rest beyond anxiety and exhaustion. He is the one who can answer the lack of real hope in the world as we put our faith in Him as Lord and Savior.

So when we circle back to our original question, what's in a name? Peter would say, when it comes to the name of Jesus, it's everything. It's life and death. And so we share the gospel to call for response. Picture a person drowning at sea, and the lifeboat pulls up, and the lifeline is sent out. The person in the sea still has a need to reach out their hands and to get in the boat. For us, spiritually lost at sea, Jesus has come, and He calls us today to repent and to believe. To trust in Him changes our eternal destiny. Look at verse 23, anyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from their people. It's an idea of curse. It's being separate from God and His goodness. But if we trust in Jesus, verse 25, we'll be blessed. We'll enjoy peace and life with God. Today, we call on the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved. [ 33 : 29 ] And if we've done that already, will we take up our mission to tell people of the glorious, the mighty name of the Lord?