

AM Luke 24:13-35 & Acts 3:19-20

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 September 2024

Preacher: Mr Cameron MacIver

[0 : 00] of a miraculous healing and of a sermon that was preached by the Apostle Peter.

We'll read the whole chapter, Acts chapter 3. This is God's Word. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, that's called the Beautiful Gate, to ask alms of those entering the temple.

Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, look at us.

And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, I have no silver and gold, but what I do have, I give to you.

[1 : 12] In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up.

And immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And recognized him as the one who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple asking for alms.

And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's.

And when Peter saw it, he addressed the people. Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this? Or why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?

[2 : 21] The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him.

But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. And you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead.

To this we are witnesses. And his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. And the faith that is through Jesus has given this man, given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that as Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all things, about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

[3 : 57] Moses said, The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.

And all the prophets who have spoken, men and women, sorry, from Samuel, and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days, You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.

Amen. This is God's holy word. Well, our second scripture reading is also from the New Testament this week. It's from the Gospel according to Luke and chapter 24.

And that is, I believe, on page 1066 in the Church Bibles.

[5 : 18] Luke chapter 24, but we're going to start reading at verse 13. And we'll just read a section of this chapter.

That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, What is this conversation you're holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still looking sad.

Then one of them named Cleopas answered, Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days? And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him.

[6 : 31] But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, this is now the third day since these things happened.

Moreover, some of our women, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and when they did not find his body, they came back saying they'd even seen a vision of angels.

They said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see. And he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going further, but they urged him strongly saying, Stay with us for it's toward evening and the day is now far spent.

[7 : 48] So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together saying, The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon. Then they told what had happened on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Amen.

Amen. But before we turn our attention to the scriptures here, let's bow our heads once more again in prayer.

[8 : 49] Let us pray. Lord our God, our loving, heavenly Father, we come once more into your presence in prayer.

Giving thanks to you for your goodness to us. We thank you that you've given us such a clear statement of what the gospel means.

And yet as we come as a group of your people this morning into your presence, we also are told in your word that we are to come with our petitions.

Come to bring our needs and our desires before you and to lay them before you as it were.

And you know our needs, O Lord. You know that this group of your people have suffered a bereavement recently and the pain of that and the loss of a member of this fellowship is a sadness, O Lord.

[9 : 56] We pray that you would bring comfort. we pray, O Lord, that you would bless this fellowship of your people.

We're so conscious of our frailty, of our needs for growth, of our need for a regular minister to proclaim the good news here week by week in a way that is good for building up your people. We need, O Lord, protection for our families. We thank you for the families that are represented here. We pray that you would watch over our relationships within our families.

We pray, O Lord, that you would watch over the relationships within our fellowship, that you would guard our hearts in all that we say and do and think about one another, that there would be that closeness, that love that is evident to all, that is, has its origin in the work of grace in our hearts that

is, should have that fruit that is apparent to those who would see what we are doing. So we pray, O Lord, that you would grant us grace to be more fruitful, to be a growing group of your people, that there would be a witness for you here.

[11 : 41] We know that there are many people in this town and in the surrounding area, many, many people who are living in spiritual darkness. We pray, O Lord, that you would grant us wisdom as to how to reach out, that you would make us a light in that darkness.

Grant then, O Lord, your spirit with us and grant, O Lord, that you would continue with us as we turn now to your word. And we ask for this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, this morning, our text is verses 19 and 20 of Acts chapter 3.

Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, and so on.

This is a great sermon preached by the apostle Peter. And as we come to study any part of God's word, it's always a good practice for us for us to step back from it initially and consider not just the meaning of these words, but the context as to where they come in the revelation that God has given us in his word.

[13 : 26] And as I was preparing to preach on this passage, I noticed that a few weeks ago Duncan Peters was here and he preached on the beginning of Luke's gospel and on the beginning of the account of the Acts of the Apostles.

And I'm sure he would have mentioned that both of these books are written by the same person, by Luke, who is a physician, a doctor, who wanted an orderly account to be given of the gospel.

And he's done that in two parts. Luke has given us the gospel according to Luke, which tells us the events around Jesus' birth, his earthly ministry, his public teaching, but most especially his betrayal, his crucifixion, his rising again from the dead.

And his ascension to heaven. And it's obvious from the way Luke presents both these books to us, with a similar dedication in each one, that he sees this as a continuity.

It's the same thing that he's telling us about. He recaps at the beginning of Acts that Jesus has indeed risen again and has ascended to heaven.

[14 : 52] But that does not mean that Jesus has stopped the work that he is doing. Everything that Jesus said he would do has continued to come true.

And so in the earlier chapters, just before we come to this sermon, we see that Jesus ascended to heaven exactly as he said he would. And that he promised to send the Holy Spirit.

And we read of that the day of Pentecost, Jesus does indeed send the Holy Spirit. And what happens when the Holy Spirit is sent? A great sermon is preached, which is understandable to everyone in every language.

A great sign that the work that Jesus is doing is no longer, it was never really just limited to only being in Israel and only being for people from a Jewish background.

But this sign of sending the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the wonders of God in all these different languages was a clear sign that the gospel is for everyone.

[16 : 04] God in all And so that was the first proper gospel sermon. And now here we have what we would take to be the second ever gospel sermon preached to a crowd of people.

And it contains this clear statement about the guilt of those who are hearing that sermon.

It's very different perhaps to some of the emphasis that others might have when they come to present the gospel. Peter doesn't say, doesn't emphasize that God loves you.

He says, repent and turn again. The emphasis is on the guilt of those who hear this.

So that's the context. Let's look at now more carefully at verses 19 and 20.

[17 : 13] Repent therefore and turn again that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus.

Jesus. So we're told to do something. We're told to repent and turn to God and that if we do that there will be three consequences, three things will happen if we repent and turn to God.

Our sins will be wiped out, these times of refreshing will come from the Lord and that God will send Jesus.

And so in the time that remains I'm simply going to consider what it means to repent and turn to God and then we'll look in turn at these three things that will happen when we repent and turn to God.

So as I was saying to the children the word repent has this meaning, it has a meaning of turning around, it's a complete reversal of our attitudes but it also signifies that we cannot change ourselves.

[18 : 34] And this is true, it's true also that we sometimes cannot we can't just say sorry and make something okay again, even in our, what we call our horizontal relationships, our relationships with each other.

If I break a coffee cup, I can offer to buy a new one. Or you could say it's fine, we will take the cost, it doesn't matter. But often in the things that we say to one another we can say something hurtful that causes pain and offence and it can't be unsaid.

And so even on our relationships with each other there are things that we can do which we cannot fix ourselves. But Peter here is not talking about our relationships amongst one another, he's talking about our relationship to God.

And he's not talking about one or two small things that we did wrong, little errors, small sins. He's emphasizing one big sin that these people were guilty of.

there's one sin here that's so massive in terms of its impact that it means that the whole direction of our lives is wrong and that we need to completely change.

[20 : 03] What is Peter saying that these people need to repent of? Look back with me at verses 13 through 15. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers glorified his servant Jesus whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him.

But you denied the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. And you killed the author of life whom God raised from the dead.

These people are guilty of denying or disowning Jesus. And worse than that, they substituted Jesus for a murderer.

The author of life, the one who created and sustains all things. They denied him and chose instead someone who had taken away life.

They had substituted the only one who was truly righteous and chosen instead a sinful option. And friends, that's unfortunately the same for us if we will not repent.

[21 : 40] You might think, well I'm not guilty of causing Jesus to be crucified. I wasn't there in the crowd shouting release Barabbas, that murderer, to us.

but when we trust in our own sinful ideas, instead of the righteousness that is offered to us in Christ, we're guilty of that same level of sin, it's the same sin effectively.

We're denying Jesus and choosing something else which is not holy, not righteous. well three things happen when we do turn, when we do repent, and the first of these is that our sins are wiped out.

I hope you can see that this is good news. Wiping out our sin is something that we absolutely cannot do ourselves, but no matter what I say here, unless the Holy Spirit is working in your heart to enable you to understand the seriousness of your sin, nothing I say will make a difference.

I can use every analogy I can and present it to you in the most shocking terms as to why your sin would be so serious. But the Bible is clear that unless the Holy Spirit enables you to see that for yourself, you will not see it.

[23 : 33] Think of how ready we can be to bear a grudge when someone sins against us and how that sense of offence is increased depending on our relationship with that person.

imagine for a moment that you are an employer and you decide to take a chance, give somebody a good job, you pay for their training, you sponsor them through accreditation, you give them all the equipment that they need to do their job and you put time and effort into that person and then they steal from you.

How does that make you feel? or perhaps you're in a relationship with somebody and then they steal from you or they betray you in some way and it's made much worse because of the relationship that you have to that person.

Well what about our betrayal? Well it's not against a kind and generous employer, it's not even against the love of our lives, but Peter says to his hearers and to us today that we've killed the author of life.

Every moment of our lives that is not lived in conscious acknowledgement of the glory of Jesus as the author of life, the one who brings and gives us life.

[25 : 10] Every moment that we do not give glory to Jesus in that way is actively dishonouring Jesus.

And in failing to acknowledge him as the holy and righteous one who can save us for our sins, we inevitably provide completely unsuitable substitutes. sins. And that is what causes such a great offence to God. And so if we repent, if we acknowledge that the whole direction of our lives has been wrong, and we turn instead to God and admit that we cannot make atonement ourselves, it's then that Peter says our sins are wiped out. To imagine that on the day of judgment we could appear before the Lord and say that there's something else here that makes our sins wiped out is beyond dangerous. It's a contempt for what Jesus has done. And it brings this ferocious guilt upon us. that's described here as killing the author of life.

[26 : 40] So if we repent, our sins are wiped out. But there's more good news. Times of refreshing will come from the Lord.

Well what does that mean? Well, this word refreshing is an interesting word. I'm told that the Greek word behind the word that is translated for us refreshing here is something like getting your breath back.

There's something about it that means to be revived, to get a new breath of life as it were. There's also something in it of a cooling breeze perhaps if you've been, maybe, I don't know, climbing a hill or something and you get a cool breeze and it brings refreshing. And throughout the Bible there's an association between that idea of breath and the work of the Holy Spirit. Right at the beginning of the Bible, Genesis chapter 2 verse 7 we read of God making man and breathing his spirit into him to give life.

[28 : 04] And many of you know the famous chapter in Ezekiel, chapter 37 which speaks of a vision that that prophet had of these dry bones and they're brought together but have no breath of life and then the breath, the Spirit is given to them.

And in the New Testament of course there's a strong association isn't there between the work of the Holy Spirit and this breath. So what is Peter really saying here?

I would take it for granted that Peter is not saying that when our sins are forgiven we'll also physically catch our breath or sort of, I don't know, feel physically better.

it's surely obvious that it's a spiritual thing that Peter is speaking of. I'm not sure if any of you might have read an amazing book about the church in Korea.

There's a book written, it's quite an old book, it was written back in 1977 by two men who were involved in going to the Korean Peninsula.

[29 : 21] And telling those people who lived on the Korean Peninsula the good news of Jesus. And the church grew a bit, but it grew from very small beginnings.

And the book I'm referring to is called the Korean Pentecost. And it began with a corporate time, a time when the people who were in the church at the time together repented.

Together they came and confessed their sins against one another. And this time of repentance in the church is traced very clearly in this book to a time of tremendous blessing and revival.

the work of the Holy Spirit was then poured out in a way that hasn't really been seen anywhere in the world since then for as long as far as we know.

And today the church in South Korea is strong. And for all we know the church in North Korea where this outpouring of revival really happened.

[30 : 40] though it's brutally persecuted we're confident that there are Christian people there to this day. And so this time of refreshing is to do with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

And even when an individual person repents sometimes we see a sort of a mini revival don't we? When one individual person repents their friends and their family will notice that change and they'll be drawn to hear the good news.

And so there is that sense of times of refreshing. And so whether we are Christians or not in both cases when we repent we see that the accompanying work of the Holy Spirit is not merely to forgive our sins but to bring this power that comes from the Holy Spirit.

But there's more even than that. So our sins are wiped away and these times of refreshing these times of revival come. And lastly we see that God will send Jesus he may send the Christ appointed for you Jesus somehow or another we don't often have our eyes focused on this as much as we should.

Of course in one sense we're waiting for Christ to return. This is why the book of Acts is such a relevant book for us because at the beginning of the book of Acts Luke tells us about the ascension and tells us that Jesus in the same way we'll see Jesus return one day and we're still in that age this is the church age we're still waiting for Christ to return and one of the sad things in the church is that lack of certainty about the details about exactly how that will happen can rob us of the joy of the big picture which is crystal clear in the Bible that Jesus will indeed return and that when he returns everything will be made new there'll be this time of restoration of all things that's spoken of in verse 21 there this is something to pray for something to look forward to every injustice will be made good every frustration will be turned around now

[33 : 47] Christ's coming was sometimes seen in the Old Testament as if it was just one event and in a sense Peter's sermon here is a little bit in the same vein most of us think that for example the references he makes to Moses when Moses says God will send a prophet like me we think oh well that was fulfilled when Jesus came and in one sense it was but the coming of Jesus that it refers to is not fully fulfilled yet because that event is seen from the perspective of the Old Testament as if it's one event but we're in between these two comings Jesus has come as our redeemer but we're waiting for him to come as king and judge so these days that are referred to are the days in which we live waiting eagerly for his return well in closing then what are some points of application from these verses firstly whether you're a

Christian or not this morning one thing that we should do is to ask God to show us how serious sin is in his eyes very often that's the first step in becoming a Christian but it also remains an essential element in staying the course as a Christian all of us have a lifelong commitment an obligation to repentance and we have a lifelong obligation to live lives that bear as the scriptures say elsewhere the fruit of repentance and when we start to see sin the way God sees it when we start to see our guilt as not being a few small problems but guilt that is an equivalent to killing the author of life this will transform us we'll be humble we'll be careful in our relationships with one another secondly then I want us to consider is there anything in your life where repentance needs to be accompanied by action only you will know what that might be but repent and turn to God strongly implies a complete reversal of our patterns of our thoughts of our speech of our actions so today let's commit to reflect on that if there is anything anything that we need to do in relation to repentance also notice in verse 22 in the context of this repentance

Peter says Peter says that Moses speaking of Jesus says listen to him in whatever he tells you we have no longer denied Jesus but instead are wanting to listen to him and of course this book we believe contains his word to us and so let's commit ourselves to pay careful attention to what it says read it daily set aside time to reflect on it set aside a routine of time for the word time on the Lord to meditate on it to hear it being preached lastly and in closing this is good news but as a preacher I have to also sound the note of caution here the note of warning look at verse 23 with me and it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people this is good news but it comes with a note of warning please don't miss that note of warning it's always present whenever the gospel is preached well may god bless to us these words from acts chapter 3 let's bring our worship service to a close then by singing from psalm 133 psalm 133 rejoices in the blessing of unity how excellent a thing it is how pleasant and how good when brothers dwell in unity and live as brothers should let's sing these words all weil ia un