

A Sign of Restoration

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[0 : 00] So have you ever done some sort of restoration job? Like perhaps a house or a car or maybe a couch? No? I know there's those TV shows, they restore houses.

Apparently popular. I don't know. I don't watch them. But I can tell you about a car that my dad restored.

So it's a 1950-something Triumph Mayflower. I remember barely.

I was very young. I remember... Okay, don't worry. There it is. I was very young. We picked it up from someone. I think the ad was in the newspaper.

And then on the same day we picked it up, we drove half an hour to leave it with someone else for over 10 years. I found out later he was the mechanic.

[1 : 01] But even after we got it back from him, the engine worked, the rest still needed work. We had to paint it, we had to do the seats, do the dashboard and everything.

And then there you go. That's how it looks now. I took that this morning. So maybe you think it's pretty nice. Maybe you don't care. It's just a car.

It's pretty uncomfortable. Well, our passage today, it starts with a person who has their legs restored, which back then is much like a car for him.

It was really important. And it talks then, Peter talks about an even greater restoration. That is to come. So why don't we get straight into it?

Last week, as Vijay reminded us, chapter 2 ends with this beautiful picture. The church are gathering, and they're growing, and they're meeting together.

[2 : 02] In verse 46, just across the page, or just above chapter 3, it says, every day they met at the temple. And that's right where we pick up, here in chapter 3.

So as we, I'm going to read the first few verses again, and just put yourself as the lame man. Whoa. All right, we're on. That's quite loud. Put yourself as the lame man.

What's he thinking as Peter and John are coming? So one day, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer, three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.

When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, look at us. So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

So it's a lot like Warwick was demonstrating before. Peter and John are coming in, and this guy sees them. Imagine being him, seeing them coming, and asking them for money, like he asks everyone for money.

[3 : 18] After all, it was expected that Jewish people care for the poor. It was in the law that they should give alms, like Warwick was saying. Now Peter told him, look at us.

What do you think he's thinking? Well, verse 5, even tells us. He turned to them expecting to get something. He probably expected money, maybe food, or something else, something he would need to live.

And then in verse 6, we see Peter says, silver or gold, I do not have. What are you thinking? That's a disappointment. Or maybe, why is this guy talking to me?

Well, Peter keeps going, of course, doesn't he? In verse 6, he says, but what I do have, I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.

Then taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly, the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping and praising God.

[4 : 28] In the name of Jesus, Peter said, walk, and he does. His legs have been completely healed. And just look at him go.

He's jumped up, he starts running, like Warwick was saying, he'd be running all around, walking, leaping, and praising God. No.

He was expecting arms, but God gave him legs. Don't worry. Okay, let's move on.

It's kind of like when you get a letter from the power company or the internet people, you know what to expect. Before you even open it, you know it's going to be a bill.

But a friend of mine was telling me the other day, the power company realized they'd been overcharging for some time. So she was pleasantly surprised one day that she opened a letter from them and found a massive refund.

[5 : 31] It's truly amazing, isn't it, friends? And the people they saw, they know it as well. In verse 9 and 10, he says, or Luke says, when all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful.

They were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. They saw him and they knew who he was. He's the same guy who begs at the same gate, the beautiful gate.

That's why Luke told us about the gate. They couldn't deny what had happened. And so they're filled with wonder and amazement. And especially, it's especially amazing because it's not just his legs that have been restored, but his whole life.

For the first time ever, he can work, he can earn his own living. For the first time ever, he can go where he wants without being carried there. His whole life has been restored.

Now, I don't know about you, but if I saw something like that, I would want to go and find who did it. I'd want to, I have a few questions for them.

[6 : 48] I'd want to know how they did it. But as we'll see, it's not Peter and John who actually restored this guy's life. So we're now on to point two.

We're looking at verse 11 to 16. Let's read through it. 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 Colonnade.

When Peter saw this, he said to them, Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed and you disowned him before Pilate.

Although he had decided to let him go, you disowned the holy and righteous one and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead.

[7 : 49] We are witnesses of this. 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 completely healed him as you can all see.

Peter and John were not the ones who restored this man's legs or his life. Rather, it was Jesus. This is the Jesus who the people disowned before Pilate.

The same Jesus who they killed but God raised from the dead. It is that Jesus, the author of life, who restored this man's life. Now, of course, they would be surprised.

They thought they got rid of Jesus, didn't they? And usually, killing people does that. Doesn't it? But now, what's happened has been a Jesus-only miracle and it's occurred again, just like the ones Jesus used to do himself.

It's proving to them that their strongest move was not enough. When they thought they had won, Jesus is back and he's shown that he has won. But how does Jesus restore the man?

[9 : 00] Well, as it says in 16, Jesus restores by faith. It could have been the man's faith or it could have been because of the apostle's faith in Jesus.

We're not clearly told. We don't really know. But we are clearly told that it is by faith in Jesus that the man is completely healed and that his whole life is restored.

Well, Peter doesn't stop there, does he? He keeps going and he continues to teach them how this restoration and how this Jesus have been part of God's plan that he's promised a long time ago.

So let's keep going ourselves. We're now at point three and now Peter illustrates God's promises being fulfilled in three ways. So the first one is in verse 17 and 18.

Let's have a look. Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets saying that his Messiah would suffer.

[10:08] So even though they killed God's Messiah, the anointed king, they had actually been following God's plan without realizing it. God had planned that the Messiah would suffer.

He had even told them about it beforehand through the prophets. It's a bit like a few weeks ago in Sunday school. I was with the 130 congregation and we've been going through the story of Moses in Exodus and Numbers and we were looking at a story where the Israelites failed to follow God's instructions again.

So that week to illustrate it we chose to run a game where we know the kids would stop following the rules because they always do. So this game involved running back and forth carrying balls but only one at a time and in their teams only one kid running at a time and every time we play this it just becomes chaos.

There's balls being thrown there's kids there's whole teams running and yeah they don't they just completely forget the rules within minutes. So as expected that's what happened this time but instead of normally where we just tell them stop doing that stop cheating this time it was actually we had actually planned it.

What they didn't realize is that we knew they would stop following the rules and we had planned for it to happen. It's kind of like that. God had already planned and promised that the Messiah would suffer.

[11:52] It was part of his plan to rescue us from sin. It was part of his plan that Jesus would suffer and die as a sacrifice. Now here Peter has made the sin of the people clear since they'd rejected Jesus and they'd sent him to the cross.

But God has planned for Jesus' death which would be a sacrifice to pay for that sin. And he'd also planned it so that the other promises here could also be fulfilled.

As that brings us to the second promise of God it's in verse 21 so just skip down there for a moment. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything as he promised long ago in his holy prophets.

So through the prophets long ago God had promised that there would be a time where he restores everything. Now of course this includes physical restoration like legs like the man and arms and hearts and brains it's everything.

This miracle was at the beginning was like a live sign of this restoration to come. And as Christians we have this same promise. that means one day there will be no more sore backs no more broken bones no more diseases or cancer or anything like that.

[13:23] Whatever it is that we are suffering from. But we don't know when that will be. Until then there's also the third promise of God which is also being fulfilled.

It's in verse 22 to 26. So let's have a look there. For Moses said the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people.

You must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people. Indeed beginning with Samuel all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days.

And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.

When God raised up his servant he sent him first to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways. So Moses had promised that God would raise up someone they should listen to and Peter has said that the other prophets talked about these days.

[14:36] Jesus is that someone he is that person and they are now living in those days the prophets spoke about. And listening to Jesus is serious isn't it?

As Moses said in 23 anyone who does not listen will be completely cut off from their own people. But what kind of promise did God make about these days?

We see in 25 he said to Abraham through him Jesus all the peoples on earth will be blessed. Is it a physical healing kind of blessing?

Is it some other kind of blessing? Is it like what the lay man received? Well we can see exactly what that blessing is in 26 it says when God raised up his servant he sent him first to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.

When God raised up his servant Peter uses this kind of like a pun because since God has raised Jesus up from the dead because Jesus was raised up from the dead the blessing for his people is being turned from wickedness and sin.

[15 : 53] It is a restoration isn't it? spiritual it's spiritual rather than physical though. There's a complete spiritual restoration that is promised to us even now since Jesus has already come and died and been raised again.

So even for those people the ones who had killed Jesus who had rejected him God has promised that they would be restored spiritually. If they put their faith in Jesus in the risen Jesus their sin would no longer make them ignorant or cause them to hate God's righteous one.

But if they don't listen if they continue to reject him they'll be cut off. And likewise it's for us too. God's promise of spiritual restoration is for our lives even right now.

So we've seen the healing of this man's legs was a sign. It was a sign of the promises that God is fulfilling are first the spiritual restoration now are the blessing of turning from wickedness and of finding forgiveness are second the physical restoration that's later when the time comes for Jesus to return and God to restore everything and the man's healing not only points to this restoration that we look forward to but also how we receive it remember the man was restored not by the apostles power or their godliness but by faith in the crucified Christ so Jesus is the one that we are to turn to to listen to to trust in and that brings us to point four if you're following the outlines I come back to verse 19 and 20 the ones we skipped and let's read them now repent then and turn to

God so that your sins may be wiped out that times of refreshing may come from the Lord and that he may send the Messiah who has been appointed for you even Jesus so if we want to enjoy the restored life spiritually now and then physically later we must repent or turn to God this is part of the flip side of putting faith in Jesus name which we saw before it's turning completely 180 degrees away from sin and instead towards God it means rejecting sin just like the people had originally rejected Jesus handing it over despising it disowning it even killing it since Jesus has already killed our sin on the cross then the promise is that sins will be wiped out immediately as he says repent so that your sins may be wiped out that times of refreshing may come now if you're thinking what [19 : 07] I'm thinking it would be something like I didn't actually kill Jesus not like those guys I wasn't there maybe you're thinking that but don't we know what it is to disown him don't we know what it is to kill him by the way we live living as if he's not important or as if he hasn't done anything and I'm sure we all have friends and family who still live that way I know maybe it doesn't feel as bad as being the ones who did it but it is the same thing isn't it however since even those guys the ones personally responsible for killing Jesus are offered this chance to turn to him how much more can we be sure that our sins can be wiped out and our friends and our family as well should we tell them should we keep praying for them should they turn to

Christ and along with sins being wiped out along with refreshing we have verse 20 Peter says God will also send his Messiah that's Jesus who has been appointed for you that is when that day comes and we'll eventually enjoy that physical restoration as well so Peter's application to these guys is pretty clear isn't it repent believe in God so that our sins will be wiped out that our life will be restored now spiritually and later even physically just as God had promised now we can even see at the beginning of chapter four how the people responded so let's have a look at that just verses one to four are the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people they were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people proclaiming in

Jesus the resurrection of the dead they seized Peter and John and because it was evening they put them in jail until the next day but many who heard the message believed so the number of men who believed grew to about 5,000 I know I said Peter's application seems pretty clear I don't think it was that difficult and this promise of restoration seems really good and yet the priests the temple guards the Sadducees they're disturbed why because Peter was telling them about the resurrection from the dead about Jesus resurrection from the dead remember these are the guys who thought they had stopped him they thought they had killed him but he's back and it's undeniable isn't it come on they have witnessed this lame man have his whole life restored along with his legs it must have been

Jesus this Jesus only miracle that only Jesus could do furthermore Peter has shown how this restoration of life was promised throughout the prophets throughout the Old Testament aren't these people supposed to be experts on the prophets or on the Old Testament but for whatever reason they don't believe they arrest Peter and John they put them in jail and you'll have to come back next week to find out what happens but on the other hand we do see many many people who do believe in verse 4 the number of men who believed grows to about 5,000 if you remember back in chapter 2

it was only about 3,000 there's a lot of people it's all happened because they had seen this lame man being healed at the gate because they have recognized this need for restoration that comes from

God through faith in Jesus Christ now this need for restoration these other people are not lame indeed they're not physically healed here but what they have understood is the need to be restored spiritually the need for God to bless them by turning them from their wicked ways so they trust in God they trust that he will restore everything when Jesus returns as well now what about us do you recognize your sin that you need it to be wiped away completely do you trust God's promises that he'll restore all things in the future along with the promise of spiritual restoration that we can have right now sharing with Jesus in his new life now I'm sure many of us do but then if that's us we ought to be challenged by this as well do we trust those promises even enough to tell others the healing in this passage it's kind of you could call it a sign of the times

[24 : 38] Peter has said this is a sign of what God is doing in these days and I don't know about you but when I hear that a sign of the times I think of those crazy people like on the internet or in America they're saying look at this and that and they're trying to tell us when Jesus will come back well friends we don't know when Jesus will come back but one thing we do know is that he will and that should be an encouragement to us to share with the people that we care about with our friends with our family they probably think Christians are crazy maybe some are but this is an encouragement for us to challenge them to repent and to turn to God there's also there's another challenge for us as well although we trust in God many of us are still struggling maybe it's with something physical maybe we want

God to heal us right now like that lame man we struggle with all kinds of physical issues in our lives diseases God here has demonstrated the restoration that comes from faith in Jesus with the lame man.

And further, God has promised that he will come when all things will be restored. So hang in there until that day. And then when it comes, all of our struggles, all our suffering will be like nothing compared to how good that day is.

It's just like Paul says in 2 Corinthians, in chapter 4, verse 17 and 18, which is on the screen. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. Since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. Let's pray.

[27 : 17] Our Lord God, thank you that you are a God who knows, who sees, and who cares. I thank you that you are a God who restores. I thank you for the spiritual restoration that you offer us right now in Jesus Christ and the promise that one day you will come to restore all things.

Please help us to continue to trust in you. Give us boldness to share of that restoration with others. And give us perseverance as we wait until the day when your son Jesus returns. In whose name we pray. Amen.