

Killing the Author of Life

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[0 : 0 0] Acts chapter 3 at verse 14 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 now see and know and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all Well the apostle Peter was here really delivering a sermon which arose out of a miracle Everybody that was listening to him had known this man for some time this man that had been cured of his disability instantly by Peter and had fixed their eyes on Peter and his companion apostles as if they themselves had had the power to bring this miracle about That was the reaction of the crowd

Peter had said to them to the man he had said look at us So he had got the man to fix his attention on himself and the other apostles and the crowd had obviously noticed that and then when the miracle took place because the man had been fixed in his attention upon Peter they came to the conclusion something about Peter himself had actually done this and brought this about and that's why they were filled with amazement and wonder at what had happened and that's why Peter here when he addressed the people said why do you wonder at this people of Israel or why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk so you see Peter is immediately concerned to turn the attention away from himself and to put the focus firmly upon Jesus Christ that's really the essence of the Christian life it's the essence of not just the preaching of the word as Peter is here doing preaching in the name of Jesus it is also the essence of the Christian life that you turn the spotlight away from yourself that you turn the spotlight onto Jesus that it's not about us it's not about who we are it's not about our gifts it's not about anything that God has given us or anything that God has made us into it's about himself it's about Jesus it's about the Lord he turned their attention away from themselves firmly onto Christ that's what you must do today that's what you must do at all times that's what you must do every circumstance of life difficult though that is at times and when you are now listening to the gospel or reading our Bible that's what we must try to do take our minds to be focused upon Christ take our minds away from ourselves away from who's sitting beside us away from what's happening back home away from what's going to have for dinner focusing on Jesus and he brought them not only to focus on Jesus but he brought them to focus on the core issue the death and resurrection of this Jesus and that's why as we look at this it's in a way preparing us for remembering him in his death next Lord's Day but of course this is really the essence of our salvation at all times it's not just to prepare us for remembering Christ and his death it's to reflect now for these moments here for this particular time that we're together on the importance of this death and resurrection of our relationship to it of the necessity of knowing this Christ in his death and resurrection so there are three things in this remarkable statement because we'll see it is quite an amazing statement that Peter makes as he announces this message to the people there's first of all what we can call a pernicious exchange an exchange in which there is very obvious evil intent it's pernicious it's something that's bad because the exchange is the exchange of the holy and righteous one for a murderer instead of setting Christ free and condemning the guilty Barabbas they set Barabbas free and condemned the innocent Christ it's a pernicious exchange secondly there's a powerful reversal it mentions that Christ was put to death in verse 15 but then this is reversed whom God raised from the dead and both aspects of it are important we mustn't leave it at the fact that he was put to death we must always tie with that what the Bible itself ties with it his resurrection and we must always think of the resurrection with which he rose from the dead as specifically tied to the kind of death which he died not just any kind of death but the death that was due to us for our sins the death that Jesus died important in itself the resurrection with which Jesus rose from the dead important in itself but you always have to keep the two specially

connected the way the Bible does so there's a powerful reversal and then thirdly there's a perfect wholeness because this man was cured he was actually made whole he was made completely healthy strong which previously he had not been able even to walk and so from this Jesus who has this death and resurrection in his own action and in his own experience from this flows this soundness this wholeness this complete cure for human beings that only Jesus can bring about look at this pernicious exchange first of all you denied the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted to you of course he's mentioned before that that it's the God of Abraham the God of Isaac the God of Jacob the God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate but you denied the holy and the righteous one and what's interesting there is the way that he describes Jesus in these phrases the holy one and the righteous one or the just one because the holy one brings your mind back doesn't it to the Old Testament especially to the book of the prophet Isaiah because consistently throughout the prophecy of Isaiah Isaiah refers to God as the holy one and the holy one of Israel and Isaiah himself you remember in chapter 6 tells us and reflects upon how God called him into the office of prophet how he called him to go for him to speak to the people how did he actually come into that service of God well he tells us that it was through this great vision that he saw of God as the king of the universe holy sitting upon the throne his train that's his royal entourage filling the temple and around him the seraphim who covered their faces and exclaimed holy holy holy is the Lord God of hosts the holy one of Israel the holy God the immensely holy God the God whose holiness fills people with awe the God whose holiness actually made people like Moses and who knew God as well as Moses did the Bible itself describes Moses as the man who spoke to God face to face you imagine if the Bible had spoken about you or about me and described us in those terms the man who spoke to God who knew God face to face just like you're seeing my face and we see each other's faces today that is the familiarity the closeness with which Moses knew God but we read that on Mount Sinai even Moses trembled he feared he quaked because he was in the presence of the holy when he realized that the burning bush that it was God who was actually present there that that was the secret behind the remarkable phenomenon that the bush was not burnt up although it was on fire and the voice that spoke to him out of the bush revealed himself to Moses as the God of your father the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob what did

[9 : 15] Moses do he covered his face with his cloak he couldn't look his head upon God the holy one and yet what is this saying it's saying to us that you denied the holy one it's really telling us that the person who was crucified at Calvary was none other than the holy one it was the holy one of Israel it was the God who revealed himself to Isaiah who was known by Isaiah who was described by Isaiah he had come into this world in the person of his son in Jesus Christ he had taken a human nature to himself to enable him if we can use the word to go through with these experiences of suffering and of death you denied the holy one and of course that means that the one they knew in the old testament as the holy one all of these people these men of Israel as Peter called them they would have been perfectly familiar with the description the holy one as descriptive of God the God whom they worshipped or at least saw themselves as worshipping at that very time they would have known who he meant by the holy one but here is

Peter saying the person you crucified is that holy one that's who you dealt with that's who came to you that's who was revealed to you the holy one of Israel and the just one he's describing him as the just one or the righteous one as well as the holy one and that of course reminds us of the innocence of Jesus in himself there is absolutely nothing in Christ to make him guilty of any transgression there is nothing in himself that makes him worthy to be crucified to be put to death death is the wages of what death is the wages of sin where is there sin in the person of Jesus ask Herod where did you find sin in him I didn't Herod will say I found no fault in him so I sent him back to Pilate ask Pontius Pilate that pagan Roman governor where did you find fault with this man seeing you sent him out to be condemned and Pilate would say

I found no fault in him but because of the accusations of his own people the Jews I delivered him over to them to be crucified the righteous one that's who was crucified the holy and righteous one and it's interesting that Peter is using this word denied I think he must have had tears in his eyes when he said this it's the same word that's used in the gospels of what he himself had done he denied this Jesus three times I don't know the man denial you see is repudiation it's saying publicly I just don't know him I have nothing to do with him I have no relationship with him he's not for me

he's saying here from what he knows of the sting of the seriousness of that and he's saying here to the people using what he draws from his own experience of having denied the same person he says you denied this holy one you denied the just one and you exchanged him it's bad enough you see that he had said to them that they had denied him that they had repudiated him that they had rejected his claims and that they had delivered him over to be crucified to be put to death a death of which they thought he was worthy because they reckoned yet committed blasphemy and claiming to be the son of

God to be the king to be God and you see the perniciousness of the exchange is not just that they denied the holy one but they actually asked for a murderer in his place where could you get a greater contrast than between Barabbas and Jesus Barabbas had killed someone Barabbas had been found guilty of that crime he was a felon he was somebody who was facing his sentence because he had been found guilty of this foul crime he had taken someone's life and here is somebody who gives everybody life and he exchanged him for the one who had taken the life a murderer instead of what we'll see in a minute the author of life you know there's that great chorus or him were you there when they crucified my lord yes you were there so was

I you were all there we all denied we all crucified it's for our sin that he died it's our hearts that set him there our sinful lost condition that's why he died let's remember he died the kind of death that you and I deserved the very death you and I deserved and in God's great purpose the exchange of the holy and just one for the felon the murderer pernicious exchange though it of course is yet in the overarching wisdom and in the mystery of God's wisdom and in the glory of God's provision that is how he provided salvation for us and yet when you've said that you're still saying that it added to Christ's agony that not only was he repudiated and denied by his own people when he came to his own and they received him not not only that but they aggravated the crime of rejecting him by accepting a murderer in his place imagine how

[15:56] Christ felt going to the cross when not only did he know that they had rejected him but that they had asked for and been given Barabbas in his place who can understand the love behind that that would still go to the cross despite this and that would say when he came to be tied to the cross father forgive them for they know not what they do they didn't they didn't in the deepest sense know what they were doing but they knew it well enough to know that they were doing wrong that they were doing something that was an exchange of the holy one for the unholy and then there's a powerful reversal and in this itself there is an amazing paradox something that seems to be completely contradictory if not impossible you notice how Peter is putting it first of all talks about the killing the putting to death of

Jesus and then the raising that's the reversal you see the death is reversed by the resurrection but within the death itself he puts these amazing words together and you killed the author of life there are no words in the Bible more amazing than that we can say that really with confidence because what this is really saying to us is that the author of life by which Peter means the one who actually gives life the originator of life in other words he's talking about the creator he's the holy one of Israel he's the god of the old testament the god who has been god from all eternity but here he's called the author of life the word is used in the new testament elsewhere sometimes translated captain or pioneer but it really means essentially the one from whom all life comes

Christ the lord Jesus Christ was not absent when the universe was made he was not absent when god created human beings as the pinnacle of his creation as genesis 1 and 2 describes because there's a plural in the version genesis that says let us make man in our image and it takes the new testament to open up the mystery of that plurality the mystery of that god in three persons the mystery of that conference within the being of god where god looks upon the creation that he has made and comes to crown it with the creation of human beings and that conference within himself involves the second person of the trinity involves this person of Jesus Christ involves him because he is as fully engaged in it as the other two persons are let us make man in our image he's the author of life he's the one who scooped up a handful of dust and created human life and form from it he's the one who breathed into that human form that he had created he breathed into him and he became a living soul he's the one who brought that woman to be joined to the man to be his special companion who did all that

Christ did all that that's why John is able to say at the beginning of his own remarkable gospel and introduction in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him was not anything

made that was made in him was life the author of life now then how can you kill the one who gives life to everything else how can you kill the author of life how can the one who is life itself and from whom all life derives how can you speak about killing that author of life doesn't it seem such an impossibility doesn't it seem a contradiction indeed doesn't it seem something that you would never dare say unless he himself had said it for us well it wouldn't have happened of course if it had been anything other than by his own authority and by his own will and you can see that from the gospels and from the record they have of

Christ and of his trial of his being brought into captivity first of all into custody and then put on trial and then out to the cross and his death on the cross and all the fact that it is Christ's will that's governing it all it is he who allows them to take him captive it is he who is able to say to Pilate the Roman governor who is himself in terms of the legal situation the one who is presiding over the trial of Christ it is he Christ who says to him you could have no power at all against me except it were given to you from above he is talking about himself it is he who actually comes on the cross when it comes to the moment of his death physically it is he who says father into your hands I commit my spirit nobody is taking his life from him nobody is actually overpowering him so that this

[22 : 35] Jesus is actually under the mastery of someone else he doesn't he is in charge he is the author of life and he is the giver of his own soul into the hands of the father he is the one who gives himself in the death that he died even when he is saying my God my God why have you forsaken me he is active in that he is actively bearing the sin of the touch the very fringe of this and even then we're saying that we don't know it but very much empowered

God as God cannot die divine life cannot decay cannot change cannot die yet God in the person of Jesus in our nature experience the death which we deserve died the death in Jesus Christ which we deserve that reminds us of something that the children need to remember this as well as you're thinking about Jesus and who he is and all the way through the gospel of Luke as we've been seeing in our studies on Sunday evenings this question arises again and again and again it's really what the gospel of Luke is all about in a sense who is this Jesus who is he well you can't answer by saying he is a human being you can say that that's true but that doesn't describe really all that he is well who is he then well he is

God he is the son of God as well as being a human being and what the Bible teaches us is this whatever is true of God is true of Jesus everything that makes God God Jesus possesses power authority wisdom holiness all of these things the Bible tells us are attributes of God you say they belong to Jesus because he has the divine nature of God on the other hand all the things that you read about him doing and experiencing as a human being they are also his experiences they are also his properties his attributes as the son of God whatever is true of either of his natures the two natures of God and of man they combine together without mixture without confusion in him whatever is true of the one is true of the person the person of the son of

God in other words when you say he was weak and he needed sleep who needed sleep the son of God did it's his person through his human nature and at the same time as he's asleep in the boat or lying as a baby in the manger after his birth at the very same time that that is true of him he's upholding the whole universe that he's created as God there's no there's no one indescribable Jesus the immense Jesus the Jesus who cannot be defined merely as man or even merely as God but is the God man the one who was the author and is the author of life and yet it says you killed the author of life let's remember what we're remembering in the sacrament of the

Lord's Supper when we come God willing next Lord's day to take the bread and to take the cup and to take these to ourselves what they represent to us is the killing of the author of life the death of the Son of God in our nature and for his people but there's the reversal of that you killed the author of life whom God raised from the dead to this we are witnesses that of course is Christ's resurrection and Christ's resurrection well it isn't just the reversal of death resurrection is death reversed of course because resurrection is all about life it's about leaving death behind forever but it's also remember a victory over death it's not just reversing death it's actually achieving victory over death and the fact that it says that the father raised him God raised him from the dead he is God himself but God the father raised him from the dead and what does that prove it proves that that

[28 : 01] God God God God God God accepted the death he died that God fully approved of that as an atonement and as a sacrifice for our sin that's why in the raising of Jesus there's the verification the proof that everything has done has been thoroughly successful to deal with our sin and that's why the resurrection too was verified by the apostles see that's important God raised him

from the dead and then immediately he says to this we are witnesses the resurrection was witnessed not as it took place but subsequent to it because these men met Jesus these men are reliable men these men are not liars the ones who lied were the guards around the tomb and the people who bribed them to say that somebody stole his body these men didn't lie they weren't going to go about saying actually he's alive if they knew he was dead these are men of

God men of integrity what did they say what did they preach they preached that he was risen from the dead because they knew it was a fact and if there's one thing we need to get back to as a people and as a nation and as communities it's to the facts of the Bible these are not theories these are not speculations these are not human philosophies these are not inventions of human beings they are divinely brought about facts events that's what your salvation is based on your salvation is not based on an idea however good an idea it might be that God would come into the world and that he would die on the cross and that he would be raised from the dead however good an idea if it's just an idea it's next to useless just like any other idea that you or I might have it's not an idea it's a fact it's history it's happened it's an event it's a powerful reversal and a victory over death one other point

I'm going to deal with very briefly because we expanded that a bit more than I intended but there's a perfect wholeness this name his name by faith in his name has made this man strong whom you now see and hear well the name that's mentioned there his name that's again taking us back to the Old Testament all the way through the Old Testament you'll find frequent references to the name of God by which for example Exodus 34 and verse 5 God passed by in front of Moses in a strange way that only Moses himself I'm sure could understand but God declared himself to Moses as the Lord the Lord God faithful goodness mercy all of that passing before God before Moses as God passed in front of him having put him in the cleft of the rock ■■■■■ and and there Moses himself writing the book of

Exodus says there he declared the name of the Lord in the Old Testament is very much to do with God revealing his attributes God doing certain things that reveals himself in great acts of power especially but it's to give himself a reputation and you see that's why in Joshua chapter 7 for example after the defeat of the people at the town of Ai Joshua fell on his face before God he was staggered he was amazed, he was ashamed will it not be the case he said that the Canaanites will hear this and they'll destroy our name from off the earth and what will you do for your great name you see the reputation of God is tied to the life of his people and when his people are not living as they should be the reputation of God is assaulted what will you do for your great name was Joshua's concern and let that be for me and for you every day something that we bring to the forefront of our minds that today is going to be a day every single day that we live when we will be careful and not to bring something against the reputation of God to bring his great name to be doubted to be maligned to be mistreated on the lips of those who don't want it well what he is saying here is that his name the name of Jesus that is the again you see it is bringing in the fact that because he is using it as of Jesus then Jesus is this God the name his name has made this man strong the attributes of God it is God himself that has brought this about and through faith in his name let's just finish with that that is an emphasis that is very important as well because there is no contradiction between saying it was the power of Jesus that did it and saying that it was done through the faith of the man himself although some people take it here that it is the faith of the apostles that Peter means but I think it is better taking it as faith on the part of the man himself who was requested by Peter to look upon us and then he actually spoke to him in the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk in the name of Jesus and the man believed in this Jesus and then this is Peter now saying that through faith in this name through faith in this Christ has come this wholeness this completeness well of course you can follow that out

I've given you some references there in the notes John chapter 1 verse 12 he came to his own his own did not receive him that's what we've been dealing with in the first part of the past but to as many as did receive him to them he gave authority to become the sons of God even to as many as believed on his name same thing or you can find Hebrews chapter 7 verse 25 tying together the ability of Christ to save to the uttermost tying that with all who come to him in other words he's really emphasizing for us that the ability of Christ does not dispense with the necessity of believing we all know that Christ today is able to save us but we want to be saved unless we believe in him unless we trust in him unless we give ourselves to him and that really defines what a Christian is doesn't it it's not just somebody who believes who Jesus is or was it's someone who is vitally connected to

