

Acts 3:1-26

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[0:00] Good morning, friends. It's good to be with you this morning. I invite you to turn with me to Acts chapter 3. And then at the end of verse 47, we saw that the Lord was adding to their number.

Day by day, those who were being saved. And this week, we're going to see that play out actually happen. Because in verses 1 through 10, we're going to see a wonder, a sign, done through the apostles.

And it's going to be verses 1 through 10. And then it's going to be the occasion for Peter to preach Christ, verses 11 to 26. And then this is actually beyond the boundaries of today's passage.

But we're going to see that the result of that next week, chapter 4, verse 4, is that many of those who had heard the word believed. And so that's a rough outline of today's sermon, right?

The sign, the sermon, and it's not three S's. I'm a Baptist preacher, but I'm not that good. And then the response.

[1:33] The sign, the sermon, and the response. So let us pray that the Lord would reveal his good intention for us through his word.

Lord, we need you. I need you every hour. And we are so thankful that, Lord, that you have not left us alone, but that we have you every hour.

You have not left us orphans in this world. And fathers, we look to your word. A testimony to us that you are with us.

Will you, by your spirit who is in us, transform our hearts and help us to hope in Christ. In whose name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Acts chapter 3, beginning in verse 1. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

[2:44] And a man, lame from birth, was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, that is 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 or gold. What I do have, I give to you. 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, amazement, at what had happened to him.

[3:53] While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. The first thing that we see here in this passage is that Jesus is kind.

Is he not a kind and good Savior? He could have done any kind of sign and wonder through his apostles, couldn't he?

I mean, just let your imagination run wild. He's the one who spoke this universe into existence.

There is nothing that is beyond his control.

He could have done any sign, any wonder through his apostles. But the miracles that he chooses to work through them by the power of the Holy Spirit are like his own in his ministry as we walked with

him for two and a half years through the book of Matthew.

They're restorative. They are kind and merciful. Friends, because he is kind and he is merciful. What a wonderful Savior we have.

[5:14] I like how one writer put it. He said, this lame man was socially and physically blemished. Now he is welcomed. Now he is welcomed.

He was cut off spatially from the people of God. Now he is able to enter the temple. He was economically destitute. Now he has received the riches from the true king.

This man enters a new space because a new era has dawned. Resurrection life spreads. And so just from the nature of this miracle, we can see something of the God who's behind it.

The character of the one who worked it. And the crowds saw something too. And Luke wants us to see something too. When the biblical authors, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recorded the words of Holy Scripture, they did so on purpose, the way they did it.

They did it in a way that matters. So when Luke chooses his words, we ought to pay attention to them carefully. What does he highlight? Verse 9.

[6:32] All the people saw him walking and praising God. End of verse 10. They were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Verse 11. While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together with them in the portico. Luke wants us to get that.

He's repeating it over and over. Actually, we're going to see more of it as we progress through the rest of chapter 3. This amazement and awe theme. He wants us to recognize. Yes, this is cool, but like, it's more than just a cool trick.

Because what they have seen here in front of them is one of the signs of the Messiah. If you were with us when we looked at Matthew chapter 11.

John the Baptist had been put in prison. He thought the Messianic age had dawned. And things weren't going great for him. He'd been put in prison for preaching the truth.

[7:45] And so he sent messengers to Jesus asking, you know, are you actually the one? Like, this does not comport with my understanding of how life is supposed to be going now that the Messiah is here.

So we read in Matthew 11, when John heard in prison about the deeds of Christ. When John heard in prison about the deeds of Christ. He sent word by his disciples and said to him, are you the one who is to come or shall we look for another?

And Jesus answered them. Go and tell John what you see and hear. The blind receive their sight and the lame walk.

Lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear. And the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me. At the temple of the Lord.

The sign. The Messiah of the Lord. The sent rescuer of the world. Is done in their midst. So yeah, there's awe.

[8:54] There's wonder. And so their natural question is, how did you do that? Remember, Peter's a fisherman. From Galilee.

That's the sticks. That's the backwater country, right? How did you do that? And so they don't ask it. Luke doesn't record for us that they asked it.

But Peter anticipates that question. And in verse 12, he's going to answer it. And he's basically going to say, we didn't do it. Verse 12. When Peter saw it, he addressed the people.

Men of Israel. Why do you wonder at this? See that wonder theme again? Why do you stare at us as though by our power or piety, we have made him walk?

The God of Abraham. The God of Isaac. The God of Jacob. The God of our fathers glorified his servant, Jesus. Whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate.

[9:56] 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 the man his perfect health. In the presence of you all.

If this sign brought them to a point of awe. And Luke wants us to see that it has.

Peter wants to direct that awe. That wonder in a very particular direction. And it's not at himself. It's not even at the man, is it?

[10:58] It's at Christ. Christ. And before we dig into that message. Let me finish off his sermon.

Verses 17 through 26. Because we're going to treat it as a whole here today. Verse 17. And now brothers. I know that you acted in ignorance.

As did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of the prophets. That his Christ would suffer. He thus fulfilled. Repent.

Repent. Therefore. And turn back. That your sins may be blotted out. That times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. And that he may send to the Christ appointed for you.

Jesus. And heaven must receive. Until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke. By the mouth of his holy prophets. Long ago.

[11:54] 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. 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. As you heard that.

And as you contemplate those words. Where did we start? The beginning of chapter three. This morning. A lame man.

[13:02] Begging. For scraps. For coins. Outside the temple. And then. He's. Yanked off the ground.

He's. Leaping. And clinging to Peter. And praising God. Right. We would normally. Expect. The sermon that follows it.

To be an explanation. Right. Of the miracle they just performed. But. I mean. He talks about it. A little. But what is this sermon really about?

Like. If you took a highlighter. A couple different highlighters. And highlighted. The themes going on. Like who is it. Who is this about? This sermon. What would you find?

Well. You're going to find. Because I did it for you. Right. This is Peter's sermon. Right. You're highlighting me very. You know. So. Don't. Don't try to read.

[14:07] Or. You know. In. In. In. In blue there. The apostles. Two mentions.

In green. The people of Israel. In red. That's the lame man. That's all Peter says about the lame man. And in yellow. This sermon is.

It's all about. God. Peter thinks that this miracle. Yes. It's for that lame man. I'm so glad.

He did that. For that. I mean. He changed that man's life. But that miracle. Is about God. That's the point here.

There are only two references. To the. Now. Healed man. And the whole thing. Verses 12 and 16. Peter thinks that this miracle.

[15:09] Is about God. And he. Wants. Everyone. Not just the guy who received the blessing. In that moment. He wants them all.

To be restored. To this God. This wonder. Working God. God. Now, you probably know this, that there's a lot of overlap between this sermon that Peter preaches in Acts chapter 3 and the sermon that he preached in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost.

I know that makes a lot of sense, right? It's the same preacher. It's also a Jewish audience. It's also in the same city, Jerusalem. It's also around the same time. We don't know exactly when this sermon was preached. But I think Luke wants us to understand by pairing them back to back that they came together. So we shouldn't be surprised that Peter has a lot of the same things to say, right? He gives a huge emphasis on the fulfillment of the Old Testament, just like at Pentecost, right? Whereas at Pentecost, he focused on the fulfillment of David, presenting Christ as David's heir, the king. Here he focuses on the patriarchs, looking at verse 13, the God of Abraham, the God

of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers glorified his servant Jesus, and also the fulfillment of the prophets. He says in verse 18, what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that is, Christ would suffer. And he follows that up with a pair, right? Moses and Samuel and the other prophets. So heavy emphasis on fulfillment of the Old Testament.

So there's a lot of overlap with Peter's Pentecost sermon, which makes, again, makes a lot of sense. And there are even more similarities we could kind of roll through. He talks about culpability. He talks about so many things about the resurrection, right? There are a lot of parallels between these two sermons. I think there are probably two things we ought to do because of this. The first thing is that this teaches us that it is good for the people of God to hear the foundational truths of the faith again and again and again. We can never hear the gospel too many times.

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[18:04] We can never hear about God's faithfulness too much. We can never hear the word of the Lord too often.

Friends, the gospel of God's grace only gets richer the more you know of it. And the more you know of yourself, the longer you have lived.

And the more sins that you have seen of your own nailed to Christ's cross. And the more brokenness you have walked through and witnessed.

Knowing he will redeem and restore it all. Friends, there is nothing better than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Not one thing. Because there's no one better than Jesus Christ. That's why Paul said, I knew nothing among you except Christ crucified.

[19:16] Let's say, let redeeming love be our theme. Let's stay until we die.

And in him find life. Let us never get tired of hearing the gospel. I had a professor in seminary who actually passed on a piece of wisdom from an old professor he had had who had told him, young preachers preach about ethics and old preachers preach about grace.

That has stuck with me. The longer you have lived and the more you have seen and the more you have walked through and the more sins you have had forgiven, the more you the more you know your own heart.

The more I know my own heart. The more brokenness I have seen in this world. The more and more and more I appreciate God's grace.

What has 2020 done to you? Has it made you appreciate God's grace more?

[20:35] Or has it hardened you? Friends, either way, look again to the cross. Look again to Christ.

That's the first thing this repetition between these two sermons I think calls us to is to recognize the centrality of Jesus Christ and how basically back to back Luke has shown us exactly the same message.

But it also invites us to look at the distinctions because they aren't identical sermons and there are some features here and that's kind of where we're going to point the rest of our attention before we close at what is new and distinct in this passage.

And actually there are if you you know I set them side by side there are a fair number of unique elements in this sermon. Right? That transition from tying Christ to the king King David in Acts 2 has now transitioned like we said to tying him to the prophets and to the patriarchs which in one sense is you know overlap tying him to the promises of the Old Testament but that's interesting. Right? We could focus our attention there. There's a mention of the Lord's return verse 20. There's a mention of the people acting in ignorance which is not an excuse.

[22:10] Right? There's such a thing as negligent or willful ignorance for which we are guilty. Right? If you back your car over someone it's not an excuse that you know you didn't see them because you didn't bother to look.

Right? There is a willful kind of ignorance as well where we shut out information so we can keep on going our own way.

Parents you've seen your children you know increase their volume so that they don't hear what you have to tell them and we too you know when I choose to forget about God so that I can continue being angry at somebody or frustrated at somebody when I ought to be fostering forget if I if I just

shut God out of my that's willful willful ignorance for which I am culpable.

So there are a number of unique elements to this sermon in chapter three. I think though the biggest development between the two and that's where we will direct our attention is found in verses 16 and then 19 to 21 where Peter develops the theme of conversion to Christ.

Verse 16 he says by 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 the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

[23:52] This is the first use of the word faith in the book of Acts and Peter then pairs it verse 19 with the command to repent.

He says repent therefore and turn back 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 the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

What Peter is doing here and the Lord is doing through him is tying together these two things repentance and faith and in fact the sweep of scripture teaches us that they are really not different things but they are the same thing examined or looked at from two different vantage points repentance is a look at what we are turning from turning every one of you he says at the very end from your wickedness faith is a look at in turning who what are you turning to more precisely who are you turning to his name by faith in his name turning from wickedness to faith in his name and so in this passage church

I think that's that's the big distinction between Acts 2 and Acts 3 not that it's not present in Acts chapter 2 or something like that but that here Peter is developing this theme and Luke is recording that for his church as we consider more what it means to be converted to Christ right because conversion is more than just hearing the facts about Jesus Christ it's more than understanding them conversion to Christianity is more even than agreeing that Christ is risen from do that conversion is the turning of the person to Christ right I hear the message of Jesus and I am cut to the heart chapter 2 and in my soul

I turn my back on my former way of life and I run to Christ and turning away from sin and self I find myself facing Jesus and I find myself trusting him and I trust him for the renewal the restoration and the life that he offers that's what conversion looks like in the inner person right it's more than conversion to Christ is more than you know affiliating with a political party or a social group right this is not joining the elks club or something it's more than finding a philosophy that works for you or having a new outlook on life or sports team like conversion like conversion to Christ is having our hearts so changed by the working of the Holy

[27:57] Spirit in our lives that as we see with clear eyes who we are and what our circumstance truly is and see who he is and what he has done for us and what he offers us that we are changed in the affections of our hearts that we find in him our greatest good and everything else we count the loss and when that happens in us it changes everything especially it changes our view of God probably I changed my mind about myself what I would call sin

I changed my mind about myself you know my self evaluation of where I stand I also changed my mind about God however it was that I previously thought about him if I think if I once thought that God was distant uninvolved uncaring I look to the cross and see a God who chases after sinners not for their condemnation but to forgive them or if I once thought you know it's no big deal like God can forgive God has to forgive God should forgive let's not why wouldn't he forgive me I also look to the cross and see what the sentence for sin truly is and recognize what it actually cost for him to forgive me or if I once thought that he was a stern unyielding judge conversion does not make me think he is less holy but I look to the cross and see love and mercy chasing after me and if I thought once thought there was no God at all

I look to the cross and see the unexplainable because this story ends with an empty tomb and friends when we talk about repentance and faith it's important that we don't think of these things oh you know like oh God I'm so aren't you so glad I turned away from my sins as if like that has earned me something my salvation right a murderer does not undo their crime earn their victims life back because they've seen the error of their ways yeah right repentance and faith are not how we save ourselves it is simply the turning of ourselves from chasing after death turning around to receive the

torrent of grace

God stands ready to offer so there's nothing meritorious about it it is only a beggar receiving grace might remind you of something at the beginning of the chapter what happens at that moment when grace floods in what happens life floods in you're reconciled to how did Peter name Christ in this passage you are reconciled to the author of life and your guilt is gone forever and your forever your forever your life forever is secure and it will be more glorious glorious than we can possibly understand today or we'll be able to express our gratitude for on that day and suddenly the whole world around you changes doesn't it as the eyes of our hearts are opened to see that every person you have ever met or will meet is someone made in the image of this

God who has so loved you and you recognize that this God who has so loved you loves them as well I hope today to show you not that I can show you but I hope today that you are seeing in God's word the beauty of what it means to be converted to Christ because his gospel is so good it is so sweet because he is so good he turns death to life and there is a beauty of wisdom found in this in the gospel message is it not as God graciously turns us away from foolishly sinfully but also foolishly pursuing the way of death and guides us into the paths of life and guides us indeed to the fountain of life himself where we find at the very end reconciliation to the living God and so friends [34:48] I can't cause a change of heart in you I can't command you to do it I can only do what Peter did I can tell you the story of this God of grace I can call you to conversion I can call you to Christ himself and so I do won't you come if you never have before won't you come to the fountain won't you come to the one the author of life let's get an awe to make you his own won't you see that he is good I call you now to Christ and friends if you have already turned to him I call you back to him again today come to the fountain drink deep at the waters he is good he is good and lucky for us there is no shadow of changing of turning in him he has always been good and he always will be

I also call you just like Peter did to offer it to others and I have found in this passage a real solace this week someone important to me is has been in hospice this week and these words of life have just rung out with a truth and a sweetness that draws my heart to heaven and to the day when he renews all things repent therefore turn back that your sins may be blotted out oh that we might have lightened souls as the weight of guilt is lifted off our shoulders and placed on his how freeing is the gospel that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the

Lord he says oh friends when faced with death I don't know what you're facing today the prospect of COVID or the prospect of infertility or the prospect of someone you love in hospice or none of those things but they're coming when faced with death I want friends I want to cling to the author of life and I want that for you to find hope and life and refreshment in him Peter says that he may send the Christ appointed for you Jesus oh come Lord Jesus this world is weary and heavy laden with our sin and our suffering Peter says heaven must receive that is Jesus heaven receives him until the time for restoring all things about which

God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago friends do you long for the restoring of all things you will find it in Christ in Christ and in Christ alone so let's pray there Lord we need you every hour we need you and we praise you because of Christ Jesus you will never leave us or forsake us but that we might have life in you all by your grace all because you are good forever we can approach your throne to praise your holy name because of Jesus in whose name we pray amen to Thank you.