

# In Jesus the resurrection of the dead

*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: 14 April 2024

Preacher: Chris Lowe

[ 0 : 00 ] Could our gospel message ever get us in trouble? That is, the things that we say we believe about Jesus, the things we say about Jesus,! Could our gospel message ever lead even to our being seized and jailed?

It is pretty striking what happens here in Acts 3 and 4, just weeks after Jesus' resurrection. So an amazing miracle takes place at the temple gate, and then in the temple court, chapter 3, verse 11 onwards, Peter speaks, he speaks wonderful truth about Jesus Christ, and yet even before he's finished speaking, he and John are grabbed.

Look, chapter 4, verse 1, 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, and they were greatly disturbed. So they're annoyed, they're provoked, they're disturbed. Why?

Because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus, the resurrection of the dead. In 21st century Britain, Christians, I think, are maybe tempted into making belief private and personal.

Inside my heart, behind closed doors, with my Christian friends, it is okay for me to believe in my Jesus, my saviour. He's died for my sins. He comforts me. This is my religion, my belief, my Jesus in my heart, making my life better.

[ 1 : 42 ] The kind of private spirituality, the kind of personal spirituality that helps you, disturbs no one, and of course would never ever get you into any trouble at all. Why would it?

The gospel of the apostles, here in Acts 3, is very, very different. Because, verse 2, they were proclaiming in Jesus, the resurrection of the dead.

That is, they're not sharing personal beliefs about Jesus in my heart. They are proclaiming public truth about the resurrection of the dead.

God, our creator, promised in the scriptures through the Old Testament prophets, that the day of the Lord would come.

This is promises in the Bible. On this future day, this day of resurrection, every human being will be raised from the dead to stand before the judgment throne of God.

[ 2 : 47 ] That is, I and you and every person you see this coming week will be there at this final day, universal resurrection of the dead.

On this coming day, the prophet said, God will judge the world with justice. On this coming day, the Lord God will cut off every rebel against him and condemn them to hell.

And on this certain future day, the Lord God will restore this sin-sick creation of ours and make it new and perfect forever.

It's what the prophet spoke about. It's what God spoke about. The resurrection of the dead, about which we hear little to nothing today in our world, is a universal, unavoidable, glorious, public event, which every single person in Orchard Park and every single person we know will experience firsthand as we come face to face with our God.

Imagine sharing that in your workplace or around Cambridge. How would people react? It's not just the resurrection of the dead, though.

[ 4 : 01 ] Because, verse 2, the apostles were proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. That is, all the events of this earth-shattering day are tied up now in Jesus.

Jesus was the first to rise from the dead in history. The resurrection of the dead, the resurrection of all things, begin in this Lord and Messiah who overcomes death.

And it is the risen, ruling Lord Jesus Christ who will himself raise and judge all people on the final day. This, then, is the apostolic gospel message for the world.

That through the Lord Jesus Christ, God raises the dead, judges the world, and restores all things. All people dealt with, the whole of our world put right, in and through Jesus.

And that is why, right now today, all people everywhere must listen to and turn to Jesus. The lives and future of every friend and colleague depends on Jesus.

[ 5 : 11 ] Salvation from judgment and condemnation on resurrection day is found in no one else but Jesus. What do we make of that?

What might your next-door neighbour make of that? This proclaimed public truth of what will happen. Well, the priests and temple authorities were greatly disturbed.

You can understand it. Because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. And so offended and affronted were they that they seized Peter and John and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.

Private spirituality will not get us into trouble. But this public message of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the kind of message that can get a person jailed.

Do you not think? Or shunned? Or cancelled? Get away from us. Yet it is the gospel. The true, divisive, wonderful gospel that we and our friends need to hear.

[ 6 : 29 ] And this gospel is laid out for us here in Acts chapter 3. And the story and the sermon that is told. So what we're going to do this morning, that was just an introduction. What we're going to do this morning is, with Acts 3 open in front of us, Well, we're meant to see the sign.

We're meant to hear the sermon that's preached. We are meant to believe in Jesus. And then we're meant to give ourselves as a church to proclaiming the true gospel that saves.

So for our time remaining, rewind with me with these verses open to chapter 3, verses 1 to 10. And the first thing to do this morning is to see the sign.

To see a lame man raised and restored. Because what takes place in the temple courts, it's not a random miracle. It is a sign.

Skip through the story with me. One day, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer at 3 in the afternoon. And 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.

[ 7 : 44 ] It's got no name. It's just a man. Over 40 years old, we'll learn later. And he's lame from birth. Which is so desperate. Long-term disability in a fallen, suffering world.

We're told about him. You're meant to imagine him. A man who's never walked a step, never played with others as a child, never skipped or danced. His feet and ankles, I guessed weak and twisted and useless.

He can't move. He can't work. He just gets carried and put at the temple gate to beg and survive, day after day at the same spot. Verse 3. 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. And Peter said, silver or gold, I don't have.

But what I do have, I give to you. What can he give him? In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. It is a straight-up miracle.

[ 8 : 49 ] Taking him by his right hand, he raised him, literally. And instantly, the man's feet and ankles became strong. No physio.

No strengthening exercises. But 40 years' worth of twisted and wasted tissues and ligaments and muscle, were restored instantly to strength. Look, verse 8 is all action.

And leaping up, he stood and began to walk. And then he went with Peter and John into the temple courts, walking and jumping and praising God. You think you would. You'd leap like a deer for joy.

And then you'd praise God for what has happened. Over the past 12 months, two years, we've got into watching Poirot on DVD.

The Belgian detective who solves murders with his fingers dirty in human misery. We're just watching casually. It came up in an episode I can't remember a while back.

[ 9 : 48 ] This, Hercule Poirot, quote, There is nothing in this world so damaged that it cannot be repaired by the hand of Almighty God. This lame man's body is repaired and restored and he praises God.

It's a public sign. It's a miracle at the temple gate. And verse 9, See the sign.

One lame man rising and restored. Next, verse 11 following. Hear the sermon. While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished.

They came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade in the temple courts. And you can picture it. Word spreading. People piling up from every direction. Clanking the lame man standing there grinning from ear to ear.

And then looking wide-eyed at Peter and John. Verse 12, 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?

[ 11 : 07 ] Verses 12 to 16 aren't just explanation of what happened. There's accusation here. Verses 12 to 16, Listen to this, verse 13.

This is Peter in the temple courts speaking to all the people, his fellow Israelites, his Jewish brothers. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.

You, people of Israel, you handed him over to be killed. You disowned him before Pilate, though he decided to let him go. You disowned the holy and righteous one and asked that a murderer be released to you.

In fact, verse 15, you killed the author of life. Peter's saying, Peter's saying, It's just weeks, a couple of months maybe, after the resurrection, we've seen Jesus, risen and alive.

You killed him, but God raised him and made him Lord and Messiah. And don't think we made this man walk. It's not our power. No, no, no, verse 16.

[ 12 : 28 ] By faith in the name of Jesus. This man whom you see and know was made strong. It's Jesus' name. And the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

What you see here wasn't me, it was Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. The book of Acts, reaching forward to the 21st century, is about the continuing work of the risen Lord Jesus.

What Jesus continues to do in his world. And the restoring of this lame beggar, it's a sign for people then and us today.

It's a sign and a miracle of resurrection power. From the one who will one day restore and make whole, not just one man's feet and ankles, but all things.

Just as the first snowdrops are a sign of spring. Just as the first strawberries are a sign of summer fruitfulness. Here is one lame man, raised and restored by the power of Jesus Christ.

[ 13 : 46 ] And he's a sign and a foretaste of resurrection day. When God, through our Lord Jesus, restores all things. In verses 17 to 21, Peter arrows in on those whom he's accused.

To people who've killed Jesus, seen the power of Jesus at work. Now an invitation, a command. Verses 17 to 21, repent then and turn to God.

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.

So, verse 19, repent then and turn to God. Through the New Testament and on to today, this is the gospel command.

It's God's command. You've heard about Jesus. He is Lord and Messiah. Repent then and turn to God.

[ 15 : 01 ] So to Jewish people in Jerusalem with a hand in murdering Jesus, repent and turn to God. To all people everywhere in God's world, living by nature, turned away from the God who made us repent and turn to God.

In sorrow for your sins, come back to God and bow before him so that... Well, look at this. Verse 19 onwards.

Look at what God offers to those who repent and turn to him. Repent and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

That's like wiping crumbs from a plate or wiping pen marks off a whiteboard so it's clean. It's like someone who loves you wiping away tears from your eyes until they're gone.

When today a person turns to God, he wipes away and wipes out your sins so that they're gone and you're clean. But not just that.

[ 16 : 07 ] Repent and turn to God, verse 19, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. You receive the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out into your heart to refresh you, give you breathing space and joy in your life.

But not just that. There's a third blessing when a person turns to God today. Not just your sins wiped out, not just refreshing in your life, but a future blessing.

Which is verses 20 and 21. That he may send the Messiah who's been appointed for you, even Jesus. On this future resurrection day, when God sends Jesus, look, verse 21, heaven must receive him, because that's where Jesus is now, until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

And for those who've turned to God, we will be part of this, when God restores everything through Jesus. Restoring means returning something to how it should be, making it good again.

Think of a classic car found in a garage that's wrecked and rusty and painstakingly restored to its former glory. Think of a painting, dust caked and cracked, restored.

[ 17 : 37 ] Think of a lame man, his weak and wasted ankles made strong and restored. Think of followers of Jesus Christ, scarred by sin, suffering, damaged and bruised, who are repaired and made new.

The day will come when God sends his Messiah and restores everything, and our sin-wrecked diseased world in bondage to decay and shrouded in death will be restored.

Our world will be repaired to how it should be. As God promised through his prophets, through Daniel and Ezekiel and Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 35, then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy and water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. When God restores all of creation, the lame will leap like a deer, like this beggar, says Peter, right next to me.

Just one lame beggar, miraculously restored by Jesus, his ankles and feet strength and jumping and praising God. He's a foretaste, he's just a little taster of the restored creation that Jesus will bring about.

[ 19 : 13 ] I haven't had the most regular week. I'm really thankful to God that verses 19 to 21 have come to me very fresh. This command and invitation, how these blessings are described.

Look, turn to God, he'll wipe your sins away, he'll refresh you, you'll be made part of his restored new world through Jesus.

The day will come when we'll be restored, we'll be made whole and pure and good, physically and mentally and morally, in a whole restored creation.

That's our future through Jesus. And yet that's not the end of Peter's speech, this offer of blessing.

Because finally this morning, look and see that verses 22 to 26 bring strong warning.

See, what the apostles talking about here, what we're talking about this morning is public truth. The glorious gospel of the risen Lord Jesus who will raise all on judgment day and restore all things.

[ 20 : 23 ] And Peter says, now is the time for Jewish people and all people to turn to Jesus. We must listen to Jesus and turn to him because finally, if you won't, you'll be cut off.

You'll be cut off from the blessings of God forever. In these final verses, Peter assembles a mini list of witnesses as a warning to his hearers. Verse 22, 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. Moses was talking about Jesus. Anyone who doesn't 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, the days of Jesus.

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. And when God raised up his servant Jesus, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways. It's a pretty stark end to a sermon. Listen to Moses, listen to the prophets, listen to Abraham, turn from your wicked ways and turn to Jesus. Or be cut off.

[ 21 : 46 ] It's a warning in the context here to every Jewish person back then and today. This Jesus in whom is the resurrection of the dead, you must turn to him for the wiping away of your sins.

Or on the day he raises you from the dead, he'll condemn you, cut you off and cast you away. It is a warning that overflows to all people of every religion and tribe and tongue.

Hindu, Church of England, hard-nosed atheist, Muslim, colleague, shoulder-shrugging neighbour, Iranian, Israeli.

The day of the Lord is at hand. The risen Jesus Christ who is Lord and judge of all will himself raise the dead and judge all people and restore all things.

So repent. It's the gospel command. Before that day comes, repent. Turn from your wicked ways. Turn from your false religion, your shoulder-shrugging religion, your no religion.

[ 22 : 52 ] Turn to God today and discover through Jesus the blessings of sins forgiven and times of refreshing and future restoration. But you must turn to him because salvation is found in no one else.

For there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. This is the gospel. This is the gospel message. Not a private spirituality to make me feel better.

Public truth about Jesus for every single person in Cambridge and the world. It's a true message.

It's a divisive message.

It's an exclusive message. It's a wonderful message. It is a gospel for the 25 to 30 of us to believe in and hold on to.

But not just believe in and hold on to, but share and proclaim without fear and with great boldness.

This public gospel message about Jesus Christ, the author of life, the risen and only saviour, in whom is the resurrection of the dead.

[ 24 : 05 ] I wonder if you can see with me why this message might get people seized and jailed, shunned, or cancelled. Well, that may be so, but this message is the message that gets people saved for all eternity.

And let me lead us in a prayer. Let's pray together. our Lord and our Father, you foretold that your Messiah would suffer.

He died for sins. Then you raised him from the dead and installed him as King and Lord of all.

Thank you that all your promises to raise the dead and judge the world and restore all things are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Please make us those who turn to you, bow before you, and trust in Jesus. May we enjoy the glorious blessings of our sins wiped out and refreshing through the Spirit and a certain future.

And we pray that our world might hear this glorious, exclusive, challenging message of the Lord Jesus Christ. and that, well, maybe even today, 5,000 would turn and be saved.

[ 25 : 45 ] Or that thousands and millions in the coming days and years would turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and find in him the salvation that you offer. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.