

Acts 3

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[0 : 00] He would have been there every day, lying on his mat.

Longing for scrap. Just a little help. His lifeless legs awkwardly sticking out from under him. Living in a daily despair of a life that would seemingly never change. He never knew anything else. And his greatest hope?

Can you spare some change, brothers, so I can eat? Maybe you've been there. Maybe you've actually been on the street.

Longing for that handout. Maybe... Somehow, you found yourself in a life that feels like it will never change.

[1 : 22] And you felt it easy to despair. Whether it be the demands of daily responsibilities, wiping noses, cleaning diapers.

Endless hours writing lab reports. Late nights in the library. The grind of the nine-to-five job that seems a lot more like seven to nine.

Maybe it's walking into the schoolroom at lunch every day, wondering if yet again you will eat alone. Or whether it's that conflict with your spouse that just never seems to get settled.

Things in life we think never will change. And we ask with hope.

Without hope, we ask, will my life ever be better than this? For his whole life, that beggar sat at the gate.

[2 : 28] And one day, Jesus stepped in. Through Peter and John, the beggar didn't get a handout. He got more than he hoped for.

He got a new life. In the name of Jesus, his legs that had never worked were suddenly strong. Muscles that had never flexed were suddenly pushing him up.

And in the account, Luke says it three times. He got up and he walked. And he walked. And he walked. And he didn't just walk, but he leapt. And he praised God.

And this morning, I want us to see what that poor beggar saw. And I want us to experience what he experienced.

This story at the beginning of Acts 3 of the apostles healing the beggar in the temple is followed by the second sermon of the apostle Peter in the book of Acts.

[3 : 39] And the purpose of that sermon is to help everyone understand. The beggar. The crowd. The court officials.

And yes, even us. To understand what the significance was. What it was that that beggar saw and experienced. That that healing wasn't just a healing.

But it was an expression of a much greater reality. That God was doing something new in the world through his resurrected son, Jesus Christ. And I hope that you here this morning will see with me. Jesus. In a way that fills us with hope. That fills our mouths with praise. That will metaphorically or perhaps even literally make us leap for joy.

I can't make this happen as we're taking this next step in our journey in the book of Acts. As we've titled this sermon series, When God Builds His Church.

[4 : 49] I can't make this happen this morning. We desperately need God to help us see Jesus clearly this morning.

My prayer is that God will open our eyes and fill our hearts to know and experience this great truth. That in the resurrected Christ, we find life more than we ever hoped for.

Let me pray for us. Lord, thank you for your word. Thank you that we are not left alone to try to figure out who you are on our own.

But Lord, rather, you have revealed yourself. Told us who you are in your word. And Lord, I pray this morning that you would open our eyes.

Open our hearts. Lord, help us to see Jesus as he is proclaimed in this passage today. And Lord, call us.

[5 : 53] Draw us. Lord, that we may know what that beggar knew. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. If you have your Bibles, if you want to turn with me to page 772.

We're looking at Acts chapter 3. And I'm going to read the whole chapter. And actually the first four verses of chapter 4. Just to get the whole unit together. So if you want to read along with me.

Or you can just listen. One day, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer. At three in the afternoon. Now a man, crippled 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. And when he saw Peter and John about to enter, he looked. He asked them for money. And 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 him. And Peter said, silver or gold, I do not have.

[7 : 04] But what I have, I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. Taking him by his 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. 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.

And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. And while the beggar held on to Peter and John, all of the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.

When Peter saw this, he said to them, Men of Israel, 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.

[8 : 15] And you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One. And you asked that a murderer be released to you.

You killed the author of life. But God raised him from the dead. And 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 given this complete healing to him, as you all can see. Now, brothers, 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 Christ would suffer. Repent, therefore, and turn to God, that your sins may be wiped out, that the times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ who has been appointed for you, even Jesus.

He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For Moses said, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people.

[9 : 38] You must listen to everything he tells you, and anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people. Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days, and you are heirs of the prophets in the covenant God made with your fathers.

He said to Abraham, Through your offspring, all the peoples of the earth will be blessed. When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.

And the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people, and they were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put him in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about 5,000.

Luke's account tells us a story of a man who is healed, and then this sermon gives an explanation, and that's what I want to focus on this morning. What is the significance of that healing?

[10 : 56] What is the significance of what happened to that man? And Peter's sermon breaks down basically into two sections. The first section, which is verses 11 through 16, Peter paints a portrait of

who Jesus is, and incidentally, how the people responded or didn't respond to that portrait.

And then, in the second half, from verses 17 to 26, Peter says, you must respond to this portrait. You must somehow react to who this Jesus is. So let's look at these two things in turn. In the first section, verses 11 through 16, the central thought is in verse 16.

Peter's saying, man, why are you looking at me as if we healed him? This is not what happened. What happened was this. It was the name of Jesus. Jesus, and the faith that comes through Jesus to this man in that name that made this man well.

So that's his answer. What is the significance of what we've seen? Well, Jesus has healed this man, not Peter and not John. But when we talk about a name, when you see this word in the New Testament or in the scriptures, the name is the embodiment of all that that man is.

[12:25] And so what Peter does is he paints a picture of who Jesus is. Look with me. Verse 13 again. says, this Jesus is the one who is glorified by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

That is, by his resurrection, he is the fulfillment of the promise that the Jewish nation had longed for from way back in Genesis 12. In verse 13, it says again that Jesus is God's servant and any first century Jew listening to that would hear the resonances of Isaiah 53 and the promise of a servant that God would raise up who would suffer to redeem his people.

In verse 14, Jesus is called the Holy and the Righteous One. Again, a Jewish audience would hear all of these as titles for the Messiah, the promised one that they've been longing for for so long. someone who is set apart in his sinless perfection and humble obedience to the Father. And then in verse 15, it says, Jesus is the author of life.

You could also say, Jesus is the prince of life. He is the one who has authority over life and death because God raised him from the dead.

[13:59] Because, having died for our sins and God raised him from the dead, Jesus has defeated death and has overcome the power of our sin.

And so, he is now the author of life. He can write into the storylines of our lives, life, life more than we ever hoped for.

He can breathe life into the dry bones of our daily existence, life more than we ever hoped for. the beggar experienced that.

Jesus breathed life into his hopeless situation and his despairing soul. Now, Peter's words, we see Jesus portrayed of all of these things and we see that God is doing something in Jesus for the whole Jewish nation that was greater than they had hoped for as well.

The first century Jews were longing for a Messiah who would come on a white horse and lead an army to free them from the oppression of the Roman government. They were looking for social and political freedom.

[15:23] And you know what? when God raised Jesus from the dead, he said, your hopes are too small. Your dreams are too little. The Messiah that I'm sending you is not going to save you from political and social oppression.

But it will be a Messiah who will restore all things, not Rome, but sin and death itself. And how was this Jesus responded to?

It's amazing, isn't it? Look with me again in verses 13 through 15. Luke gives five verbs to describe how people responded to Jesus. You handed him over to be killed.

You disowned him. The next verse, you disowned him. You asked for a murderer, a taker of life instead of him, and you killed him.

Peter says, we are all witnesses of this. We all know this happened. There's no doubt about this. You were there. We were there. We all know that it happened.

[16:42] And, lest we sit in our 21st century high horse and think, gosh, how can those people do that?

How could they miss Jesus? I mean, during his earthly ministry, he did all these great things. He fed people. He healed people. He raised people from the dead. How foolish could they be to kill him? Well, do we refuse Jesus as the author of life in our lives in any way? The prophet Jeremiah talks in chapter 2 of his book about his claim against the people at that time that they had turned from God the spring of living water and had built for themselves cisterns.

And a cistern was basically like a big rain barrel dug into the ground to try and hold water. He describes them as cisterns that don't even work. Cisterns that don't hold water.

You turn from life to try to take care of life on your own and make your own life. And it fails. Do you ever do that?

[18:07] My life is my family. My life is my work. My life is in succeeding in this exam or that promotion.

My life is in that romantic relationship or the hope of it. We turn from the only real source of life and try to build a life on our own.

And when those attempts fail we settle for a life that is far less than what God intends us and we live in a despair of hopelessness. We fall into cynicism.

We fill our hearts with empty entertainment. Drown our crushed hopes with food or drugs or drink. And in all of these ways we deny the author of life.

friends make no mistake if we were there we would have done it too. And Jesus died for them.

[19:15] He died for them who killed him. And he dies for us who would have been there and killed him too. And God raised him from the dead so that he could be the author of life for the very people who killed him.

My friends this morning look at this Jesus the fulfillment of all the hopes of God's work throughout the whole Old Testament.

The holy and righteous one the author of life. See his resurrected glory.

See what that lame beggar saw for a moment. Peter then goes on and he says having shown you this.

Having shown you what Jesus was and who he is. Having shown you how you respond to him. And he has almost this aside.

[20:30] Oh and by the way you acted in ignorance which is actually pretty generous if you think about it. You acted in ignorance but God was not thwarted in what he did.

God was not thwarted by even our worst sin. but God used the very rejection of Jesus to accomplish the work of redemption that God wanted to do in Jesus.

That's what verse 18 says and it leads you to the response the call to response that Peter gives to his audience in that day and gives to us now.

Look with me in verse 19 let's read it together again. Repent then 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 Christ who has been appointed for you even Jesus.

So this is the first thing he says repent repent which means just change your mind change your heart change your direction turn from seeking life and these other things turn from your small hopes and your dreams turn from your cynicism and your self protectiveness turn from your pragmatism that says it's not going to get any better than that turn from your hopelessness and the darkness despair repent of your rejection of this Jesus repent and turn to God because in him you will find a life more than you ever hoped for what does that look like there are three so that clauses that come out of it verses 19 20 21 three statements that say this is what you will find if you repent of these things and turn to

[22:40] God turn to Jesus turn to the author of life and as we look at these things I want to begin by simply stating up front there's something tricky about navigating this throughout the whole New Testament there is a pattern that what God has done in Jesus Christ what he has accomplished is both really present now and yet still fully coming in the future the way we talk about it is it's the now and the not yet of what God has done in Jesus Christ and what I see in this is this pattern and we're going to talk about it for a minute because I see in the forgiveness of our sins this now and not yet and also in the hope of God remaking our lives it's both a now and a not yet for us and if we get it wrong it really messes with us it really distorts what it means to follow

Christ so I hope we see this this clearly let me walk through it with you what is it that we find again verse 19 repent and turn to God therefore so that your sins may be wiped out that your sins may be wiped away think about it this way in first century they wrote on parchment and they used ink that didn't have acid in it so it didn't stick the closest thing to that that we have today is a white board unless you leave something up on a white board forever or white boards are meant to be written on and then erased and it's not a very elegant image but think about it with me like this there is a divine white board and then each and on that board there is a record of our whole lives and if we were to sit with

God and look at that white board we would see the record of our participation in a fallen world we would see our sin the bible tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and our record would be marked by incidents of rebellion against our creator the rejection of our life giver stubborn self dependence and desire to live life apart from God's rule not to mention maybe the things that first came to your mind when I mentioned this your petty selfishness your unkindness towards other the times you've lost your temper when you've gossiped or spoken poorly of others when you've just been mean or cruel or careless even to those who are closest that white board stands against us it is a list of indictments and evidence that in the heavenly courtroom would lead to a guilty declaration but friends this is the good news of the gospel that when we turn from sin from our wicked rejection and when we turn to his appointed savior

Jesus Christ when we place our faith our confidence our trust all of our hope in Jesus it's as as God took the eraser and he just wiped the board clean we're in the courtroom but there's no longer any indictment even though the evidence is still there you still know what you did but there's no more indictment Jesus took that indictment on himself he willingly took responsibility for our actions for our sin and he paid the penalty and he didn't just die but he rose again and that's so important because so often we talk about the penalty paid for sin and we stop there but we need to recognize that that penalty that Jesus took could not stick because Jesus was sinless and because it could not stick on him

God raised him from the dead and because God raised him from the dead Jesus has power over sin and death in our lives life this is why Jesus can call himself the resurrection and the life this is why Peter says that Jesus is the author of life we turn from life apart from him to life in him because he is the one who because he is risen from the dead can give us that life we are declared new in Christ declared right before God and friends that is the now of our sins being blotted out but there is more than that isn't there because if we look through the whole scope of the New Testament we will know that not only has the penalty of sin been taken away but the power of sin has been broken in our lives we no longer are slaves to sin but we are now in

[28 : 29] Christ put in a position of a slave to righteousness and sin no longer has a power over us we will never fully defeat sin in this life but sin has no full power over us anymore and in the future not only will the penalty of sin be taken away not only will the power of sin be broken but the very presence of sin will be removed from us one day when we are raised with Jesus to new and eternal life there will be no more sin you will not have that temptation to be selfish or greedy you it will have been taken away God will have washed it away completely not for now but in that future hope that not yet time one day sin will be defeated and this means that we have great hope there is no longer shame for our sin there is no longer helplessness in the face of our struggle against sin we are known by

God he knows every sin that we did do that we are doing that we will do he has accepted us in Christ he has made us new in Christ and he is changing us to be like Christ this is our hope sin is not the last word but life in Christ is the last word for us and like the leper or like the beggar we will leap with joy and praise God repent and turn to the author of life that you may experience this the second thing then that Peter promises that Peter says repent and turn to God so that there are two pieces here that

I think we need to see together so that times of refreshing may come from the Lord or maybe even a better translation would be from the very presence of the Lord Lord and that you may wait that you may look forward to that he may send the Christ who has been appointed for you even Jesus he must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything as he promised long ago through his holy prophet so not only is life in Christ this life that was more than we can hope for characterized by the victory over sin in these experience of a newness of life a restoring of a whole world where there is no more sin and no more fall now again it's tricky with this right because we really really want the future restoring the promise that that

God's going to make everything right we really want that now we want injustice to be overcome we want evildoers to be punished we want life to be brought to the dead places of our world of our lives we so desperately want it and you know it's easy when as most of you probably already know and if you haven't you'll figure out soon it isn't like that is it Jesus rose from the dead and the world is not a perfect place is it and it's easy to become critical or hopeless or disappointed disappointed in God God why haven't you changed this God why haven't you made this better that would be taking the future fullness and trying to have it all now now some some of you may be more like me because I

find it much easier to push all my hope into the future

I love the hope that God's going to make everything new one day and until then I'm just hanging on I don't want to hope for much because I might get disappointed it. It's easy to just be realistic or down to earth or, come on, let's get serious. This world is a really stinky place a lot of the time, isn't it? It's easier for me to just live there.

[33 : 35] And I don't believe that God wants to work now. I don't believe that God wants to give me tastes, foretastes, now. When we face those times that are hard, financial crises, sudden diagnoses, terrible relational conflict, the darkness of depression, do we believe that God is there? Do we believe that God is with us? Do we believe that God wants to bring times of refreshing? Tell you what, I don't. Many of you know, and some of you don't, my wife Brandy is battling cancer right now. And I have struggled to know how to pray for her. Let me put it to you. Do I pray for healing or not? Is God going to heal her? Is God going to make her better? I know God can heal. Look at the layman in the story. God can do it.

I know God wants me to ask him to heal. James 5 says, if anyone's sick, call the elders, pray. I want to believe that God will heal her. But you know what? I don't know that. Because I look around and I see God doesn't heal everybody. God doesn't take it all away, does he?

And you know what? Even that beggar died. Even Lazarus died. And my wife will die. And I will die. And you will die.

So why would I think that God is going to give me 70 years instead of 40? Why would I assume that? I promise you I won't leave you here. But it's what I struggle with. It's how I struggle with this. Peter says, turn to God that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. And I think, what is that supposed to look like in this circumstance? What hope do I have?

You know, when I first looked at this promise of times of refreshing in the now, I thought, man, times of refreshing. That's exciting. I've read lots of stories about revival. And I thought, yeah, that's, you know, that's what I want. I want God to pour out his spirit, make all things new, fill my heart with joy. Even though things are still going to be hard, I'm going to be filled with this inexpressible and unstoppable spirit. And God has done that in times. And it is a beautiful and a wonderful thing. And it is good to seek him for that. But you know, as I read this more, and again, I mentioned it earlier, I think the translation would better be seen here to say that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. See, because this is where I get it mixed up. I want times of refreshing to look like an easy or a fruitful or a successful or a happy life.

[37 : 17] And you know what? He will do that. He will do that for many of us. He will do it in seasons, and it will be a glorious thing. But the promise here is that the times of refreshing will come from his presence, not just in his gifts.

It's not times of refreshing are your best life now. You get everything you always wanted, and a boat on a lake. It's not that God will take care of all of your earthly endeavors.

I've actually been reading a book recently by an author named Larry Crabb called Shattered Dreams. And he says God wants to bless his people. And that the very highest good that God wants to bless his people with now in this in-between time is the presence of God himself.

If we think about the book of Acts, we wouldn't be surprised that this would be one of the things that we should cling on to, because in Acts chapter 2, what do we see?

When Jesus went away, he said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. And he sent his spirit to come and dwell in his people to say, I will be with you always.

[38 : 52] He has not, and he will not abandon us. And that refreshes our soul. We are not lost. We are not on our own. It can bring joy to our soul through the hardest and darkest seasons.

And it brings lightness and joy in seasons of blessing and gladness. There's a quote in this book from Crabb's book. He says, Faith, as I'm growing to understand it, is about looking beyond my circumstances to a person.

To have faith in better circumstances, even in God creating better circumstances, is not true faith. I want to be the kind of man who can watch every dream go down in flames and still yearn to be intimately involved in kingdom living.

Intimately involved with my friend, the king. Still be willing to take just another risk, to take another risk just because it delights him for me to do so. And my flesh shivers to think about it now.

And you know, as I was thinking about this last night, as I was reviewing this, I was writing. You know, with Brandy and what we're going through right now, at times it's been true that the presence of the Lord has been the great hope that we have clung to.

[40 : 22] And it has given us hope. In the midst of our tears, we have had confidence that he is good and that he is sovereign and that he has not left us and he has not abandoned us.

It has deepened our longing for him. He is a high priest who has walked this world so that he can empathize and sympathize with the things that we suffer.

Jesus knows that. And his presence with us allows us to have fellowship and communion with him. And I'd love to tell you that's what it looks like all the time.

But it doesn't. Right now, I actually feel pretty alone. I want to say, yeah, because God's presence is with me, I'm getting through this.

I'm doing okay. But you know, I don't know if I'm doing okay. I know Jesus is with me. I know Jesus is with us.

[41 : 35] But it doesn't feel like a time of refreshing. We have to think about this. Because if we don't get it right, we expect the wrong thing from God.

Repent and turn to God so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. His presence will be a source of refreshing that can sustain us through any circumstances.

When you face a battle with sin that you feel hopeless in, helpless in, when the despair of the dead end of your hopes and dreams sets in, when you settle for a little pleasure here and there, the presence of Jesus with you can renew a life that is more than you hoped for.

It's not going to be sweetness and light, but it is life. And we have just enough to keep us going.

He gives us a taste of a banquet that is yet to come. He gives us a sip of a living water that we will drown in. What we see now is only in part, but what we will see then will be full.

[43 : 13] When we turn to the author of life, we turn to the one who will come and restore all things. And this is great news for us. His presence now sustains us.

His future coming. As it says in verses 21, that heaven is holding Jesus now, but one day he will come. And this picture, he will restore all things.

He will make all things new. He will finally redeem the world. and reverse the curse of sin.

What does this look like? Some of you know I'm a Lord of the Rings fan. J.R.R. Tolkien's great trilogy. And the reason why is because without being very explicit, the books are full of the echoes and resonances of the gospel.

Sam Gamgee is one of the key characters. He's the servant of Frodo Baggins and they travel through the hardest and ugliest things to gain victory by destroying the ring of power.

[44 : 25] Sorry, I just ruined it for those of you who haven't read it. Um, and, uh, but on the, along the way he's seen the worst of it.

He's seen the corruption of companions, the horrors of monsters, the pride and doubt of mankind. He's endured months of physical suffering and deprivation.

He saw his hero Gandalf fall to death and at the very end he saw his master unable to do the thing that they had come all the way to do and only by a divine providence were they able to actually destroy the ring.

and his life seems to end on a slag heap with lava flowing down as the mountain that they are on is blowing up and he thinks this is it, this is the end.

But as he passes on into a coma he passes out he's rescued. and he awakens in a bed with sunlight streaming in and he thinks where am I?

[45 : 44] How could this be? And his hero Gandalf is sitting there next to him again and Sam cries out he says Gandalf I thought you were dead but then I thought I was dead.

Is everything sad? going to come untrue? What has happened to the world? Tolkien has grabbed onto the hope that we are meant to have that Jesus will return and restore the world.

What is sad now will become untrue. What is evil now will be judged and conquered and done away with. What is wrong will be made right.

what is dead will be made alive again. Where there is hopelessness and despair there will be rather hope and joy and life.

We read about it earlier in Isaiah 35 didn't we? Susan read it beautifully. The eyes of the blind will be open the ears of the deaf will be unstopped the lame shall leap like a deer the mute will sing for joy water will come to a parched desert dry grass shall turn to vibrant green there will no longer be any danger for those who follow the Lord the ransomed the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing everlasting joy shall be upon their heads they shall obtain gladness and joy and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

[47 : 25] the author of life will bring life again one day one day one day one day one day one day will bring to the Lord of the Lord the words that you've known probably heard before the picture that John saw in Revelation chapter 21 of what it will look like when the author of life comes back to restore all things then I saw a new heaven and a new earth and the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea I saw the holy city the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them they will be his people and God himself will be with them and their God he will wipe away every tear from their eyes there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away and he who is seated on the throne said

I am making everything new Jesus the author of life was raised from the dead that he may bring us this hope this is life more than we ever hoped for and you know I have to tell you something this is something that has been the place that I have clung to with Brandy because you know what death is not the worst thing that could happen to her it would be terrible for those of us who are left behind but you know what we have hope that even in that moment she will be healed she will be with the Lord all of her sickness and all of her pain and all of her suffering will have ended forever she will be made new she will be fitted with an eternal body there will be no more sickness and no more pain for her she will be filled with songs of praise in the presence of our Lord friends to die without that hope that's terrible and this is why Peter's exhortation for us is to repent to turn away from life apart from the author of life to turn away from life on our own to turn away from settling for our little dreams and to turn to God turn to him the author of life who has forgiven our sins who is present with us now and who one day will make all things new some of you this morning may have never turned to him may have never put your faith in him

I hope that you this morning will hear the call turn from your sin because Jesus alone can give you life more than you ever wanted for those of you who have walked with God for a while who know him let this message be one to stir your hope again God is not done with you he has not just saved you so that you can hang on until eternity he has saved you for life with him now and a hope of a glorious future more than you ever hoped for let me pray spirit help us to see Jesus God open our blind eyes awaken our dull spirits soften our hard hearts Lord that we may take hold again of life and the author of life in you Lord fill our mouths with songs of praise and gladness to you Lord may our hearts leap because Jesus is raised from the dead and as the author of life he has promised us more than we could ever have imagined we pray in Jesus name amen