

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 4.20.2025

PART 11 - GOD HAS RAISED UP HIS SERVANT

I. INTRODUCTION

- Our study in Acts takes us through the ongoing ministry of the risen and exalted Christ through his Spirit-empowered witnesses.
- In Acts 3, see the power of the risen Christ on full display—a man crippled from birth, is suddenly healed, and he is walking and leaping. A crowd gathers, having witnessed the spectacle.
- It was a moment where God disrupted the ordinary.
- We are drawn to such stories. Had we been there, we too would have marveled and been amazed.
- But we also see the power of the risen Christ on full display in the bold proclamation of the gospel.
- Peter seizes the moment—not to showcase the miracle—but to proclaim the Messiah.
- And now just as then, we are called not to merely marvel at the display of power, but to be directed to the one through whom all power flows—the Lord of glory—the risen and exalted Christ.
- May we have our eyes directed to Jesus, marvel at the astonishing grace of God in Christ, and may we respond in true repentance by turning to him.

Acts 3:11-26

11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. 12 And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? 13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. 14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. 16 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 this perfect health in the presence of you all.

17 "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, 20 that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, 21 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. 22 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. 23 And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' 24 And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. 25 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.' 26 God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

II. THE GLORY OF GOD'S SERVANT

1. The Crowd's astonishment

- Like the event at Pentecost, the miracle attracts attention and draws a crowd.
- The man was clinging to Peter and John. He wouldn't let go.
- He was clinging to them because he saw them as instruments of his healing and blessing.
- The crowd is astounded!
- They follow Peter and John and the man hanging on to them all the way to the eastern wall of the Temple Mount called Solomon's portico.
- As he did at Pentecost, Peter seizes the moment to redirect the people's amazement and give an explanation for what they are witnessing.

2. Peter's redirection

- Notice who Peter addresses—"Men of Israel."
 - The people were almost undoubtedly residents of Jerusalem, not the same crowd from the day of Pentecost that would have included pilgrims.
 - Peter's address was particularly Hebrew; he is speaking to Israelites.
 - God's covenant people. (25)
 - Sons of the Prophets (25)
 - Heirs of all of the covenant promises and the one to whom Messiah would come first (20, 26)
 - It is through his chosen people Israel, that God promised to Abraham that in his offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed. (25)
 - To them were given all of the prophecies concerning the Messiah and that he would have to suffer. (18)
 - The last section of his message is grounding Jesus in Israel's story, everything about him has been foretold by all of the prophets—Moses, Samuel, and every prophet after him.
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- Peter employs two questions to redirect from the miracle to the Messiah.
 - "Why do you wonder at his miracle?"
 - Wasn't there a reason to wonder and marvel at this miracle?
 - The question is meant to pave the way for the explanation that was to follow.
 - These were people of the covenant and the prophets.
 - They should have expected their God to do this very thing; they should have been expecting this type of miracle in their midst.
 - Why are we surprised when God shows up and does the impossible? Shouldn't we expect it?
 - "Why do you stare at us as if we're anything special?"
 - "Who are these men to possess such power?"
 - This was evidence that they were out of touch with their past history as God's people and out of fellowship with their covenant God to even consider this false explanation.
 - *"We don't have any power to do this."*

- It's not because Peter and John, or even the man who was healed, had any intrinsic worthiness or godliness.
- If they had believed the Scriptures, believed the promises and the prophets of God, they would have seen this miraculous healing as the logical result of all the things they believed.

3. The explanation: God has glorified his Servant

- The miracle was the set up for the message.
 - The power, Peter says, comes from the God of their great patriarchs, The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers.
 - Peter skillfully connects the healing of the lame man with a display of their own God's power.
 - He is not proclaiming some new thing but that this is fulfillment of God's ultimate plan for Israel and for the nations of the world.
 - Peter gives God the credit and the glory for the healing.
 - He is quick to deflect any notions that he has anything in himself to bring about this miracle.
 - Acts 14, Paul in Lystra.
 - When God works through us to bless someone else we should be quick to deflect any praise or glory to the only one worthy of praise and to whom all glory is due.
 - Because God has glorified his servant Jesus and raised him from the dead, it is by the faith that is through Jesus—by faith in his name—that God has made this man strong and given him perfect health in the presence of you all.
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- Now, the people would have clearly picked up on Peter's statement, "God has glorified his servant Jesus."
 - The term comes from Isaiah's fourth servant psalm found in Isaiah 52:13-54:12.
 - The title servant of God was to the Jew, a word of hope, an expression of God's promised salvation.
 - Peter declares Jesus is God's servant.
 - Jesus is the Christ in whom all of the Messianic hope is fulfilled.
 - God has glorified Jesus, He is the Lord's servant.
 - Jesus himself declared that he did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).
 - And that's what he did for us.
 - He served us by living a life of perfect obedience to the Father so that his record of righteousness could be credited to us.
 - He served us all the way to the cross, taking upon himself the punishment for our sins, so that our record of debt could be cancelled, our sins forgiven, he redeemed us and reconciled us to God.
 - He served us in his resurrection, defeating death and the grave.
 - And he continues to serve us today as our perfect Mediator who ever lives to make intercession for us.
 - Peter tells the crowd, "*It's Jesus! He healed this man! He's the Messiah, He's the servant of the Lord.*"
 - In his message he exalts Jesus with several titles:
 - The Servant of God
 - The Holy and Righteous One
 - The Author of Life
 - The Christ
 - The One prophet foretold by Moses
 - The titles speak of the uniqueness of Jesus and his suffering and glory.
 - This Jesus is no ordinary man. Jesus stands alone in a class all by himself.

III. THE GUILT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

1. The Charges Levied

- V13-16 is the explanation Peter gives for why this man has been miraculously healed.
- His message is bold and daring.
- Observe the flow of thought.
- V13 up to “glorified his servant Jesus,” is with v16 And his name—by faith in his name... That is the explanation for the miracle.
- Everything in between is a parenthesis beginning with the phrase, 13b “whom you delivered over... and to the end of v15, “to this we are witnesses.”
- In effect he says, “*The God of Abraham, the God of our history, the God of our nation, the God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus and it is through him, by faith in his name, this man has been healed in your presence.*”
- But in between, Peter levels a scathing indictment of the guilt and complicity of the Jews.
- “Whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.
- “You denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked a murderer to be granted to you.”
- “You killed the Author of life.”
- The gospel accounts all record the grave sin and guilt of the Jewish people and having Jesus crucified and killed.
- They denied him, they delivered him up, all in spite of a gentile who wanted to set him free.
- Jesus’s blood is on their hands. They are guilty of killing the servant of God.
- In his Pentecost sermon Peter declared, “you crucified and killed Jesus by the hands of lawless men.” (2:23)
- They denied the Holy and Righteous One—these are OT titles of God.
- Peter was laying on Christ the prophetic and messianic designations, associating him with the servant of God.
- They are guilty, Jesus was holy and righteous.
- They asked to have Barabbas released to them saying, “His blood be on us and on our children!” (Matt 27:25)
- They wanted to free a murderer over the suffering servant of God.
- The people in Jerusalem are held responsible for these sins. They might not have directly carried them out but they are liable.
- They killed the Author of life. They killed the one who is the source of life.

2. God's servant vindicated.

- But, and here is the good news in all of this, “...and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.”
- That’s the heart of Easter Sunday!
- Resurrection is the message of the apostles. “God raised him from the dead, God glorified his servant Jesus, and we saw him alive.”
- You killed the Author of life, but God replied to what you did by raising him from the dead and making us witnesses of that resurrection.
- You rejected him and killed him but God vindicated him.
- “And it is by faith in his name—the name of Jesus—whom you rejected, whom you denied—whose death you brought about, whom God raised for the dead, who is glorified and is the long anticipated Messiah; it is by faith in his name that this man is healed!

- Peter took that man who experienced the great miracle of healing and directed them to Jesus who is the source of the healing—God was working in their midst through the risen and exalted Christ.

3. Faith in his name

- What does it mean “by faith in his name” and “the faith that is through Jesus...?”
- In Scripture, a name is a representation of a person’s character, authority, and work.
- Peter means that by the authority and power of Jesus Christ, the risen and exalted Lord, has this man been healed.
- “By faith” and the “faith that is through Jesus...” Faith is not the cause of the man’s healing but the instrument by which the power of Christ is applied.
- Faith is trust, extending an empty hand, having no merit of one’s own to give, to receive what Christ alone can give.
- And that faith is a gift of God. The faith that brought about the healing was not ultimately from the man or from Peter—it was through Jesus.
- Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- It is by faith in the risen Christ by which we are saved and delivered from the domain of darkness.
- “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.” (1 Cor 15:17)
- The miracle becomes proof of the resurrection and lordship of Christ.
- He is alive and reigning and the people stand condemned for their wicked actions.

IV. THE GRACE OF GOD MAGNIFIED

1. A response is required

- V17 to the end of the chapter is Peter’s appeal for the crowd to respond.
- He has explained how the man was healed—God has glorified his servant by raising him from the dead.
- He has leveled the charges against them, they are guilty of killing the Author of life.
- Now he calls them to repentance.
- Notice the tenderness of Peter’s plea. He appeals to them as brothers and extends to them the grace of God.
- V17 “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.”
- It seems like he is taking away their guilt by making the statement, you did it ignorantly.
- Isn’t that what most people want to claim—ignorance on that Day when they will stand before the Lord.
- But Peter is merely relaying the truth of what Jesus prayed as he hung on the cross, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)
- Their ignorance was that they did not know this was God’s servant, the Messiah.
- Acts 13:27 For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.

- Then he says to them, “But all of this God foretold by the mouths of all of his prophets, that his Christ would suffer, and Jesus is the fulfillment of that.”
- Even their evil actions and ignorance did not disrupt God’s plan, but rather furthered it.
- God fulfilled what he had predicted through his prophets.
- The infinite purpose of grace triumphed over the ignorant murder of Jesus.
- Though it was God’s plan, they are still guilty and have blood on their hands.
- What do they need to do? They need to repent and turn back.
- They need to turn from their ignorance and wickedness to the light.
- They need to see Christ for who he truly is, God’s servant, Messiah, risen and exalted!
- And that is how all of us need to respond to the gospel message by turning to Christ in faith, recognizing our own spiritual wretchedness.

2. The benefits of repentance

- Peter enumerates three results of repentance:
- Our sins will be blotted or wiped out.
- Time of refreshment will come.
- Jesus will return and restore all things.
- This is what Jesus’s sacrifice and death accomplishes for us. Our sins are forgiven. They are blotted out.
- There is refreshment from the presence of the Lord, a sense of relief knowing that we are right with God, having been reconciled to him by the blood of Christ, having peace with God. There is rest for our weary souls.
- And in Christ we have the hope of his second coming, when he will restore all things. Our best days are yet ahead of us.

3. How will you respond?

- The miracle attracted the crowd but what the message offered was far greater and more important than the miracle.
 - We can be miraculously healed but our body will eventually wear out. We will die.
 - What we need is more than a miracle of temporary healing.
 - We need the Author of Life. We need the one who offers us true and everlasting life.
 - While we will all suffer a physical death, it is only by faith in Christ that we will NOT suffer a spiritual death.
 - Put your faith in the risen Christ, who came to rescue hellbent sinners like us.
 - Because Jesus rose from the grave, because he is exalted and ruling right now, there is hope for wicked, sinful humanity.
 - There is no greater miracle than a person being brought from death to life!
 - God wants to bless you today by turning you from your wickedness, he offers you the gift of life and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Don’t ignore Jesus. Don’t delay in responding to his offer of salvation. He is your only hope in life and death.
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- The same Jesus Peter proclaimed is alive today!
 - He is the servant who suffered for your sins. He is the Holy and Righteous One you must not deny.
 - He is the Author of life raised from the dead—and He now calls you to repent and believe.
 - The empty tomb demands a faithful response.
 - May we live boldly and hope fully—in Jesus’s name.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?