

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

What's in a Name?

Acts 3:1–26

Take your Bibles with me and turn to Acts 3. I want to start this morning by quoting the greatest writer in the history of the English language—William Shakespeare.

This excerpt is from a scene in “Romeo and Juliet” where Juliet says the famous words: “What’s in a Name?” That’s the title of our message today. The scene is from that part of the play when Romeo is courting Juliet under her balcony. And Juliet says:

*“O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I’ll no longer be a Capulet.”*

One of the tensions in the play is the family feud between the Capulets and the Montagues. Romeo was a Montague. Juliet was a Capulet. And so their love was forbidden. They were “star-crossed lovers.”

But Juliet says here essentially “I’ll renounce my name in order to satisfy my love for you.” She goes on:

*’Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What’s Montague? it is [not a] hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What’s in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;*

Some of you might have heard the expression, “A rose by any other name is still a rose.” That expression comes from this dialogue between Romeo and Juliet.

Romeo responds to Juliet by telling her that he will abandon his surname, Monague. He’ll even abandon his first name, Romeo. Because his name is insignificant. What’s in a name? It doesn’t matter, because your essence as an individual stays the same.

Now that’s all well and good in sixteenth century Europe. But the situation is a little different in first century Israel. What’s in a name? Well, if that name is Jesus, then there’s a lot to that name. Your name in the ancient world represented more than just what you were called, “I’m Bill,” “I’m Harry,” or “I’m Tony.” A person’s name was part of his or her essence and his or her reputation.¹

That was true of the OT name “Yahweh,” and that was true in the NT with Jesus Christ. God gave his son the name Jesus which means Savior. He was the Christ, the Messiah, for the world. And so when someone invokes the name of Jesus Christ in the Bible, they are invoking all the essence and power and substance that stood behind that name.

The invoking of Jesus’s name happens a lot in the book of Acts. 1) In Acts 2:38, the apostles baptize people in the name of Jesus Christ. Nobody baptizes in the name of Peter or Paul or Mother Mary. 2) Also in Acts 3 (we’ll see this in a second), the apostles heals in the name of Jesus Christ. 3) In Acts 8:12, Phillip preaches in the name of Jesus Christ. 4) In Acts 15:26, Paul and Barnabas suffer for the

¹ Richard Longnecker says as follows: “‘The name of Jesus’ signifies his authority here. The name in Semitic thought ‘expresses the very nature of [a person’s] being. Hence the power of the person is present and available in the name of the person.’” Quoted in Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC, 139.

name of Jesus Christ. 5) In Acts 21:13, Paul said that he was willing to be imprisoned and even die for the name of Jesus Christ. One of the resounding themes throughout the book of Acts is the power of the name of Jesus!

I think even in the way people curse in today's context. We can see the power of Jesus's name. People don't hit their thumb with a hammer and yell "Mahatma Gandhi" or "Buddha" or "Confucius" or "Muhammad." The temptation in that moment is to profane the name of Jesus. Why? Why do people do that? Because they know intrinsically that there's power in that name! And we'll see that power on display today in Acts 3.

Go ahead and write this down as #1 in your notes. Today's text is going to reveal two things to us. First, the name of Jesus triumphs over human affliction. And second, the name of Jesus triumphs over human sinfulness. Let's start with that first statement.

1) The name of Jesus triumphs over **human affliction** (3:1-10)

Look at verse 1 with me.

¹ Now Peter and John were going up to the temple² at the hour of prayer,³ the ninth hour.⁴

Last week we read that the disciples prioritized Scripture, fellowship, remembrance, and prayer in Acts 2. That's what they were *devoted* to. And as they did that, God brought about in their midst awe, generosity, gladness, and favor.

We also saw two additional things last week. First, Acts 2:43 says that "many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles." We're about to see one of those signs and wonders.⁵ And Luke also tells us that day by day, "they were attending the temple" (Acts 2:46). Sure enough, that's what we find Peter and John doing at the beginning of chapter 3. They are off to the temple.

Now let me say two things about verse 1 before we move on. **First, Peter's not operating as a one-man marching band.**⁶ Actually Peter and John are often paired together in the book of Acts. I think there's a principle there for us. **Rarely does the Bible have people doing ministry on their own in solitude. Peter had John as well as the other apostles. Paul had Barnabas and Silas and Timothy. And Jesus had his twelve disciples. And although Jesus did get alone from time to time (e.g. the temptation in the desert, prayer alone with the Father), he embraced a team-based model for ministry.**⁷

² Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 192: "The temple complex was accessed through several stairways on the south,⁸⁴⁷ west,⁸⁴⁸ east,⁸⁴⁹ and north sides.⁸⁵⁰ (For a description of the temple complex, see on 1:4). Most likely the apostles used one of the four gates in the western wall, which are, from south to north: the gate associated with Robinson's Arch and the bridge across the Tyropoeon valley, which linked the Upper City with the Temple Mount."

³ Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 88: "Acts 3 shows the continued loyalty of the Messianic believers to the Temple, for they went there to pray on a daily basis."

⁴ JOHANN SPANGENBERG: "Why do they enter the temple to pray? Couldn't they have prayed at home? Or is prayer in the church better than at home? They went to the temple to pray for this reason, that they proclaimed God's Word and the gospel concerning Christ's resurrection to the people who gathered there. They made known the name of Christ to the entire world." Quoted in Chung-Kim and Hains, *Acts: New Testament*, RCS, 40.

⁵ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 157: "This is the first of fourteen miracles in Acts (Peter: 3:1-10; 5:1-11; 5:17-26; 9:32-35, 36-42; an angel of God: 12:1-19, 20-23; Paul: 13:4-12; 14:8-11; 16:16-19 with Silas; 16:20-34 with Silas; 20:7-12; 28:3-6, 7-8 [survives a snake bite and performs a healing]; Pesch 1986a: 144-45). There are four healings (three paralytics, one with fever), two raisings from the dead, four liberation miracles (two person-freeings and two exorcisms), three judgment miracles, and one preservation miracle (Paul at Malta)."

⁶ Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC, 141: "Through the alternation of the use of Peter and John and Peter alone in this passage, we have a good example of the team ministry of the evangelist Peter. This style is found throughout Acts. When Jesus sent out his twelve apostles and the seventy disciples, they were sent out two by two (Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1). When Peter rose to speak on the day of Pentecost, he "stood up with the Eleven" (Acts 2:14). When he talked of his witness, he said, 'We are witnesses of this' (3:15; cf. 2:32; 5:32). Peter was not a lone voice; he had a ministry team backing him when he spoke."

⁷ Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC, 142: "We can safely say that in the Bible, working in teams is the normal style of ministry."

Also, notice a second thing. In this scene, Peter and John are going up to the temple at the ninth hour. That's roughly 3pm by our reckoning, which was a time of corporate prayer for the Jews.⁸ The Jews would sacrifice twice a day and after the 3pm sacrifice, they would pray.⁹

This was normal life for the early church in Jerusalem. There was still some crosspollination between Jewish life and the emerging church, at least until the temple was destroyed in AD 70. If nothing else these times in the temple gave the disciples an opportunity to evangelize their Jewish brethren.

Okay, let's look at **verse 2**.

² And a man lame¹⁰ from birth¹¹ was being carried,¹² whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple.

By the way, the hike up to the Beautiful Gate was pretty extensive.¹³ So the fact that this guy was carried up there and put down there to ask for alms every day was striking. It speaks to the extent of his infirmity. This wasn't a sprained ankle or a busted knee. This was someone who had severe affliction. He was "lame from birth" says Luke. In other words, this man had never used his legs!¹⁴ Keep that in mind as the story progresses.

Look at **verse 3**.

³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms.¹⁵

By the way, benevolence and generosity towards the poor was a normal part of Jewish life.¹⁶ There were OT provisions to help those who were crippled or orphaned or widowed. And alms-giving was a big part of this culture. What better place to receive alms than in front of the temple? And this was busy time at the temple. And who better than Peter and John to give alms?

In fact we read last week that members of the early church were even selling their own property to meet the needs of their brothers. There was Spirit-induced generosity among the early church! You might think to

⁸ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 125n3: "Josephus recorded that the two daily sacrifices took place in the morning and at the ninth hour (*Ant.* 14.65; cf. Num 28:4). There also was a third time of prayer, probably at sunset."

⁹ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 125: "It was also the time of the evening Tamid, one of the two sacrifices held daily in the temple... The largest crowds would thus have been found at the times of sacrifice, as Peter and John must have been well aware; for they went to the temple for prayer and for witness."

¹⁰ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 193: "Greco-Roman readers would view the condition of the man as an outward physical sign of an inner weak moral character, inferring a soft, or timid, or effeminate nature. In 4:9 Peter calls him 'a weak man' (ἄνθρωπος ἄσθενής). The disabled and the lame were often the object of ridicule and cheap humor. Plutarch relates that an insensitive host of a symposium might ask 'a stammerer to sing, a bald man to comb his hair, or a lame man to dance on a greased wineskin.' It appears that in Jewish society, similar attitudes could be found. The Apocryphon of Ezekiel argues for the reunification of body and soul in the resurrection of the dead making the point that alone, a lame man and a blind man are each only 'half a man.' In the late first century, a Jewish author urges his readers, 'Do not ridicule a lame man' (4 Ezra 2:21)."

¹¹ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 126: "This man was no recent "psychosomatic" cripple but one who was congenitally lame."

¹² Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 193: "He had to be carried to the temple, presumably by relatives who expected him to contribute to his upkeep by begging, which is what crippled and blind people would do who could not work in the fields or in a trade."

¹³ Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 90: "This was one of the gates of the Temple compound that led from the Court of the Gentiles (or the Outer Court) to the Court of the Women (the Inner Court). People going between the Outer Court and the Inner Court would pass by this man, as he was sitting there asking for alms from those who came in and went out of the Temple. Yeshua frequently ministered in the Temple compound, and He would have often seen this individual. Yet, He never chose to heal him, showing that even He did not heal everyone."

¹⁴ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 197: "People who were lame from birth were naturally regarded as hopeless cases. Hippocrates, in his book on diseases, lists the condition of being lame among the disorders which disable a person permanently... People living in Galilee would have had many opportunities to witness healings of lame people during Jesus' ministry. Most Jews living in Jerusalem probably had only heard about Jesus' miracles. Now a good number of them had finally become witnesses of the power of Jesus."

¹⁵ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 127: "'Alms, alms,' he begged, like a stuck phonograph record, as he would have uttered hundreds of times a day. This time the response was different. Typically, donors would flip a coin in his direction as they hastened into the temple, scarcely giving him a glance. This time the would-be benefactors stopped in their tracks. Peter fixed his gaze on him (*atenizō*). "Look [*blepō*] at me," he said. This obviously was not going to be a chance encounter, so the man responded by giving his total attention (*epechō*) to Peter."

¹⁶ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 194: "The giving of 'alms' (ἐλεημοσύνη) was a central feature of Israelite and Jewish piety. The law motivated the people of Israel to help resident aliens, widows, and orphans by reminding them of their slavery in Egypt from which God rescued them [Exod 22:21–27; Deut 10:18–20; 24:17–18; 27:19]."

yourself, **“Well, this is going to be another display of the church’s generosity with this crippled man!”**
Well, yes, but it’s going to be more than that.

Look at **verse 4**,

⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.”

⁵ And he fixed his attention¹⁷ on them, expecting to receive something from them.

I just envision this crippled man as a little glum before Peter and John got there. It was probably was a rough day up to this point for collecting alms. And if he was a little glum beforehand, now he’s full of glee.

“Someone has responded. Someone is going to give me something.”

He fixes his attention on Peter and John probably with a big smile on his face thinking, **“Finally I’m going to receive something. Maybe now I’ll be able to buy some food and eat and fill my hungry stomach.”**

⁶ But Peter said, “I have no silver¹⁸ and gold,¹⁹

Well, that’s a bummer. Whatever hopeful anticipation this man had is now dashed by Peter. And I imagine his countenance went from sorrowful to hopeful but then back to sorrowful again after these words.

Peter says, **“I have no silver and gold... I have no money for you.”**

but what I do have I give to you.

Well what’s that? Some crusty leftover sandwiches? Some cold soup?

In the name²⁰ of²¹ Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”²²

Forget money! Forget food! Forget a temporary solution to your problem. How about something permanent? How about permanent relief from your human affliction?

⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

¹⁷ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 161: “The lame man turns his attention (ἐπεῖχεν, *epeichen*) to them in the hope of receiving something... the verb is presented vividly in the imperfect. He is giving them his attention, hopeful, no doubt, that financial help is on the way.”

¹⁸ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 195: “Almost all the coins which were struck in Palestine were made of bronze; coins made of silver and gold were minted elsewhere. In the early Roman Empire, the aureus, a gold coin, equaled 25 silver denarii. The silver coins which circulated in Palestine were the Tyrian tetradrachma and the denarius minted in Rome, Tyre, Antioch, and in Nabatea. The Tyrian tetradrachma was the trade coin of the Levant and was thus in circulation in Galilee and Judea. Smaller denominations were the obol, chalkos, lepton, assarion, and quadrans which could be carried in a purse (cf. Luke 22:36). Jewish males had to pay the annual temple tax, which was a half-shekel. In Syria, one bronze obol (2 asses) bought the minimum daily food on subsistence levels (between 1,500 and 3,000 calories per day, depending on gender, age, occupation), which means that 45 to 50 denarii per year was the subsistence wage, i.e., the income that allowed a person to procure enough calories in food to live and remain healthy. Two denarii would provide three weeks of bread ration for a poor person. In Galilee, one denarius was the wage of a day laborer (Matt 20:2). A poor woman’s generous gift to the temple was two lepta (Mark 12:42); a lepton was the smallest copper coin, worth 1/128 of a denarius. This was most probably the coin that a beggar would be given most frequently.”

¹⁹ Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 91: “There is a legend that has circulated for years about a discussion between Pope Innocent II and Thomas Aquinas. While counting a large sum of money, the Pope said, ‘You see, Thomas, the church can no longer say, ‘Silver and gold have I none.’ Thomas answered, ‘That is true, Holy Father, but neither can she still say, ‘Arise and walk.’”

²⁰ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 195: “Interpretations that assume a magical background for the use of the “name” of Jesus miss the point that Luke knows all too well that “powerful names” are used in magic, but that the name of Jesus cannot be used in this sense with the intended effect. In 19:11–17 he relates the story of the seven sons of a Jewish priest called Sceva who worked as exorcists; their attempt to use the name of Jesus over people who had evil spirits, saying, ‘I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims,’ backfires when these sons are attacked by the demon, who mauls them. Acts 8:9–11 also demonstrates Luke’s rejection of magical practices... It is not the use of the ‘name’ Jesus, i.e., not the utterance of the word ‘Jesus,’ which heals the lame man. Rather, the source of the power that can and in fact does heal the crippled beggar is Jesus himself. The phrase ‘in the name of’ (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι) means ‘by the authority of Jesus’ (see on 2:38). The power of Jesus becomes a present reality in his name that has been given so that people believe. The power that healed the lame man is faith in Jesus, which was made possible on account of the proclamation of Jesus’ power, as Peter explains in the speech that follows (v. 16).”

²¹ Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 90: “The expression ‘in the name of’ means ‘in the authority of.’ Because the name stands for all that a person is, Peter invoked the power and the authority of Yeshua.”

²² JOHN CASSIAN: “Those men who received power from God never used that power as if it were their own but referred the power to him from whom they received it; for the power itself could never have any force except through the name of him who gave it. And so both the apostles and all the servants of God never did anything in their own name but in the name and invocation of Christ. For the power itself derived its force from the same source as its origin, and it could not be given through the instrumentality of the ministers, unless it had come from the Author.” Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 40.

Now pay attention here, because the phrasing of Peter's statement is so important. He doesn't just say **"Rise and walk!"** He doesn't say, **"In the name of Peter, rise and walk!"**²³ He doesn't even say, **"In the Name of God, rise and walk!"** although he did say that implicitly. He says, **"In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."** Why did he say it that way? Because **"The name of Jesus triumphs over human affliction (3:1–10)."**

By the way, when Jesus healed people, he would just do it by his own authority. As Messiah, as God-Incarnate, he had the authority and power to heal by himself.²⁴ **Howard Marshall** says in his commentary, **"Jesus himself had no need to appeal to a higher authority such as the name of God."**²⁵ Jesus was the highest authority! But Peter's authority was derivative. **As is ours!** It's not his own. It's Jesus's power and authority that has been bestowed upon him.

Peter makes a statement here that will help him to transition to the preaching of the gospel later. Peter says, **"This guy Jesus, the guy from Nazareth in Galilee. This guy, Jesus, who Jerusalem despised and rejected and crucified. He's the Christ. And his name has the power to heal."**

Now that's a great statement, but it doesn't mean squat if the guy doesn't get healed. It would be a lot of theatrics without any substance. If the guy just sat there and said, **"Okay, that's great. Thanks a lot,"** but wasn't healed, then there would be some question about the power of the name of Jesus.

But look what happens in **verse 7**.

⁷ And [Peter] took [the crippled man] by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.²⁶

⁸ And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple²⁷ with them, walking and leaping²⁸ and praising God.

There he goes... right into the temple! This is a place he couldn't go to while crippled. It's as if walking wasn't enough for him, he had to jump. And as he's walking and leaping he can't contain the joy in his heart and he starts praising God. **"Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!"**²⁹ He probably started singing a song!³⁰

What would you say if you were him at that moment? Would you sing a lament? Would you sing a song in the minor key? "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen." If that was me, I'd start singing, "Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!"

Whatever he was doing, it attracted a lot of attention. He wasn't quiet or reserved. Actually I think one of God's goals here was to get the attention of the audience. And that's exactly what he did.

Look at **verse 9**,

⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

²³ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 200: "The focus of the attention is not on the miracle workers (who end up in prison), and not on the healed man (who praises God), but on the power of Jesus as the power of God."

²⁴ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 124: "Of the many miracles recounted in Acts, none has more formal resemblance to the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels than this one. There is one major difference—Jesus healed by His own authority; Peter healed by the 'name' of Jesus, which was indeed by Jesus' authority at work through the agency of the apostles."

²⁵ Marshall, *Acts*, TNTC, 94.

²⁶ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 162: "The passive 'were strengthened' makes clear that divine power is what strengthened the legs."

²⁷ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 128: "Day by day he sat there at the threshold to the place of worship, but he could not enter. He was lame, blemished, and denied access to the inner courts (cf. Lev 21:17–20; 2 Sam 5:8).¹³ At this time not only had he received physical healing, but he had found spiritual acceptance as well. For the first time he was deemed worthy to enter the house of worship. This theme will repeat itself in Acts. Those who were rejected as unworthy for worship in the old religion of Israel found full acceptance in the name of Jesus, whether a lame beggar, an Ethiopian eunuch, a woman, or a Gentile."

²⁸ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 163: "The verb for 'leap' (ἄλλομαι, *hallomai*) appears three times in the NT—twice in Acts, as a parallel healing in 14:10 also uses this verb. John 4:14 has water leaping up to eternal life. Isaiah 35:6 LXX uses this verb regarding what will happen in the time of salvation, "Then the lame shall leap like a deer" (Isa. 35:1–10.)"

²⁹ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 196: "Perhaps the healed beggar uses the first lines of Psalm 135:1–2, 'Praise the Lord! (הַלְלוּ יְהוָה) Praise the name of the Lord (הַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה); praise him, you servants of the Lord (הַלְלוּ עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה), you who minister in the house of the Lord (בְּבֵית יְהוָה), in the courts of the house of our God. Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.'" "

³⁰ MARTIN LUTHER: "It certainly is not our merit or power [that accomplishes such], but faith granted them this power. This man lay very long, forty years, there before the temple. This indeed was acknowledged by those who knew him. He goes about and leaps like a deer; he gives praise and is so joyous in his heart. This cannot be witchcraft." Quoted in Chung-Kim and Hains, *Acts: New Testament*, RCS, 42.

So I just see this guy jumping around and singing at the top of his lungs. And the miracle was so radical that he didn't even feel the effect of atrophy or arthritis or anything. He didn't even have to learn how to walk or leap. This guy was crippled from birth! And now he's running around, leaping in the air, and praising God.

And the people are saying, **"You're that guy!" "I've seen you asking for alms at the gate." "I've seen you there for years. How are you walking and leaping? How did this happen?"** Well **Jesus triumphs over human affliction.**

Now let's just take a time out here, and step out of this story for a second. Because I want to do my best to try and explain what God is doing here. I think there are a few things happening.

1) God has created another "wow-moment" in the life of the early church in order to get the people's attention and allow the gospel to spread. This is similar, though not as dramatic, as what took place at Pentecost. I imagine that things like this happened with relative frequency in the early church. **Acts 2:43** says, "And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles." This healing of the lame man is an example of the "many signs and wonders" done through the apostles.

2) This is not just a miracle done for the sake of doing miracles. Miracles in the Bible always have a purpose behind them. When God parted the Red Sea and allowed the Israelites to walk through it on dry land, he did that to show his people his power. And he also did it to humble the Egyptians and to glorify himself.

It says this very clearly in **Exodus 14:17-18**, "And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen." We have a similar incident here in **Acts 3** where God's purpose is to magnify the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. **"The name of Jesus triumphs over human affliction."**

But not only does **"The name of Jesus triumphs over human affliction."** Also **"The name of Jesus triumphs over human sinfulness."** The Lord Jesus is sovereign over the physical world, and likewise he is sovereign over the spiritual world. That's what's being demonstrated here. **D.L. Bock** says it this way, **"As in the Gospel of Luke, this miracle is a visual act that points to a deeper reality... Jesus can transform and give new life."**³¹ This leads to a third statement about what God is doing here.

3) The miracle gave Peter an opportunity to preach the gospel, pure and simple. What good is it if your body is healthy on earth, and yet you still go to hell when you die? The endgame of these miracles is to preach the gospel. **The endgame of all ministries of mercy should be "spiritual healing" not just "physical healing."**

So with that in mind, let's pivot. And write this down as #2 in your notes if you haven't already.

- 1) The name of Jesus triumphs over **human affliction** (3:1-10)
- 2) The name of Jesus triumphs over **human sinfulness** (3:11-26)

Watch how fluid this transition is for Peter in the following verses. He draws a straight line from healing in Jesus's name to salvation in Jesus's name.³²

Look at **verse 11**.

¹¹ While he clung to Peter and John,

This is a very tender picture here. I just imagine this healed man holding Peter and John with all his might. **"I'm not letting you guys go. This is the greatest day of my life!"**

¹¹ While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's.³³

³¹ The full quote is as follows: Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 158: "This gives the man the capability of an entirely new life; it is an act that portrays what salvation does. Compassion expresses itself in service to others and in meeting their needs. Another emphasis in the account is that God is still active in the authority Jesus possesses, working through the apostles. The account is a miracle event in form (vv. 1-2: setting; vv. 3-5: approach of miracle-workers; v. 6: miracle; vv. 7-10: response and reaction). As in the Gospel of Luke, the miracle is a visual act that points to a deeper reality (Bock 1994a: 463; Bock 2002a: 106-7). Jesus can transform and give new life, and so can the deeds of those he works through."

³² Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 125: "In Acts the miracles were always in the service of the word, confirming God's presence in the spread of the gospel or as a sign that enabled faith."

This whole incident made quite a commotion. There may have been hundreds or even thousands of people running to Peter and John. And Luke says all of this took place in Solomon's portico. Let me give you a quick temple detail. Here's a model of the temple on the screen:



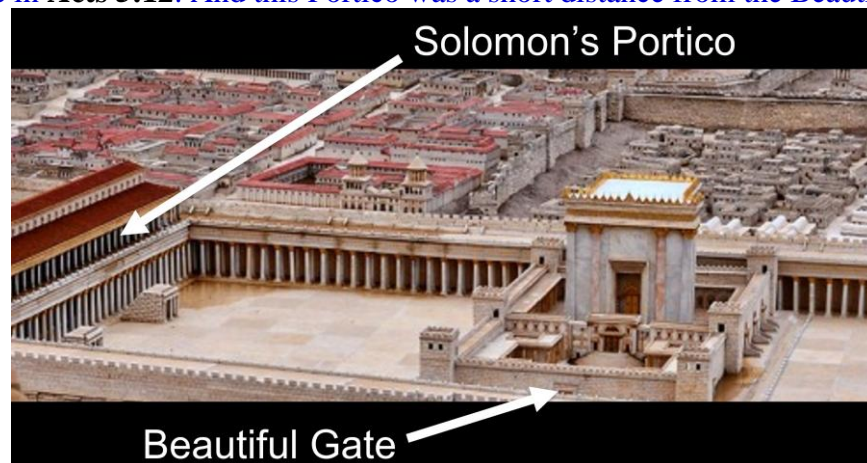
“The Second Temple on the Temple Mount, as it may have looked following Herod the Great’s refurbishment”³⁴ As I’ve said already the temple was destroyed in AD 70. But before its destruction it was a magnificent edifice.³⁵ It was one of the great structures of the world at this time. And a large group of people could be gathered very quickly.

Here’s a picture showing what Solomon’s Portico might have looked like in the first century.



Solomon's Portico

Jesus taught from this portico at least once during his ministry (**John 10:23**). And the disciples met here again at least one other time in **Acts 5:12**. And this Portico was a short distance from the Beautiful Gate.



³³ Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 92: “It was called Solomon’s Porch because it was built on the remains of the ancient foundation of the Solomonic Temple.”

³⁴ Image taken from CNBC Travel “Watch these 5 endangered UNESCO sites get digitally restored in a matter of seconds,” 07-30-20: <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/07/30/watch-5-unesco-sites-get-digitally-restored-in-a-matter-of-seconds.html>

³⁵ For a 3D rendering of Herod’s temple, see the following: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUhxQjdiAw>

So I envision this healed man running and leaping and praising God in the courtyard between the Beautiful Gate and Solomon's Portico.

Now look at **verse 12**.

¹² And when Peter saw it [the people running to them astonished]³⁶ 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 piety³⁷ we have made him walk?"³⁸

I find it fascinating here that the first thing that Peter communicates to this people is **"This ain't me!" "Don't give me God's glory. Don't think I'm responsible for this."** Peter is so protective of God's glory that he quickly defers to Jesus. He doesn't want anyone thinking that *he* did this. Peter's come a long way from his mishaps during Jesus's ministry!³⁹

But notice what else Peter communicates in **verse 13**.⁴⁰ It's kind of surprising.

¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified⁴¹ his servant⁴² Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

Wow! Okay, Peter goes from, **"This man was healed by God not me"** to **"you killed his servant Jesus Christ!"** The crowd was probably like, **"Whoa, hang on! We just came here to find out about this miracle. We didn't come here to get preached at."**

Notice Peter's not interested in explaining the miracle for the miracle's sake. He's not even interested in just bringing praise to God. His main objective in speaking is drawing people's attention to Christ.

Once again, just like we saw at Pentecost, this is not a seeker-sensitive message. In fact most preaching in the Bible, by today's standards, would be considered offensive. But it was offensive back then too. Why did they kill Jesus? Because his preaching was offensive! You don't kill somebody for preaching sugary-sweet, lollipop sermons about how special everyone is.

And Peter follows Jesus's example. Listen to what Peter says to them in **verse 14**.

¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One,⁴³ and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

What murderer is he talking about there? Barabbas.

¹⁵ and you⁴⁴ killed the Author of life

³⁶ MARTIN LUTHER: "The people chase after him, they stare. But the apostles do not want themselves to be stared at; instead, they point to the Redeemer." Quoted in Chung-Kim and Hains, *Acts: New Testament*, RCS, 45.

³⁷ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 168: "The crowd's attention has turned from the lame man to his two healers. The crowd should be careful to place the credit for the healing in the right place. The question makes clear that it is not by 'our own power and piety' (ἰδία δυνάμει ἢ εὐσεβείᾳ, *idia dynamei ē eusebeia*) that this miracle has occurred. Outside this verse, the term for 'piety' appears only in the Pastorals (ten times) and 2 Peter (four times) and refers to someone of good character. Mere piety cannot explain this healing, nor is it their character that has persuaded God to act... It is God and his glorification of Jesus that has led to this healing."

³⁸ CHRYSOSTOM: "They increased their glory even more by despising it. They revealed that what had just taken place was not a human act but was divine and that they were worthy of joining the beholders in admiration and not of receiving it from them. Do you see how free of ambition he is and how he rejects the honor paid to him? This is what the ancient fathers also did, as Daniel said, 'not because of any wisdom that is in me.'" Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 42.

³⁹ Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC, 142: "Peter and Paul both try to deflect glory from themselves elsewhere in Acts (10:26; 14:14–15). This is a refreshing change from what Luke describes in his Gospel, where the disciples began disputing among themselves as to which one was the greatest (Luke 9:46; 22:24)."

⁴⁰ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 165: "This speech [Acts 3:12–26] is one of the most christologically rich addresses in Acts, as Jesus is the servant, the Holy and Righteous One, the Author of life, the prophet like Moses, the Christ, and the seed of Abraham."

⁴¹ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 169: "God glorified (ἐδόξασεν, *edoxasen*) his servant. This reverses the normal pattern associated with glory. God is the one usually glorified."

⁴² Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 93: "He is the Servant of Jehovah of Isaiah the Prophet (Isa. 41:8–9; 42:1–4; 43:10; 44:21–22; 45:4; 48:20; etc.)." Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 131: "One is struck by the unusual title 'servant' (*pais*) applied here to Jesus. It is not a common title for Jesus in the New Testament, occurring only here and in v. 26 and twice in chap. 4 (vv. 27, 30). The usage seems to be basically liturgical in chap. 4, for it is applied there to David as well as Christ (v. 25). Here in chap. 3, particularly in a context dealing with the death of Jesus, it is tempting to see an allusion to Christ as the suffering servant of Isaiah. This becomes even more likely when one considers the possible allusions to the servant psalms that run throughout vv. 13–14, in the references to 'glorification' (Isa 52:13), the 'righteous one' (Isa 53:11), and being 'handed over' or 'delivered up' (*paradidomi*, twice in LXX of Isa 53:12)."

⁴³ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 170–1: "'The 'Righteous One' was a messianic description in Judaism (1 En. 38.2; 46.3; 53.6; Ps. Sol. 17:32; see OT: 2 Sam. 23:3; Isa. 32:1; 53:11; Zech. 9:9)."

By the way, that's a great affirmation of the eternality and the Deity of Christ. He is the Author of Life. There's a great irony in Peter's statement here. Do you sense it? **"You killed the Author of Life! You killed the person who created you. And you chose a murdered instead!"**

¹⁵ and you killed the Author⁴⁵ of life⁴⁶ whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.⁴⁷

Now this is practically a veiled threat. Peter is saying, **"He's back from the dead! We've seen him alive!"** If they weren't disturbed and terrified already, this crowd should be now!

Now when was the last time you heard this kind of preaching after a televangelist does some supposed miracles before a crowd? Usually the glory for those "miracles" go to the televangelist not to God. And the message that follows is usually nothing more than a "God wants you to be happy and healthy and he'll bend over backwards to accommodate you" message. Not so with Peter.

As the crowd gathers to understand the miracle that has just taken place, Peter drops the hammer on them: **"You killed the Author of life! You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer instead!"**

What is this? What is Peter doing? **Well, this is something that we like to call gospel preaching. Before you can get to the good news, you've got to dish out the bad news. Peter's going to get to the good news. But he doesn't skimp on the bad news.**

And Peter says, **"To this, Jesus's resurrection, we are witnesses!" And look at verse 16.**

¹⁶ And his name—by faith⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹

In other words, **"Jesus did this. Jesus is awesome. Jesus, the guy that you killed, did this! And 'by faith in his name' (notice the focus on the name again), this crippled man has been given perfect health before all of you. God should crush all of you for your actions against his Son. God the Son could have risen from the dead to exact vengeance on all of you. But he hasn't. Instead he offers you hope and healing."**

Let me just step out of this story again for a second. I've mentioned the need to preach the truth even forcefully at times. But here's another important component of preaching the gospel: hope. Here's another point of emphasis: grace. Let me say this, "Don't ever be so focused on the truth that you conceal God's grace." Because truth without grace is brutality, and grace without truth is hypocrisy.

⁴⁴ Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 93: "The ones guilty of doing so were the people to whom Peter was speaking: ye. The personal pronoun is in the emphatic position. It was they, the Jewish people, who handed Yeshua over to a civil authority for a civil trial; it was they who denied Yeshua before the face of Pilate when they said that they had no king but Caesar (Jn. 19:15). And when they said, his blood be on us and on our children (Mt. 27:25), they said this at the time when Pilate himself had determined to release him."

⁴⁵ Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 94: "the fact that Yeshua is the Author of life is the emphasis in John 1:1–18; Colossians 1:15–20; and Hebrews 1:2... Using the same term, the author of Hebrews pointed out that Yeshua is the pioneer of our redemption (Heb. 2:10)."

⁴⁶ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 171: "The expression also stands in contrast to a murderer who takes life."

⁴⁷ MARTIN LUTHER: "Here we see that the apostles on Pentecost, in fact throughout the entire year, had nothing else in their mouth than the forgiveness of sin and the extermination of sin, the resurrection of the dead." Quoted in Chung-Kim and Hains, *Acts: New Testament*, RCS, 44.

⁴⁸ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 172: "Whose faith is meant here, that of Peter and John (Barrett 1994: 200; Witherington 1998: 182; vv. 12–13), or that of the man (Haenchen 1987: 207; Jervell 1998: 165), or that of all three? ... Given that faith can refer to the start of faith or its ongoing character, it is not impossible in this case that all three are meant, but certainly the lame man is the key one who responds and whose response is represented in what is said about repentance in verse 19 (14:9 also points to a response in a healing context). The lame man's response to his healing shows that he did respond to what God had done and was thankful for it." Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 94: "It was the lame man's faith in Yeshua of Nazareth that caused the healing, not any internal power of either Peter or John." Luther thinks it's Peter's faith: "The beggar does not believe, but Peter believes. 'In the name [of Jesus] stand up,' for I believe. He stands up, leaps and is joyous. Peter must have had powerful courage, and a completely different courage than he had on Good Friday." Quoted in Chung-Kim and Hains, *Acts: New Testament*, RCS, 42. So also John Chrysostom, "Both by his thankfulness and by the healing itself his faith is revealed." Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 40.

⁴⁹ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 172: "This verse gives the answer to the question of the source of the healing (see v. 12). It is written in a very contorted syntax (Williams 1990: 75–76), but this is a result of highlighting the role of the name and the person of Jesus, whose "name" is mentioned twice in the verse, as is the twofold mention of faith connected to him."

What we have here from Peter is a balancing of *grace* and *truth*. Jesus himself was full of grace and truth (**John 1:17**). And Jesus's disciple, Peter, is exemplifying that in his sermon.

Look what Peter says next. Look at **verse 17**.

¹⁷ "And now, brothers,⁵⁰ I know that you acted in ignorance,⁵¹ as did also your rulers.

¹⁸ But what God foretold⁵² by the mouth of all the prophets,⁵³ that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.⁵⁴

Here are some OT passages that refer to Christ's suffering. There are plenty of passages that speak of Christ's second coming with his rule and reign. But there are also passages that speak of Christ's suffering in his first coming. For example, there's **Isaiah 53:1–12, Jeremiah 11:19, Zechariah 12:10, Zechariah 13:7, Psalm 22, Psalm 31, Psalm 34, and Psalm 69.**⁵⁵ Those OT passages (and others) speak of a Suffering Servant, a Suffering Messiah. Jesus is the fulfillment of those passages.

I can only imagine Peter's audience asking now, **"Okay, so we were ignorant and persecuted the Messiah. We put him to death. But God was sovereign over that. He fulfilled what was written in the prophets. So what do we do about this, Peter? Tell us! We don't want the risen Christ angry at us. How do we make this right?"**

Alright, here it is. **This verse is just as true for us in the twenty-first century, as it was for this crowd twenty centuries ago.**

Peter says in **verse 19**,

¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn again,⁵⁶ that your sins may be blotted out,⁵⁷

That word blotted out means to cause to disappear by wiping away.⁵⁸ It's the same word that is used in **Revelation** to refer to our tears that God permanently wipes away.⁵⁹ **When we repent and turn to Jesus, we have our sins permanently removed from record. And it's not just your past sins. It's present and future sins too.**

Now just imagine for a moment every single sin you've ever committed written down on a scroll or a book. For some of us, our sins would fill a library. Think of all those sins for a second: bitterness, hate, thievery, blasphemy, deceit, lust, slander, acts of violence, addictions, greed, envy, jealousy ... do I need to keep going? Sexual immorality, impurity, enmity, strife, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, drunkenness, disobedience, etc., etc., etc.

You guys get the picture, right? Do you see all of those sins written out in a book? Now just imagine Jesus going page by page and by the power of his blood he wipes away every sin you ever committed. Gone! It's as if you never sinned at all. Is that a powerful picture or what?

⁵⁰ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 173: "'Brethren' here reflects their shared Jewish identity, not as 'if they were already Christians.'"

⁵¹ 1 Corinthians 2:8 says similarly, "None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

⁵² Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 133: "The mystery of the divine sovereignty worked through the tragedy born of human freedom to bring about God's eternal purposes for the salvation of humanity (cf. 2:23f.). God took the cross, the quintessence of human sin, and turned it into the triumph of the resurrection."

⁵³ CHRYSOSTOM: "If indeed it was all the prophets and not only one of them who said this, it follows that, although the event took place through ignorance, it did not take place contrary to God's ordinance. See how great is the wisdom of God, when it uses the wickedness of others to bring about what must be." Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 44.

⁵⁴ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 174: "Peter is making clear that a Messiah who suffers, which was not an expectation in Judaism, is something God planned and Scripture declared, even though Peter does not note a specific text here. Luke's earlier use of the righteous-sufferer texts (Pss. 22, 69) and his allusion to Isa. 53 in verse 13 show the roots of the concept Peter argues for here at a literary level."

⁵⁵ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 133–4: "Where did the prophets predict this suffering of Christ? Luke referred to such predictions often (cf. Luke 24:46; Acts 17:3; 26:22f.; significantly also 1 Pet 2:21f.). The servant psalm of Isa 52:13–53:12 immediately comes to mind, but the early Christians did not fail to note many other Old Testament passages as finding their ultimate realization in the passion of Christ (e.g., Jer 11:19; Zech 12:10; 13:7; Pss 22; 31; 34; 69)."

⁵⁶ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 182: "In the turning to God, there is a recognition about the need to change direction concerning the sins one commits. Turning to the servant means becoming an ally of the one who provides and seeks righteousness from us."

⁵⁷ JOHN CALVIN: "Our sermons must be so tempered as to profit the hearers. For unless there be some hope of pardon left, dread of punishment hardens human hearts in obstinacy." Quoted in Chung-Kim and Hains, *Acts: New Testament*, RCS, 45.

⁵⁸ See DBL Greek 1981, ἐξαλείφω #1 and BDAG, ἐξαλείφω #1, 344.

⁵⁹ See Revelation 7:17 and 21:4.

¹⁹ Repent⁶⁰ therefore, and turn again, 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 restoring⁶¹ all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.⁶²

All Peter's saying with that statement is that Christ is coming back. He's gone away for a time. He's in heaven awaiting his return. And in time he will return to restore all things as his prophets have foretold. **So you better be ready for that. You don't want to be on the wrong side of Team Jesus when he returns!**

Look at verse 22.

²² Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up⁶³ for you a prophet like me from your brothers [This is a reference to Christ. He's not just "a prophet" he's "the prophet." He's the prophet *par excellence*]. 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.'⁶⁴

Peter quotes here from the book of **Deuteronomy**. This is one of the great Messianic texts from the Pentateuch. Moses prophesied as follows, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen" (18:15). And then Yahweh says similarly, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him" (18:18–19).⁶⁵

Peter is creating a great divide here, just like his master, Jesus. And just like Moses did in the OT. There is saved and unsaved. There is believer and unbeliever. There is sheep and goat. There is wheat and weed. There is repentance and unrepentance; eternal life and eternal death; times of refreshing with sins blotted out and destruction. Those are your options.

And Peter says in verse 24 **[I love listening to good preachers preach... Here's how Peter lands the plane]**.

²⁴ And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel⁶⁶ 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, ⁶⁷ saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'⁶⁸

⁶⁰ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 175; "Repentance as the summary response to the apostolic message also appears in 2:38... It stresses the need for a change in direction, to change one's mind about where one is... Important to note is that whereas "faith" is the term highlighted in verse 16, now repentance and turning are called for. Peter uses a variety of terms to describe properly responding to his message. The variety indicates that the early church had a collection of terms, not just one, to indicate how to respond to the gospel."

⁶¹ Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC, 140: "The noun used here (*apokatastasis*, 'restoration') is from the same root as the verb in the disciples' question about God's restoring the kingdom to Israel (*apokathistano*, 1:6)."

⁶² Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 177–8: "The expression about the prophets is like Luke 1:70. Texts such as Isa. 65–66 are in view, where Israel is restored to fullness (also Isa. 34:4; 51:6; Jer. 15:18–19; 16:15; 23:8; 24:6; Ezek. 17:23; Amos 9:11–12)."

⁶³ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 178: "Such a prophet God would 'raise up' (ἀναστήσει, *anastēsei*). This verb, reused in verse 26, may well have a wordplay built around it (also Acts 13:33). It means to bring someone onto the scene of history but could in this context allude to resurrection, to raise someone up, especially in its second occurrence later in the speech... In the original context, this promise of a prophet would have alluded to Joshua or others. Their presence as those who could speak for God would preclude the need to appeal to magic or divination. This passage came to be seen by first-century Judaism, however, as a typological promise of a prophet of the Mosaic leader-deliverer pattern who was a part of the eschaton (Bock 1987: 191–94). The expectation of a Moses-like figure in the end time was common in Judaism (1QS 1.9–11; 4Q175 1.5–8; 1 Macc. 14:41)."

⁶⁴ Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC, 140: "Thus, we find two points of eschatology in this evangelistic sermon. On the positive side is the promise of the restoration of all things (3:19–21); on the negative side is the threat that those who do not listen to Jesus will be completely cut off (v. 23)."

⁶⁵ Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 136: "Already before the coming of Christ, this passage was being interpreted messianically in some Jewish circles. Evidence exists, for instance, that the Qumran community expected a prophet like Moses as a part of their messianic expectation, and the Samaritans hoped in a prophet-messiah called the Taheb. In his Gospel, Luke often likened Jesus to a prophet (cf. Luke 4:24; 7:16, 39; 24:19), and in Stephen's speech the Mosaic-prophetic typology is treated in detail (cf. Acts 7:37)."

⁶⁶ Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 180: "Samuel does not have a specific prophecy about this period, but he is the prophet tied to David, pointing to a messianic allusion as part of a "son of David" Christology."

⁶⁷ BEDE: "Christ indeed is the offspring of Abraham, and through faith in his name a blessing is promised to all the families of the earth, namely, Jews and Gentiles. However, the apostle soothed the minds of the Jews in order to make them more well-disposed to believing by saying that, out of the whole world, the Savior chose to visit and bless them first." Quoted in Martin and Smith, eds., *Acts*, ACCS, 46.

²⁶ God, having raised up his servant⁶⁹ [Jesus], sent him to you first⁷⁰ [the Jews], to bless you by turning every one of you⁷¹ from your wickedness.”

“To the Jew first and then to the Gentile,” Paul wrote in Romans (1:16). **“You guys get first dibs,” says Peter. “The prophecy to Abraham that “in your offspring shall all the earth be blessed” is coming true before your very eyes.”**⁷²

As we’ve seen already, the church has made an international impact at Pentecost. And very soon, as we’ll see throughout the book of Acts, that international impact will become cross-cultural as Samaritans and Gentiles are added to the church. But before all that happens, just know that it started here first. God raised Jesus up here first, in Jerusalem. And Peter is telling his Jewish brethren, **“You have a chance to repent and turn from your wickedness and embrace Jesus as Savior.”**

Pretty inspired preaching by Peter here! He’s now preached two sermons in Acts to two riveted audiences. And let me say this about those two sermons. They are different in terms of content, but still the same. Did you notice that? The wording is different. The OT quotes are different. The principles derived from those OT quotes are slightly different, but the message is the same.

Actually this encourages me quite a bit. Peter is not dull or repetitive or monolithic with his preaching of the Word. But the same basic principles are there: Preach the Word! Preach Christ as Messiah! Preach Christ’s death and resurrection! Preach Salvation by faith! Preach repentance! That’s the message that he preaches twice in Acts. **And then afterwards he leaves the results to God, just like we do here in San Antonio.**

In fact let me boil Peter’s two sermons down to two essential components: 1) Preach the Word, the Scriptures! 2) And Preach the WORD, Jesus Christ! Preach the Bible and preach the gospel. **That’s what I’m called to do. And for what it’s worth, those are the two primary objectives that I have every time I stand before you here on Sunday morning.**

So, that’s my takeaway from this passage as your pastor/preacher. As Paul says, an elder should labor in “preaching and teaching” (1 Tim 5:17). But let me add to that some additional takeaways for all of us who are followers of Jesus Christ.

I want to help you in the few moments that we have left to move from information to transformation and from being a hearer of God’s Word to being a doer of God’s Word. And so I’m going to give you as we close four applications from Acts 3. Write these down.

1) **Embrace** healing and suffering to the glory of God

I think the temptation for all of us as we read passages like this is to desire healing from whatever human affliction ails us. We want to be healed. We want God to answer our prayer of faith. But the thing we have to keep in mind is that the endgame of God’s healing is not our personal comfort or even answers to our prayers. It’s the glory of God. And at times God is glorified through healing. At other times God is glorified as his people endure great pain and suffering.⁷³

⁶⁸ Bock, Acts, BECNT, 181: “The appeal to old promises is important. It shows that although this community is a seemingly new entity, it is rooted in old promises. In the ancient world, for a religion to be old was a virtue because it meant that the religion had the benefit of experience. Peter’s appeal to the past is a form of legitimization for the new community.”

⁶⁹ Fernando, Acts, NIVAC, 140: “The speech begins and ends with the expression of Jesus as God’s ‘servant’ (vv. 13, 26). This directs us back to the messianic servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 42–53. The Septuagint uses the same word (*pais*) in those passages.”

⁷⁰ Polhill, Acts, NAC, 137: “There is significance in the little word ‘first,’ just as there is in Abraham’s blessing extending to “all peoples on earth.” It may have taken the apostles some time to fully realize the implications of the missionary imperative, but there it is. Peter was primarily concerned with the Jews. The gospel was preached to them first. Soon it would reach far beyond the boundaries of Judaism “to all the peoples on earth.”

⁷¹ Bock, Acts, BECNT, 181: “The interplay between the collective (ὁμας, *hymas*, plural you) and the individual need for response (ἑκαστον, *hekaston*, each one) is evident.”

⁷² Bock, Acts, BECNT, 158: “The “new” faith is actually very old, rooted in promises that go back to the beginning of God’s work in the world.”

⁷³ Schnabel, Acts, ZECNT, 199: “There have never been Christians who were able to heal all the sick whom they encountered. It is not only naive, but manifestly wrong, to think that if only we had enough faith, we could heal everyone who needs to be healed. It is not

I know in my own life, I've experienced the healing power of God. I know without a doubt that Jesus triumphs over all our human afflictions.⁷⁴ And soon enough in my incorruptible eternal body there will be no more pain or suffering or ailment. But in the here and now, healing and suffering coexist to the glory of God.⁷⁵

Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 3:1–3, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up.” In this NT era, there’s a time for healing, and there’s a time for suffering. God has determined those things. Our responsibility is to glorify God whatever comes our way. As Job said after his bout with suffering, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

I do think that there was an apostolic gift at play when Peter and Paul healed people. The apostles were able to do things that you and I cannot. And we’ve got to be okay with that. I wish I could do what they did. That would be great if we had a staff member here at church who could just run around town healing people all the time. That would be great for evangelism!

But keep this in mind, there were times when Peter and Paul couldn’t heal. Paul was even afflicted with a thorn in the flesh, and he couldn’t remove it. To be more precise, God wouldn’t remove it. So embrace healing *and* suffering to the glory of God.

2) **Take** up mercy as a means of gospel ministry

Even though we can’t heal people as Peter and John did in this passage, there is still a Biblical principle for acts of mercy that build bridges for the gospel. Jesus met tangible needs. The apostles met tangible needs. And they did that in order to pave a path to the gospel.⁷⁶

You might not be able to deliver a supernatural healing to someone who is physically hurting, but you can deliver a kind word to that person. You can deliver generosity or a means of provision.

James 1:27 says, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction.” What are some ways that you are distributing mercy as a means of gospel ministry? What are some ways our church is doing that? What are some ways that you are salt and light in our community and people are seeing your “good works” and glorifying your Father who is in heaven?

By the way, I’m all for parachurch ministries to help us do that. I would encourage you to explore ways that you can give and support financially mercy-based ministries. But let me just caution you in two ways: 1) Make sure that whatever parachurch ministries you are supporting are indeed building bridges for the gospel. Make sure that their “mercy” is a means of gospel ministry. Because some parachurch ministries get off track and build bridges to nowhere. And they are far removed from the gospel. So watch out for that. 2) Also make sure that you’re not just outsourcing mercy ministry to a parachurch organization. What are some ways that you... What are some ways that we... as the church... can take up mercy as a means of gospel ministry?

Thirdly, here’s another application.

3) **Call** sinners to repentance

the faith of Peter (which is not mentioned in the text) that healed the lame man, nor was it the faith of the lame man (which is mentioned only later in 3:16) which healed him. Authentic Christians always have faith that Jesus’ power can work through them to heal others, and they always have faith, if they are sick themselves, that Jesus’ power can heal them. But sick people are not always healed.”

⁷⁴ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 199: “Both a rationalistic attitude which trusts more in physicians than in the miracle-working power of Jesus and an enthusiastic attitude which despises the use of ordinary means to help the sick and the needy are misplaced.”

⁷⁵ Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC, 143–4: “We must always ensure that all our ministry is done in the power of the Spirit. Those without the gift of healing may not have the boldness to make the same type of statement that Peter made, resulting in the healing. But all ministry should be done in the power of the Spirit.”

⁷⁶ Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT, 199: “The goal of Christian ministry is ultimately not that the poor, the sick, the depressed, the challenged are being helped, but they can fully participate in the community of the people of God, as believers who have found true salvation in the name of Jesus Christ.”

“God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life!”⁷⁷ Absolutely! I don’t have a problem with that statement. I have no problem communicating that to people, but only when it is balanced by a call to repentance. Our gospel needs to be grace and truth both! Don’t skip on either.

When Peter preached this sermon, he gave the audience only two commands. These are imperatives in the Greek. Verse 19 has the words μετανοέω and ἐπιστρέφω. “Repent” and “turn around.” They’re synonyms. We turn from our sin, and we turn to Christ.

Here’s another way to frame repentance—admit your sinfulness before an Almighty God. Confess your identity as a sinner. And from this point forward make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life. You’re going this way in the direction of unbelief, sin, death, and destruction. Turn around and go the other way. Acknowledge the fact that “I’m a sinner. And Christ is Lord. And Christ died for my sins. And now he is allowing me to have my sins blotted out for eternity.”

If you haven’t done that before today, do that now. Repent before God. Admit your sinfulness. And allow the grace of God to come over you and remove all of your sinfulness. Because the name of Jesus triumphs over human sinfulness. Believe it!

Finally, one last thing.

4) **Lift** high the name of Jesus in worship

What’s in a name? What’s in a name? Philippians 2:9–11 says, “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The lingering image in my mind from this passage is the crippled man bounding up and down throughout the temple walking and leaping and praising God. People probably thought he was a lunatic. Running and jumping around like that. What a disgrace! What a buffoon! This is the temple! Have some decorum!

Well you would do that too if you experienced what he experienced. David said, “I’ll become even more undignified than this” (2 Sam 6:22) in order to celebrate the Lord. How much more should we who have experienced salvation through Jesus Christ, who have had our sins blotted out by the blood of Jesus, lift high the name of Jesus in worship. Let’s lift high the name of Jesus in worship!

⁷⁷ This is an evangelistic statement that we used as part of Campus Crusade for Christ (now called Cru: <https://www.cru.org/>) when I was in college.