

## Acts 3:12-26

### "The Plus Side Of Repentance"

There was "shock & awe" on Solomon's porch. A man, lame from birth had just been healed by a miracle performed through the apostle Peter & the people were blown away! The beggar was hoping to simply be sustained in his broken condition, but God didn't want to sustain him, He wanted to *save* Him.

& This is the heart of God toward all of mankind, not being willing/wanting that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance! Jesus said, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*"<sup>1</sup> There isn't so much as a single person that J.C. did not die for, He came to seek & to *save* that which was lost. Too often people are content to try & find answers in the things of this world, silver & gold. "If I just had a little more money, *then I'd be happy, then I'd be satisfied.*" Contentment is always & ever just out of reach, we always need just a little bit more. But it's not *silver* we need, it's a *Savior*.

Peter placed his eyes on that man & said, "Look at us; silver & gold I do not have. But what I do have I give to you: In the name of J.C. of Nazareth, rise up & walk." But he just sat there, he didn't even try. So Peter just reached down, grabbed him by the right hand & yanked him up, & immediately (somewhere in the transition) his feet & his ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood & walked & entered the temple, walking, leaping & praising God.

Then, all the people, hearing the commotion (this man making a scene [& understandably so]) began to recognize the man as the beggar who'd sat there every day for years! & They were filled with (the words are) "wonder & amazement" at what had happened to him...

Can I just say that Christianity is truly phenomenal? By the very definition of the word. It's not just a philosophy, or an ideology (though certainly there is teaching). But essentially, it's a phenomenon. It's something that occurs *in* you, that happens *to* you. You're taken from dead in sin to alive to God in Christ Jesus; & *then* you're taught how to live out this new life; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

This man was changed & everybody knew it. So they all started rushing together toward Peter & John & this man who went from lame to leaping for joy in a moment of the miraculous. Look at Vs 12.

<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [In 3:16-17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## Vs 12

Peter surveys the situation & seizes the opportunity to preach to the people. He'll share w/them the *explanation* & an *exhortation*.

But straight out of the gate he makes a couple of things clear. #1 You shouldn't be surprised. & #2 You're focused on the wrong place & wrong people.

He says, "Why do you marvel at this?" His point is simple. "Hey, let's not forget who our God is! He's the God who parted the Red Sea, who brought manna from heaven, who caused the sun to stand still... We serve a God of miracles! So why should you be shocked when He performs a miracle? Jesus healed all kinds of people when He walked the earth, so why should it seem strange to you that He continues to heal from heaven?" Translation? Why are you shocked, why does this surprise you, let's not forget the nature of the God whom we serve, who exactly Jesus is!

#2 He lifts (as we'll see in a moment) their eyes off of the gift of healing & onto the Giver of the gift. He draws their attention to the fact that it's really not the miracle that we should be focusing on, but the One to whom it *points*, that's where the power is found & the praise is due.

& That's such an important point. We touched on it last week, the wrong *place* to focus is upon the miracle, the wrong *people* to praise is Peter or John. He says, "Why do you look so intently *at us*, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?" He can tell that they're beginning to be elevated in the people's eyes to some kind of "hero" status. Like, "Wow, you guys must be really close to God, how else could this be?" & There's always a temptation to give praise or some kind of exalted status to the vessel that God uses rather than to God Himself. Who praises the scalpel, rather than the surgeon who skillfully uses it? The guitar over the hand that plays it? It's not the instrument or the gift itself who's deserving of the attention & praise, but the Giver of the gift, the One who wields or works *through* the instrument. Man is simply the conduit, Christ is the One who does the work, give *Him* glory. Notice.

## Vs 13-15

It's ok Peter; don't hold back... ☺ Again this is nothing short of the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit moving through Peter giving him boldness to declare openly & honestly the truth about J.C. & their accountability before God concerning Him.

Peter understands something & that is this. There can be no *conversion* apart from *conviction*. If you don't realize you're guilty, you won't recognize your need to repent.

So he lays it out for them. He doesn't allow idle curiosity, or allow people to simply spectate anonymously, but he starts addressing them collectively in a way that they each have to consider themselves individually. & This is one of the beautiful things about God's word & the message of the gospel. It can be shared w/thousands simultaneously, but it finds us & deals w/who we are & what's happening in our lives individually/personally & it forces us consider our condition before God & the current direction of our eternal destiny.

& Peter knows his audience; he's speaking to Jews. So he starts by establishing that this is the work of the God of Ab, Isaac & Jacob (they're all on the same page). & He *instantly* zeroes in on Jesus. Ladies & Gentlemen, this is the greatness of his message, it was all about Jesus. It wasn't on himself, his study habits, his prayer life, how God could use *you* if you were more like *me* ☺. There was none of that. It's all about Jesus...

“The God of our fathers glorified His Servant Jesus...” Listen, we're going to pick up on the fact that Peter refers to Jesus by a few different titles, all of which are Messianic in nature. He refers here to Jesus as God's “Servant”. As in Isa 42:1, “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.”<sup>2</sup> & Again, “He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.”<sup>3</sup> These are references that these people would've been readily familiar with.

Peter is saying, “The prophesied Servant of God (the One mentioned in Isaiah 42, 49, 52 & 53) is Jesus, who *you delivered up & denied* in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go!” He's saying, “Look, even a pagan, w/no scriptural background or understanding at all could clearly & plainly see that Jesus was an innocent Man! He tried & tried again to set Jesus free but *you insisted on His crucifixion!*”

(Now I should say that though Peter is placing blame squarely on the Jews, that this doesn't in anyway point to the fact that the Jews alone were responsible for the death of Jesus. Pilate (& the Roman Gentiles) may not have crucified Him apart from the pressure of the Jews. But the Jews *couldn't* have crucified Him apart from the cooperation of the Gentiles. God saw to it that both Jew & Gentile were culpable in the death of Christ... As we've said before, truth be told, if we want to know who is responsible for the death of Jesus, we need to look no further than the mirror. He was paying the penalty for *our sin*.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Is 42:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Is 53:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He wasn't the victim of circumstance, it wasn't the railroading of justice that put Jesus on the cross, it was our sin.) (& We might add that *no one* took His life, He willingly laid it down out of His great love for you & for me.)

But Peter says, "You should've recognized Jesus for who He was, the Messiah. You didn't. Instead you delivered Him *to* Pilate, & denied Him *before* Pilate when he was determined to let Him go."

#### Vs 14

You can't speak much more plainly than what Peter is speaking here. "You should've recognized Jesus as God's Servant, but you didn't. You delivered Him to Pilate, you denied Him, you *disowned* Him; the Holy One (another Messianic title [Ps 16:10]) & the Just (another Messianic reference [Is 53:11]) & asked for a *murderer* to be granted to you (Barabbas), (they demanded the release of a known murderer) & killed the Prince of life, who God raised from the dead, of which we are all witnesses..." Wow...

This is the great antithesis, "You killed the Prince of life." The Author of life, the One in whom all life originated... "You chose a *taker* of life & *killed* the Giver of life... But God raised Him from the dead, of which we are all witnesses."

I'm telling you guys, every message in the book of Acts is an Easter message, the apostles were constantly bearing witness to the resurrection of J.C. "You killed Him; God raised Him, & He is alive & reigning upon the throne at the right hand of God forevermore."

& Here comes the explanation for why this man is standing before them whole.

#### Vs 16

Allow me to remind you that when we talk about "The name of Jesus", it's not like unto a magic stamp that air mails our prayers to heaven. It's not the "abracadabra" of the Christian world... When Peter said, "In the name of J.C. of Nazareth, rise up & walk" that meant that he was consciously doing what he did in the power & authority connected to Jesus, not in the power & authority of Peter. Peter wouldn't even take credit for the faith that was exercised in the healing! He said, "The faith which comes *through Him*" (that is, Jesus is the One who even gave me the faith to raise this man up!)

If you went to another country in the name of the President of the U.S. It would mean that you were there on his behalf, acting in his stead, his authority, you would be carrying his reputation (& having an impact *on* his reputation based upon how you conducted yourself).

Even so, Peter is saying, "I'm nothing but a conduit connected to the Divine supply line."

& This (ladies & gentlemen) is ministry; when Divine resources meet human needs through loving channels (willing vessels) to the Glory of God. & That happens (as Peter points out here) through faith in His name. Faith in the power/authority of J.C.

The temptation, of course, is to do things trusting in good intentions, or talents/gifts or skill, trusting in enough money or material resources, perhaps experience or hard work. However, if we're to actually do any eternal good, it must always & only be through faith in His name, for apart from Jesus, we can do nothing... Nothing of eternal value.

### Vs 17-18

He's given them an explanation, now he's preparing them for the exhortation. He's confined every one of them (& by way of application every one of us) under guilt, we can plainly see our sin & how it resulted in the death of God's only Son. However, he doesn't leave us w/out hope.

But here's something we need to see. He says that what they did, they did in ignorance – *however* – that did not make for their *innocence*. Ignorance & *innocence* are 2 different things. Ignorance may *mitigate* the circumstances, but it does not *alleviate* the guilt. You may not have known it was a 2:30 when you were doing 35 mph through the school zone but you'll discover real quick (when you're pulled over & given a ticket) that ignorance does not equate innocence... Right?

But what we see here is that biblical principle in play that God can take what man means for evil & use it for good. They were completely accountable for all that they had done (because *they did it*). However, even in that God worked His redemptive purposes just as He'd foretold by the mouth of all His prophets... All throughout the O.T. you read of passages of the suffering Servant of God; Ps 22, Isa 52, 53, of course the "types" in the book of Jonah, in Moses, in Joseph (in the volume of the book it is written of Him). In His suffering He bore our sin... God taking a terrible situation & turning it for His glory.

We have the same promise in the N.T. We may not understand it, we can't always see it or explain it on this side of eternity, but we trust in the word of God when it says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."<sup>4</sup> There you are, going through something & it's a genuinely terrible situation. I'm not asking you to understand it, you may not. I'm asking you to trust God through it. That He has thoughts of peace toward you, not of evil, to give you a future & hope, together forever w/Him... Ok, so here I am, confined under guilt; what' the appropriate response?

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 8:28]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## Vs 19-21

Peter announces the crime, he presents the evidence, explains the nature of their sin; & then offers them a pardon! He wasn't vying for their condemnation; he was encouraging them to recognize their condition & trust in J.C. in order that they might receive *salvation* by grace through faith in Him!

He says, "You've done this! Now; repent & be converted." We've spoken recently of this word "repent", so I won't dive too deeply into it. Simply stated it means "change your mind in a manner that leads to a change in direction." You thought Jesus was a blasphemer, worthy of death (you thought Jesus was just a "good" Man, a great teacher) now change your mind & see Him as the Lamb of God who's taken away the sins of the world & exalt Him as Lord (& Savior) in your heart/life.

Isaiah said it like this, "*Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.*"<sup>5</sup> Stop walking away from God & start walking toward Him. Detect & destroy the rationalization that leads to sin... You know; "It's just once, I can handle it", "I'll cover it up so no one knows", "Everybody else is doing it" (here's one) "It can't be wrong if it feels so right" or how about, "I'll just do it & then ask God to forgive me." We've got to change our mind about these lies!

"Repent", not turn over a new leaf, not subscribing to a self-help program, repentance isn't putting forth the effort to finally get your life together... It's a complete 180 in thought & deed, I wasn't trusting in Jesus, now I am. This is how I thought, it's time to think again... "& Be converted" be changed, J.C. changes your life!

& Here we begin to see the plus side to repentance (there's not really a minus side ☺). What's the 1<sup>st</sup> plus to repentance? "Your sins will be blotted out." The idea here is wiping ink off of a document. Ink, in the ancient world had no acid content, it didn't "bite" into paper. It could be wiped away w/a damp cloth. Peter is saying, "You have an ink stain of sin written out in your life, against your life, God will blot it out, wipe it all away, the record of your sin erased, when you repent, turn *to* & trust *in* Jesus."

Plus #2, "Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." Now; Peter points out the *implications* of this *prophetically* (the time in which J.C. will rule & reign over the earth in righteousness), & what a glorious time that will be. But for now, we enjoy the *applications personally*.

<sup>5</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Is 55:7]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.



When you & I repent of sin (not just initially unto salvation, but consistently unto sanctification) it's like a giant burden lifted off your shoulders, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. In the 32<sup>nd</sup> Ps, David said that like this, "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.*"<sup>6</sup> Refreshed through forgiveness brought on by repentance.

Vs 22-26

He says, "Even Moses told you that God would raise up a Prophet (like him) from among us that we should hear & obey" Jesus was the One God raised up to deliver the nation, to judge the world, to lead them in righteousness. & Every soul who will not hear Him, "shall be utterly destroyed."

Plus # 3 to repentance? Spared/saved from the promised judgment/destruction of God. I hope you're catching on the gravity of the plus side of repentance, I pray it's doing something in your soul... Sins blotted out & erased, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, saved from destruction & judgment...

He says, "Guys, all of the prophets have spoken of these things, & *you are the sons of the prophets.*" In other words, *you should* (of all people) be ready to receive the One spoken of *by* them... God promised a blessing in the seed of Ab (in reference to Christ), that He (that is Jesus) would be a blessing to every tribe, tongue & nation of the face of the earth. "& To you 1<sup>st</sup>" (Peter says) God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you..." Here we go, what was the blessing, what's the 4<sup>th</sup> plus to repentance? Jesus turns away, every one of us from our iniquities.

God's blessing us in Christ includes His turning us away from sin & iniquity which would otherwise destroy our lives... Though our sins are like scarlet, He makes us white like snow, though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. & Honestly, this is where some say, "No". They're good w/forgiveness, refreshing & freedom from judgment. But when they learn Jesus wants to turn them way from their iniquities, they push Him away & say, "Thanks, but no thanks." They prefer their sin over a Savior, to be enslaved rather than set free... & it's tragic. Don't reject J.C. Repent of your sin & times of refreshing will follow...

<sup>6</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Ps 32:1-5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**Prayer Points:**

God, we thank You for the manifold benefits that You extend to us through repentance. May we be a people quick to repent, quick to acknowledge our sin *as* sin in Your presence, to humble ourselves before You & draw near *to* You. & I pray that as You search our hearts & lead us in the way that we should go that You would refresh & renew lives even today. That we would honor You, in being transparent w/You & giving way to *Your* way, in us.

We began our time today w/the understanding of the heart of God that He's not desirous that *any* should perish, but that all should come to (our word of the day) repentance. Maybe that's a word that's hitting home w/you today. You recognize your sin & today you're willing to humble yourself before God, turn away from your sin & trust in J.C. Give God His way & leave here a new creation today.