

Peter's Second Sermon

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Turning the World Upside Down / Sermon; Peter; Jesus; Sin; Repentance; Faith; Forgiveness; Refresh; Restoration / Acts 3:11–26

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Introduction

We continue our study in the Book of Acts in a sermon series called, “Turning the World Upside Down.”

Jesus commissioned his apostles to “make disciples of all nations” ([Matthew 28:19](#)).

After his ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and the other disciples and filled them with power on the Day of Pentecost.

The followers of Jesus proclaimed the good news of the gospel in languages so that Jews from all around the Mediterranean basin could understand.

The Jews wondered what was going on. So Peter preached his first sermon to them explaining what God was doing. Three thousand people were converted on that day.

The power of God pulsed in the life of that first-century church in Jerusalem. Believers studied the word of God together. They fellowshiped together. They worshipped together. They served together. And they evangelized together.

The Jerusalem church was a Spirit-filled church.

Then one day as Peter and John went to the temple at the hour of prayer in the afternoon they encountered a man lame from birth.

The man wanted alms from Peter and John. But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” ([Acts 3:6](#)).

Peter took the man by the right hand and raised him up. Astonishingly, “immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God” ([Acts 3:7b-8](#)).

“While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon’s” ([Acts 3:11](#)). Solomon’s portico was a colonnaded area along the eastern wall of the temple courtyards.

The healed man was a living illustration of God’s power and his authentication of Peter and John as his messengers.

And when Peter saw that a crowd had gathered, he addressed the people. Peter began his sermon by asking questions. He wanted to explain to the crowd what had happened to the lame man who had been healed.

Peter began his second sermon with a question, “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this?” ([Acts 13:12a](#)). This was a mild rebuke to the people.

They were God’s covenant people. They knew God to be a powerful, miracle-working God. Who could forget the Ten Plagues in Egypt? Or the parting of the Red Sea? Or the sun standing still? Or the walls of Jericho falling down?

More recently, the people had witnessed countless miracles that Jesus had performed to demonstrate that he was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and the only Savior of sinners.

The fact that another miracle was performed in Jesus’ name should not have caused them to wonder at all.

Peter continued with another question, “Or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?” ([Acts 13:12b](#)). The people should have known that Peter and John had neither power nor piety within themselves to heal a lame man.

So, what was going on?

The people’s dilemma was that they acknowledged that God alone had the power to do miracles. What they denied was that Jesus was God and also that his apostles had power granted to them to perform miracles.

So, the people were left without an explanation for the miracle they had just witnessed, that is, the miracle of the lame man being healed.

As Peter developed his second sermon, he directed attention away from himself and John to Jesus. Peter made it clear that the lame man was healed by the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth ([Acts 3:6](#)).

Scripture

Let's read [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.”

Lesson

[Acts 3:11-26](#) shows us four notable features in Peter’s second sermon.

Let’s use the following outline:

1. Peter’s Sermon Was Christ-Centered (3:13a)
2. Peter’s Sermon Dealt with Sin (3:13b-15)
3. Peter’s Sermon Pressed for Repentance and Faith (3:17-19)
4. Peter’s Sermon Gave Reasons to Repent and Believe (3:19-26)

I. Peter’s Sermon Was Christ-Centered (3:13a)

First, Peter’s sermon was Christ-centered.

Just as in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, this sermon of Peter focused on Jesus Christ.

Now, Peter could have focused on something else. He could have focused his sermon on the miracle itself. He could have said, “This is an important thing that has just happened, and I want to make sure that you understand that this is a miracle. Look at this man. You all know him well. Examine him for yourselves and see that he has been healed.”

Or Peter’s sermon could have led to a testimony service. He could have said, “Now, brother, you have been healed. Here’s your chance to give a testimony. Stand up and tell everybody what Jesus has done for you.” A testimony like that might have focused on the man.

Instead, Peter said in verse 13a, **“The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus.”**

Jesus! This is the emphasis of the entire sermon.

In speaking about Jesus, Peter was thoroughly biblical. Unlike his sermon on the Day of Pentecost where Peter expounded three Old Testament texts, here his sermon was entirely grounded in the word of God.

We see that in Peter's choice of words.

When Peter referred to Jesus as a **“servant”** he used a word for “servant” that occurs in the Septuagint (Greek) translation of [Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#). There the coming of the servant of God (52:13) is described as the one who would be “pierced for our transgressions; [and] crushed for our iniquities” (53:5).

So when Peter referred to Jesus as a **“servant”** the people thought of the Messiah who was promised in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Moreover, when Peter talked about Jesus, he highlighted several important facts about him.

One was that Jesus was a real man. Earlier, when Peter spoke to the lame man, he referred to Jesus as “Jesus Christ of Nazareth” (3:6). Peter was referring to a person who was known throughout the entire nation. Many thousands of people had seen him and heard him teach.

Furthermore, this same Jesus was the one who died on the cross for their sins. He had been raised by the power of God. He was alive and he was continuing to change lives.

When you think about Christianity, do you think about Jesus?

And do you understand who Jesus is as he is described in the Bible?

There is a lot more that Christians talk about, of course.

But properly understood, those other things all relate to Jesus in some way.

Without Jesus, you do not have Christianity, and the Jesus of Christianity is the Bible's Jesus.

To be a Christian is to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Therefore, Peter was preaching about Jesus in this sermon.

II. Peter's Sermon Dealt with Sin (3:13b-15)

Second, Peter's sermon dealt with sin.

Peter was very direct about sin. He was much more direct about sin here than he was in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost.

Peter emphasized the sin of the people in denying Jesus and delivering him over to Pilate to be crucified.

Peter made their sin extremely personal. Four times he pointed the finger directly at them: “You!”

Listen to how he put it in verses 13b–15 when he talked about Jesus, **“whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.”**

Keep in mind that Peter was preaching in Jerusalem. These were the very people who just months earlier had shouted against Jesus, saying, “Crucify, crucify him!” ([Luke 23:21](#)).

Now Peter was saying, “You! You killed the Author of life.”

Peter wanted the people to deal with their sins. They needed to realize that they were all personally responsible for the death of an utterly innocent man.

Even though the Romans had crucified Jesus, the Jews were also culpable because they used all the levers at their disposal to ensure his crucifixion.

It is now 2,000 years since Jesus was crucified.

Do you realize that we are also responsible for the death of Jesus?

Why?

Because Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for sins. Not his sins because he had no sin. He paid the penalty for the sins of people like you and me.

Do you believe that you are responsible for the death of Jesus?

Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins?

Until you realize that, you cannot be saved.

III. Peter's Sermon Pressed for Repentance and Faith (3:17-19)

Third, Peter's sermon pressed for repentance and faith.

Peter did not merely want to condemn his hearers. He wanted them to know what to do about their sins.

Peter started with these words in verse 17a, **“And now, brothers.”** Peter did not treat them as enemies. Rather, he addressed them as **“brothers.”**

He had just said to the people, “But you denied the Holy and Righteous One.” However, he had done so himself when he denied Jesus on the night of Jesus' arrest. So, Peter was one of them.

Carrying on, he said in verse 17b, **“I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.”** Their ignorance did not erase their guilt. Nevertheless, they did not know what they were doing. And Peter had been in the same position himself.

He said in verse 19a, **“Repent therefore, and turn back.”** The *New International Version* of the Bible puts it this way, “Repent, then, and turn to God.”

These two things always go together: repentance and faith.

Repentance is not mere sorrow for sin. It is not mere contrition. It is not feeling sorry that you have been caught in your sin.

Repentance is feeling sorrow enough for sin to quit doing it. It means to turn around and go in a new direction.

Faith is turning to God. It is trusting in Jesus alone for the gift of salvation.

Have you turned from your sin and trusted in Jesus?

IV. Peter's Sermon Gave Reasons to Repent and Believe (3:19-26)

And fourth, Peter's sermon gave reasons to repent and believe.

Peter set down three reasons in his sermon.

The first reason to repent and believe is to receive complete forgiveness.

Peter pressed the people to repent and believe **“that [their] sins may be blotted out”** (3:19b).

The Greek word behind **“blotted out”** (*exaleipho*) pictures wiping ink off a document (see [Colossians 2:14](#)). Unlike modern ink, ancient ink had no acid in it. Consequently, it did not bite into the vellum or papyrus. It just sat on the surface of the document where it could be easily **“blotted out”** with a damp sponge.

When God forgives sin, he does so completely. He completely blots out every single sin that a person has ever committed. Those sins are beyond the possibility of review or recall. Even the heinous sin of denying Jesus and delivering him to death could be **“blotted out.”**

Every person needs God’s forgiveness. The only place to find that forgiveness is in Jesus.

Many people carry guilt in their hearts. That may be true of you. You have done something wrong. Perhaps no one even knows what you have done. You are afraid of what will happen if you breathe a word of it to anyone. And so you carry the burden of guilt with you day by day, week by week, and year by year. That burden keeps you from experiencing freedom and forgiveness.

Moreover, you do not find forgiveness in the world. The world is incapable of that. The world can judge you for your sin or pretend to overlook it. But it is not capable of forgiving it.

On one occasion, Jesus said to a man, “Your sins are forgiven.” The religious leaders who were standing by replied, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ([Mark 2:5-7](#)). They were right. They did not recognize that Jesus was God and therefore had the right and ability to forgive sin.

Do you feel the guilt of sin in your heart?

Go to Jesus. He will forgive you completely for every sin. Even the sin you have been carrying for a long time.

The second reason to repent and believe is to experience spiritual refreshment.

Peter pressed the people to repent and believe **“that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord”** (3:20a).

This may be understood in two ways.

One way concerns a future day of blessing for all God’s people when Jesus returns to gather up the church to himself.

But a second way concerns the present in which there are **“times of refreshing”** for believers even now.

Sometimes we get to a season in our lives in which we feel pretty stale. We don't feel connected to Jesus. We feel distant from brothers and sisters in Jesus. Everything feels rote.

What can you do to feel the presence of the Lord?

Examine your life and see if there is any unconfessed sin. It is almost always sin that breaks our fellowship with God. (Sometimes God withdraws the sense of his presence so that we will seek him harder.) But it is usually unconfessed sin that is the problem.

Peter said that one of the blessings of repentance is **“that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord”** (3:20a).

Do you long to experience spiritual refreshment in your life?

Then examine your heart and life for unconfessed sin and repent of it.

The third reason to repent and believe is to prepare for universal restoration.

Peter pressed the people to repent and believe **“that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, 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”** (3:20b-21).

God is going to restore all things one day, making a new heaven and a new earth. This is the promise of [Revelation 21:1-2](#), “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

The final reason to repent and believe is that a day is coming when God will restore heaven and earth to its original, pristine beauty.

That will be an unspeakable joy for all who are believers in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

This was Peter's second sermon.

In it, he reminds us, as he preached to the crowd in Solomon's portico, that the good news of the gospel is first and foremost centered on Jesus.

Second, we must be honest with ourselves and recognize that we are sinners and that it was because of our sins that Jesus died.

Third, Peter presses us to repent of our sins and to believe in Jesus.

And finally, he tells us that if we do repent and believe in Jesus, the gospel promises complete forgiveness of sins, spiritual refreshment in Jesus, and a universal restoration when Jesus returns for his people.

So, my question to you is this: Have you repented of your sins and believed in Jesus?

I pray that if you have never done so, that you will do so even now. Amen.