

WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO THE AUTHOR OF LIFE?

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Acts 3: 11-26.

The events recorded in Act 3 took place at a sensitive time in Jerusalem. The Lord had performed great miracles in the city. His trial, and all that involved, was well known, as well as the manner of His death, and then His resurrection. Besides this, the miraculous events on the Day of Pentecost had just very recently occurred and it was also known that the apostle Peter was now working signs and wonders. This is how the man at the Gate Beautiful had been healed. The consciences of some people in the city would have been very much on edge. It was undeniable that the church was growing and that, through the name of Jesus, extraordinary miracles were being accomplished.

So when Peter addressed the people in Act 3, there was particular power in his words that 'you delivered', 'you denied' (v13) and 'you killed' (v15) the author of life. In contrast to their wicked acts against the Lord, God had raised up His Son, showing that He did not share their verdict on Him. The people thus had to think about the shared responsibility that they had incurred because of their treatment of the Lord Jesus. We have to ask ourselves whether we share in that responsibility too.

1. A habit of doing good to murderers.

The people had asked for a murderer, Barabbas, to be released to them instead of the Lord Jesus. The people did not do so ignorantly. Barabbas was known by all to be a murderer. Pilate had given the people a choice as to whether they would choose this murderer or the Lord, the author of life. It was known that the Lord had raised the dead and given to life to all who looked to Him. Barabbas had done the opposite of these things and the people knew that. What gain would there have been to the city to have Barabbas free? There is no record that he had turned to the Lord in amazement at the mercy that he had benefited from. Instead, we imagine that he could not believe his good fortune and might well have returned to his life of robbery.

Yet we all have a bad habit of excusing and doing good to things that are actually killing our souls. People all by nature choose against the Prince of Life. Instead, they increasingly chose atheism or identify themselves as being 'non-religious' as they look to put distance between themselves and the claims of the Bible. People choose materialism which destroys their soul and gives pleasures only for this

life. Young people today often are happy to be called 'communists' even though their creed has led to the deaths of countless millions of people.

2. The author of life.

Today, there would be a public inquiry to find out just how the people of that day managed to release a murderer but put the author of life to death.

God is life and the giver of life. He has life in Himself and does not need to look elsewhere to find it. He gave life in creation and continues to give life to all who come into the world. God is immortal and cannot, therefore, ever die. Yet the life-giver Himself came in the flesh in the Person of His Son and continued to give life to people.

Then the seemingly impossible happened and the author of life died on the cross. It was a real death, witnessed by lots of people. It was not death as a result of some accident, or illness or, what we would call, of natural causes. He was murdered. He was put to death by people manipulating the justice system to get the result they wanted.

In the Lord Jesus was so much love, so much wisdom, so much glory, but He was hated. Man in his sin cannot bear living alongside the purity and light of the Lord and seeks to destroy Him. His words could open people's minds, but sin would close those minds and turn people against Him.

Every human being is the same as those who were actually alive when the Lord walked on the earth. We all would have acted in the same way and so we all share in the guilt of putting the author of life to death.

3. By dying, He becomes the author of life to us.

This was unforeseen by the people alive then who were part of the group that sentenced Him to death. It was God's plan for His Son to die at the hands of wicked men so that, by His death, He might bring eternal life to His people. The cross was not a victory for evil but a victory for the Lord as He brought His plan for the salvation of His people to pass. It was a demonstration of extraordinary wisdom and power, of foresight and love.

For it is we who are dead and need life. Though we have put the Lord to death through our sin, bearing ill-will towards Him, God meant it for good and through Him gives us eternal life. He saves lives. He gives life to murderers. He pleads for them. Through faith in Him, we gain a new nature. By receiving His pardon, we have new energy and new desires.

It is through repentance that we find our way into this experience of life. Repentance is when we choose sides. Will we stay with those activities, thoughts

and beliefs that destroy and murder? Will we opt for God's condemnation or choose life instead? The author of life is able to blot out our sins and refresh our souls. He is able to bring us into an experience of what is solid, real and genuine.