

A Time Of Refreshing | These Days

Acts 3:1-26

Text: Acts 3:1-26

[1] Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. [2] And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. [3] Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. [4] And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." [5] And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. [6] 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!" [7] And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. [8] And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. [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.

[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." (ESV)

Introduction — Lent

- A time of focused heart-evaluation
- Not a time of new commitments, but a time of deeper immersion in the gospel, learning to satisfy ourselves in Jesus.
- My challenge: Take notes, reread them, study the text, listen again

Romans 1:16-17 — Remember, we are called to holiness, to be saints, to belong to Jesus

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

- "Not ashamed" [**Caesar Image**]
 - Roman Christians were a religious minority; likely systemically ostracized;
 - "No matter how much of a cultural pariah I might become because of my affiliation with Jesus, I will be unmoved in my commitment to the gospel."
- "of the gospel" — It's good news about Jesus for us [**Jesus painting**]
- "for it is the power of God for salvation" — Our redemption requires an external power (the presence of God)
- "for everyone who believes" — Believing obedience (proof of the Spirit's presence)
- "Everyone" — Not just for Jews...and this brings us to Acts 3... (Presence of God)

Acts 3:1-11 — Irony at the Temple

- Temple - Synonymous w/presence of God [**Temple Entrance photo**]
- Crippled and destitute man lay outside Gate Beautiful, untouched by God's power
- Peter & John approach – Filled with Spirit previous chapter (walking, talking “temples”)
- Irony: People "utterly astounded" (vs. 11) by God's power...not the Temple
- This sets the stage for Peter's sermon through the end of this chapter...

Acts 3:12-26 — What Salvation is...

[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....

- Jesus should not be viewed as some unexpected dogleg in God's dealings with Israel.
- Jesus' ministry is not “Plan B” because “Plan A” failed.
- There is total continuity between the Patriarchs of the faith and Jesus.
 - He was prophesied about in **Isaiah** as the Suffering Servant who would deliver his people.
 - **Samuel** anticipated Jesus when he anointed David as king of Israel.
 - **Moses** even anticipated Jesus [**Moses painting**]. In verse 18, Peter quotes Deuteronomy 18: *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.’*
 - **Abraham:** And Jesus powerfully fulfills the most important promise that God made to this people — verses 25-26: *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.**”*
 - Quotes Genesis 12:1-3: That by Abraham's offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed

- “Blessed”: The grace to recognize the truth of Jesus, to experience sorrow over our sins, and to align our lives to follow Jesus. This is the power of God leading to salvation for everyone who believes.

They're Guilt Is Our Guilt...

[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

- “Times of Refreshing” — Peter's way of giving hope to our deepest longings
 - Jews' yearning for the Messiah's deliverance from systemic oppression
 - Humankind's yearning for peace, forgiveness & hope
 - It's a shorthand for salvation...for experiencing the blessing of Abraham now before the final great act of salvation in which God restores all things.
 - What is it which abates our thirst? The presence of the Lord.
 - Implication: our deepest need is the presence of the Lord. **Do you receive this?**

So, what is salvation? (when Paul speaks of the gospel being the power of God unto salvation for all who believe)?

1. Salvation, first and foremost, is the ancient story of God making all things new.
 - From Genesis to Revelation
2. The making of all things new is powered by the resurrection of Jesus.
 - Jesus' resurrection is the proof of the coming New Creation.
3. The making of all things new begins with those who believe in Jesus.

- What God did for Jesus in raising him from the dead, and what he will one day do with the whole creation, he begins with us by delivering us from the authority of sin over our lives.
4. Belief is when we hear the gospel and are convinced of its truth.
 5. Those who are convinced of the gospel's truth respond in obedience.
 - But we need help...discipleship, training, community...
 6. Those who are saved can be refreshed by the presence of God now and will one day see him face-to-face for all eternity in the New Creation.

Communion — Approach via interior aisles; return to seat via exterior aisles

Benediction: Approach, My Soul, The Mercy Seat by John Newton (1779)

*Bowed down beneath a load of sin,
By Satan sorely pressed,
By wars without, and fears within,
I come to thee for rest.*

*Be thou my shield and hiding place!
That, sheltered near thy side,
I may my fierce accuser face,
And tell him, "thou hast died."*

*O wondrous love! to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame;
That guilty sinners such as I,
Might plead thy gracious name.*

*"Poor tempest-tossed soul be still,
My promised grace receive;"*

Sunday, March 5, 2017

'Tis Jesus speaks, I must, I will,

I can, I do believe.

- John Newton (1779)