

Acts Chapter 3.

Theme: It's all about Jesus again!

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*.² And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple;³ who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.⁴ And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."⁵ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.⁸ So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God.¹⁰ Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹ Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.¹² So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go.¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.¹⁷ "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers.¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.²² For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.'²³ And it shall be *that* every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.²⁵ You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'²⁶ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities."

Introduction

Last week we discovered that the first sermon preached on the day of Pentecost was all about Jesus.

We now discover that Peter's second sermon is all about Jesus again!

According to **Acts 2: v. 43**, which is also repeated in **Acts 5: v. 12**, the Apostles performed **many miraculous signs and wonders**.

This chapter records just one of these incidents.

Chapter 3 divides itself into two sections. Firstly there is the **"sign"** which is recorded in v. 1-10, and then we have the **sermon** which is recorded in v. 11-26.

There is one thing that we must not forget as we study the book of Acts and that is the **purpose and intention of the writer**.

Luke 1: v. 1-4 In N.L.T.

Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us.² They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples.³ Having carefully investigated

everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, ⁴ so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.

Acts 1: v. 1-8. In N.L.T.

In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit.³ During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

⁴ Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. ⁵ John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

⁶ So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

⁷ He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

So we see that Luke wrote the book of Acts, which is part two of his writings.

He wrote to tell us about the continuing work of Jesus, by His Holy Spirit, through His appointed Apostles. So we must never lose sight of the fact that we are **learning about the continuing work of Jesus in the early history of the Church.**

Today His work continues and it must be done in the same way, **through the work of the Holy Spirit,** working through people who are **filled with God’s Holy Spirit, preaching God’s word.**

It is **God’s work,** and God’s work must be done in **God’s way,** to receive the blessing of God upon it.

Therefore, if we want to see God’s blessing upon O.I.C. we must be prepared to apply the principles that are set forth in this important book.

Applying Biblical principles can be very difficult for some Christians because they feel that they know better than God, how to organise the Church where Jesus is the head.

So let us be aware that we are **learning from God’s word in order to apply any change that might be needed to realign ourselves and O.I. C. to God’s word.**

1. The Sign – Chapter 3: v. 1-10.

Firstly we need to understand what a **“Sign “** is in **“the Bible.”**

John 20: v. 30-31. (N.K.J.)

³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John uses the word **“sign”** instead of the word **“miracle”.**

Why did he do this?

John used the word sign, because the miracles that Jesus performed were like **“signposts”** pointing to the identity of Jesus.

The signs declared that Jesus was God’s Son, or God in human form as a person.

John tells us that all of the miracles that Jesus performed pointed to His “Divinity”.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit who performs miracles in Acts, does so, in order to point to the Gospel message, authenticating it as the true word of God.

So let us now learn about this sign in Acts Chapter 3.

The text tells us that Peter and John went up the Temple at the hour of prayer.

This was 3p.m. in the afternoon. It was a very popular time for the crowds to gather at the Temple.

The only other times for gathering at the Temple were 9:00 a.m. or 12 noon.

Every day a lame man who had been crippled since his birth was carried to the gate of the Temple.

This particular gate had the name “beautiful”.

This gate was the main eastern entrance to the Temple, which was near the court of the Gentiles. The historians tell us that the gate was 75 feet high and made of solid Corinthian Brass.

So we have a picture of two contrasts. One is of a **poor beggar**, who could not walk or work, sitting by a **magnificent gate** at the entrance to God's Temple, at the specific time that the **worshippers were entering for a prayer meeting.**

It was a busy place and attracted lots of people.

When the crippled man saw Peter and John about to enter the Temple, he asked for some money.

Peter said to the man, "look at us". The crippled man was expecting to receive some money. However the man received something much better than money.

v. 6 – 8. In the N.K.J.

⁶Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

This miracle was a fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 35 v. 6 where it says "that the lame shall leap like a deer...."

There are a few points about the miracle that we need to note.

The first is the miracle itself.

The man had been crippled since he was born. He was now over 40 years old.

(Acts 4:22)

The lame man did not gradually get healed. It was instant.

He became very strong, very quickly. He walked and jumped, all the time praising God.

In order for this miracle to happen there had to be the creation of previously non-existent muscle tissue. The brain then had to be taught to use and direct limbs to do what they had never done before.

This miracle was an amazing act of God's creative restoration. (Gen. 1: v.1)

The writer Luke was a Doctor and he knew how amazing this miracle was. He repeats references to the man walking three times.

The second thing we need to note is that the miracle was done in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

In the same way that God had accredited Jesus Christ through signs and wonders, God was now giving credit to Apostles, who were continuing the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus Christ was the source of this miracle.

He was giving His approval of His messengers and what they were about to preach.

The historical miracle of the healing of this man gave credit to the Gospel message at this time in history.

Today we don't need new miracles of healing like this. We need to believe in the miracle that we are told happened in history.

It is faith in the historical word of God that we need.

Finally we notice the reaction of the crowd.

When the people realised that the lame beggar had been healed they were absolutely astounded.

Don't forget that the man had probably been there for over 20 years.

Perhaps his father and friends took him there when he was 20 years old?

Imagine going to pray in a building every day for 20 years and passing a crippled beggar who asked for money. Suddenly he was up and about, leaping and walking and praising God.

The crowd must have been so happy for him.

And yet however amazing the miracle was, it was for a reason.

It gave Peter an opportunity to preach the Gospel to the crowd.

What an opportunity! Peter seized it immediately.

2. The sermon – v. 11-26.

The lame man who was healed attracted so much attention that Peter was able to preach the Gospel to a listening crowd.

The first thing that Peter did was to deflect any attention upon himself and direct it to the God who the crowd had been worshipping in the Temple.

Peter's immediate concern was to give all the glory to God.

Peter gives the crowd a few challenges with his sermon.

a) The crowd's sin is pointed out – v. 12-14.

Peter connects Jesus with the God of their fathers, Abraham Isaac and Jacob.

By connecting Jesus with the person who they admired and worshipped, he exposed their sin.

If Jesus was sent by the God, who they worshipped, and they delivered Him up to be killed, and instead let a criminal go free, then they would have a big problem.

Peter said, " you denied the Holy One, and the Just and asked for a murderer to be granted to you." (v. 14)

Their sin was ultimately in disobedience to God's word.

The crowd who worshipped in the Temple knew God's word, but they did not recognise Jesus from God's word.

There are at least 40 recognizable prophecies in the Old Testament that point to the first coming of Jesus.

Why was it that the crowd in our narrative did not recognise Jesus as their Messiah, and instead crucified Him and let a criminal go free?

The simple answer is that they were spiritually blind because of their evil hearts.

People today all around the world are in exactly the same position.

People do not recognise who Jesus is, and what His word teaches, because their hearts are evil.

Their evil hearts blind them, so that they can't understand the truth of God's word.

The sin in the hearts of the crowd at that time is no different from the sin in the hearts of people who have yet to repent to God and trust in the mercy of Jesus.

Jeremiah 17 and v. 9 -10 says " The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings." (N.K.J.)

(Jeremiah 17 v. 9 -10 in the N.L.T.)

⁹ "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things,
and desperately wicked.

Who really knows how bad it is?

¹⁰ But I, the LORD, search all hearts
and examine secret motives.

I give all people their due rewards,
according to what their actions deserve."

b) The Witness for Jesus and His resurrection. – v. 15-16.

Peter said to the crowd that although they killed Jesus, God raised Him up from the dead. Peter also declared that he himself and the disciples were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus.

Peter went on to say that it was through faith in the resurrected Jesus that this lame man was healed.

In other words, the healing of the lame man was proof of the resurrection of Jesus, and of His power, through the Holy Spirit, to enable such a miracle to happen.

The healing of the lame man authenticated the gospel message about Jesus and His death and resurrection.

Despite the efforts of the crowd to destroy Jesus, God had overruled the choice of the people **to fulfil His prophetic word.**

God has demonstrated His power by healing the lame man so that the people are in no doubt about the message that Peter preaches to them.

c) Repent and be converted, so that your sins may be blotted out. v.17-26.

In the last part of Peter's sermon he makes some very clear points.

a) **Ignorance is not an excuse for sin.** – v.17-19.

Peter told the crowd to repent of their sin, even though he knew that they put Jesus to death in ignorance.

Peter's purpose in saying these words in v.17 was neither to excuse their sin, nor to imply that forgiveness was unnecessary, but to show why it was possible to receive forgiveness. Peter was reminding the Jewish crowd about their teaching in the Old Testament Scriptures. Peter was making a difference between the **Unintentional sin and the Presumptuous sin.**

Numbers 15: v. 22-31 in the N.L.T.

²² "But suppose you unintentionally fail to carry out all these commands that the LORD has given you through Moses. ²³ And suppose your descendants in the future fail to do everything the LORD has commanded through Moses. ²⁴ If the mistake was made unintentionally, and the community was unaware of it, the whole community must present a young bull for a burnt offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It must be offered along with its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering and with one male goat for a sin offering. ²⁵ With it the priest will purify the whole community of Israel, making them right with the LORD, and they will be forgiven. For it was an unintentional sin, and they have corrected it with their offerings to the LORD—the special gift and the sin offering. ²⁶ The whole community of Israel will be forgiven, including the foreigners living among you, for all the people were involved in the sin.

²⁷ "If one individual commits an unintentional sin, the guilty person must bring a one-year-old female goat for a sin offering. ²⁸ The priest will sacrifice it to purify the guilty person before the LORD, and that person will be forgiven. ²⁹ These same instructions apply both to native-born Israelites and to the foreigners living among you.

³⁰ "But those who brazenly violate the LORD's will, whether native-born Israelites or foreigners, have blasphemed the LORD, and they must be cut off from the community. ³¹ Since they have treated the LORD's word with contempt and deliberately disobeyed his command, they must be completely cut off and suffer the punishment for their guilt."

I hope that we understand today that ignorance about God and His word, and what it teaches, **does not excuse sin**, nor does it forgive the sins that have violated God's Holy Character.

Once these sins come to light they need to be repented.

The people who wilfully sin and despise God's word will be cut off from God and their guilt shall be upon them.

The same God that wrote the words in the book of Numbers is the same God that lives today, and is working through His Holy Spirit, in the lives of His disciples.

b) The need for repentance & the blessing of forgiveness— v. 19.

Although we dealt with repentance last week in Peter's first sermon, we have it **repeated here** in his second sermon.

What is very clear from the early preachers like Peter and Paul is that "**Repentance**" came first in their sermons.

In repentance, there has to be a turning from "Sin" before there is a turning to God.

Repentance is a change of mind about ourselves in our relationship to a Holy God.

In essence sin is going our own way, without the authority of God and His word controlling our lives.

We do not decide about what is right and wrong about our behaviour and our life-style.

God and His word make that decision.

We do not have the liberty to interpret God's word to support our thinking or our life-style.

God's word interprets God's word.

The Bible has 66 books and they are **all inspired by God.**

2 Timothy 3: v. 16 – 17. In N.L.T.

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

Therefore if we want to understand who God is and what His word teaches then we have to know the whole Bible.

When we know the whole Bible, we know the whole story.

So if we want to truly repent, then we have to change our mind about what we think and apply to our heart and mind what God's word teaches.

This is the gospel that Jesus preached.

Mark 8: v. 34-38 in N.L.T.

³⁴ Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. ³⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. ³⁶ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? ³⁷ Is anything worth more than your soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

After repentance takes place in people's lives Peter tells us that we are converted and our sins are blotted out.

In other words, when we repent of our sin and ask Jesus for forgiveness, then that forgiveness takes place because Jesus then takes our sin and punishment upon Himself.

2 Corinthians 5: v.20-21 in N.L.T.

²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

The burden of our sin is lifted, it is blotted out, it is taken away.

We are forgiven, we are born again into the family of God, we become His child.

The promises of God are ours for the future.

From that point we become citizens of Heaven. Earth is not the place that we call home.

Do you really want forgiveness of your sin?, if you do, **repentance comes first.**

The final blessing of forgiveness is described by Peter as **"receiving refreshing from the presence of the Lord."**

The question I ask here is, what is the refreshing from the presence of the Lord?

First of all let us look at **Psalm 16: v. 11. .**

Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

Joy is something that is not dependent on our outward circumstances. It is dependent upon the condition of our hearts.

Therefore once our hearts are right with God, then we can experience a joy that is so wonderful, that you can't add anything to it, because it is full.

So therefore, the presence of God is the most wonderful thing that you can ever experience on this earth.

Another thing that the presence of God can bring to our hearts is **"Peace"**.

However do not be deceived. It is not the peace that the world can give. It is different.

John 14: v.25 -27 in N.K.J.

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

The presence of God brings “Peace”, it is a wonderful “Peace”.
Have you experienced this “Peace” ?
If not you need to start with “Repentance”

Conclusion & Application

So what can we take away today and apply to our lives from God’s word?

1. We don’t need to see physical healings of miracles today in order to authenticate the gospel message of Salvation. The greatest miracle of all is a heart that has been changed by God’s Holy Spirit. It is a heart that experiences fullness of joy and peace, whatever their circumstances.
2. Hearts are changed through Repentance and Faith in Jesus and His work on the cross. Repentance of sin must come first before you can experience forgiveness of sin. Have you repented of your sin? If the Holy Spirit of God is working in your heart, then maybe today is the day when you will turn from your sin and turn to God for forgiveness through Jesus.
3. Getting to know God’s word is getting to know God. Reading God’s word every day is important. However obedience to God’s word is what will bring blessing to our lives individually, and to our Church corporately.