

## I. Introduction

Good morning! Last week we read about the miraculous healing of a man who had been crippled since birth. Our key verse was **Acts 3:6, “Then Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’”** With these simple words, Peter announced that God’s perfect timing for this man to be set free had come. After he was healed, the man he rose up and **(Acts 3:8), “went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.”** For this man and those who cared about him, this was certainly a day for rejoicing and for praising God. Through the Name of Jesus, this man had received a new life. His old life of begging was over; it had been exchanged for a new life of joy and freedom.



Peter, John, and the healed man went into the temple courts and everyone who saw them was amazed. Acts 3:1 told us that Peter and John were going to the temple at the time of prayer, so after this they would have spent some time praying and giving thanks, together with all who had come to the daily time of afternoon prayer.

This photo shows a model of the temple as it was in the time of Jesus. Look closely, and, to the left of the temple, you can see an area with tall columns. This was the area known as Solomon’s Colonnade, or, Solomon’s Porch. It was a spacious roofed area with tall columns and lots of open space where many people could gather.



Here is a close-up photo of the model’s depiction of Solomon’s Colonnade. In today’s passage of Scripture, we will see that Peter, John, and the healed man went to this area after they finished praying and a crowd gathered around them. Peter saw the opportunity to tell the crowd about Jesus and delivered a powerful message. Let’s read Acts 3:11-26.



## II. Scripture Acts 3:11-26 (NIV 1984)

11 While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. 12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if 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, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. 14 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. 15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. 16 By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

17 "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. 18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. 19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. 21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. 22 For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. 23 Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'

24 "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. 25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' 26 When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

### III. Teaching

The gathered crowd would have included people of all kinds, young and old, poor and rich, famous and obscure. There would have been Roman guards and Jewish scholars, farmers, fishermen, businessmen, and more. This is appropriate because the Good News of Jesus is for all people. Some of the Jewish leaders were also present, and, when we get to Acts 4, we will see that Peter's message resulted in Peter and John getting arrested. But I think they rejoiced, because that gave them even more opportunities to proclaim the Name of Jesus.



Peter's message is short, but very powerful. Peter speaks of the evidence of fulfilled prophecy and points to the authority of the prophets as proof that all that had happened was according to God's plan. Peter speaks the names of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Samuel and declares that all of the prophets spoke of the time of Jesus' death and resurrection and the birth of the church. Peter speaks of the crucifixion and resurrection, and also of Jesus' ascension to heaven and of the future Second Coming of Christ. We won't take the time to read all of the background references now, but I have put a few of them on this slide so that you can copy them and look them up this week on your own. If you look up these references and then read Peter's message again, I think you will be blessed.

For today, let's take a closer look at some key points from Peter's message. Peter begins with a question (**Acts 3:12**), **"When Peter saw this, he said to them: 'Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?'"** Peter, speaking in the Name of Jesus, had just done an amazing miracle, bringing healing to a man of more than forty years who had been crippled since birth. This was an amazing event and all the people were astounded. But Peter asks, **"Why does this surprise you?"** This is a good question. The Old Testament records that the history of Israel was full of miracles, and Jesus had recently done many amazing miracles among the people. Why should it be so surprising that God would now do a new miracle?

With this question, Peter raises the issue of who did the miracle. Peter points out that he and John were not the ones who had power. Peter had spoken in the Name of Jesus, not in his own name. In **Acts 3:13a**, Peter declares, **"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus."** The power of miracles belongs to God and the purpose of the healing miracle was to bring glory to Jesus. As I said last week, it is all about Jesus. Peter makes this very clear in **Acts 3:16**, **"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see."**

When Peter spoke to the crippled man, Peter spoke in the Name of Jesus, declaring his faith in Jesus. And when the man responded and stood, he was responding in faith, trusting in the Name of Jesus. In that first moment, his faith may have been no more than a glimmer, but it was enough to cause him to accept Peter's hand and test the strength of his legs. And when Peter lifted him up, the man suddenly found strength in his feet and ankles and his legs supported him. The miracle comes from our Lord and not from man. But, like the crippled man, we also need someone to declare the Name of Jesus to us and to challenge us to trust in Him. Peter did this for the crippled man and for the crowd.

But first, Peter needed to awaken in the hearts of his audience a need and thirst for salvation. If people are unaware of their sin, then they feel no need for a Savior. But Peter tells them directly that they are responsible for Jesus' death on the cross. (**Acts 3:13b -14**) **"You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you."**

Just a short time before this, perhaps as little as 2-3 months earlier, at the time when Pilate offered to release Jesus, an angry crowd had demanded that the murderer Barabbas be released instead of Jesus, and when Pilate asked what should be done with Jesus the crowd shouted, “Crucify him!” Now, in **Acts 3:15**, in today’s passage, Peter continues saying, **“You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.”**

The NIV translation calls Jesus, “the author of life.” Another translation says, “the prince of life.” The first translation emphasizes that Jesus is the source of life, and the second emphasizes that Jesus is the ruler over all life. But I have always thought that the NIV translation is more powerful, **“You killed the author of life.”** What a terrible sin, to kill the very one who is the source and caretaker of all life.



Can you imagine the characters in a book rising up and killing the author? The author is the very one who gave each character life and placed them in the story. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Author of Life. Jesus gave us life and included us in His story, the story of God’s work in this world. Jesus holds our lives in His hands. But even when we nailed Him to a cross, Jesus did not destroy us. Instead, Jesus looked down from the cross at His tormentors and said (**Luke 23:34a**), **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”**



We often do not understand. We do not know what we are doing. But none of us can claim ignorance as an excuse for sin. We may be ignorant of many things, but all of us have a sense of right and wrong, and all of us have done things that we knew were wrong. And, the Scriptures teach us the truth. It is our sin and our rebellion against God that put Jesus on the cross. We are all responsible, because we have all sinned. On that day at the temple mount, some of the people that Peter preached to at Solomon’s Colonnade were probably travellers who had just arrived in Jerusalem. Others in Peter’s audience lived in the city, but were not present when Jesus was condemned by Pilate, rejected by the crowd, and crucified.

But Peter says to them all, and also to all of us today (**Acts 3:15**), **“You killed the author of life.”** Guilty. None are innocent, not even one. We all share responsibility for the death of Jesus. This would be a sad story if it ended there. But next comes that little word, “but.” “But,” is a small word, but it can signal a really big change. The author of life was murdered, **“but God raised him from the dead.”**



The resurrection transforms the bad news of pain and death into the Good News of forgiveness and eternal life. Because of the resurrection, the cross is transformed from a cruel means of execution to a glorious symbol of life. But before we can claim this joy as our own, we need to respond in faith. **Acts 3:19**, **“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”** Notice that there are two parts. The first part is repentance. Repentance is essential. But by itself, repentance of sins is not enough.

Let’s think about this for a moment, if you repented of all your past sins and never sinned again, would that be enough for you to gain salvation? Many people think so. Many religions attempt to discipline and train people to stop sinning, because they think that if people stop sinning that they will be saved. But let’s consider a simple analogy.

What if you had a beautiful wedding dress, but had spilled permanent ink on it? Suppose you felt really bad about spilling the ink and were determined to never spill ink on the dress again. Would that make it okay to wear the dress for the wedding? No! Even if you are careful to never spill anything on it again, the stains from the past are still there and you cannot remove them.



That is why there are two necessary steps. . **Acts 3:19, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”** We need to repent, but we also need to turn to God. We need to turn away from sin, but we also need to turn to God. And, when we turn to God by believing in Jesus, our sins are wiped out. Amazingly, not only our past sins, but even our future sins are wiped out. The mercy and grace of God are truly amazing.

By the grace of God and the finished work of Christ Jesus on the cross, we are made holy and pure. We are clothed with His righteousness and are ready to go to the heavenly wedding celebration as the church, the Bride of Christ.



#### IV. Conclusion

Turn away from sin and turn to God by trusting in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. And then, times of refreshing will come as we experience His grace and mercy and are enfolded in His love forever. And if we have trusted in Jesus, then we will be ready for His Second Coming. Which Peter also speaks of in **Acts 3:20-21, “and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”**

Let’s pray.

#### V. Prayer

Dear heavenly Father,

We give thanks to you for the wonders of your wisdom and for your infinite grace and eternal love. Thank you that you have prepared a way of salvation, a bridge called the cross that makes it possible for us to cross over from death to life. Help us to turn away from everything that is displeasing in your sight and to turn to you through faith in Jesus, your Son. Dear loving Lord Jesus, thank you for coming and giving your life as a ransom for ours, that we might be saved. We praise your holy Name and ask that you would send your Spirit into our hearts and fill us to overflowing. Pour out your Spirit on your people, Lord. Wash us clean and give us times of refreshing in your presence. Come now, and meet the needs of your people. You know each and every need. Comfort those who sorrow, strengthen those who are weak, heal those who are sick, provide for those who are in need. Meet the needs of your people out of your endless love and compassion and for your glory. Be glorified, Lord. Be glorified in our lives, our homes, our church and throughout this land. Prepare us, your church, for the time when you will come again in power. In Jesus’ precious Name I pray, amen.