

EXPOSITION OF ACTS

Message #10

Acts 3:11-26

Somehow churches have been sidetracked into thinking that the best way to help humanity is to help society by giving gifts to the poor. This idea does not come from Scripture, but since a careful analysis of Scripture is neglected in most churches, most seem to agree with this kind of thing. What the church must never forget is that we have the “gift of all gifts” to offer to people. We are in a position to offer them truth that can give them eternal life. We must never get so caught up with the everyday things of life that we lose sight of the ultimate reality of eternity. If churches would carefully go through the book of Acts, they would see that very clearly.

Peter and John were apostles and being apostles they had a supernatural ability given to them by God to show miraculous wonders and signs (Acts 2:43). Their goal was not to use the power for social purposes or to help everybody out of some difficult situation. Their directive which was given to them directly from Jesus Christ was to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). In other words, their primary objective was to communicate saving, Grace Age truth to a lost world. They were to start proclaiming the truth in Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the earth.

Last time we were together we saw that Peter and John were involved in healing a crippled beggar right outside the Temple at 3 p.m. in the afternoon. This beggar was known by everyone, and when he walked into the Temple with Peter and John and started leaping, these people were all amazed.

Verse 11 informs us that he was clinging to Peter and John and all the people ran together to see them. Luke points out exactly where this next scene happens; it was at the “portico or colonnade of Solomon.” Jesus, Himself, had walked and taught at this very place, and He specifically told these Jews that He was their Messiah and Savior right at this spot (John 10:23). Peter and John would have remembered this, so this is the very same place where Peter decides to preach.

Now Solomon’s portico or porch was located on the eastern side of the Temple in what is called the court of the heathen. It was formed by a double row of marbled columns and it was an area that had a cedar roof over it. According to Horatio Hackett, the Hebrew scholar of the 1800s, this structure had actually been built by Solomon himself (*Acts*, p. 59).

Now all the people are flocking to this area to see this lame man who had been healed, and Peter seizes the moment and takes advantage of this and decides to preach another message to Israel. He does not pass an offering plate to get money after he performed this miracle, nor does he talk about what he and John just did; he preaches Jesus Christ. What we see here is this:

IN THE AFTERMATH OF PERFORMING A GRACE AGE MIRACLE, PETER DIVERTS ATTENTION AWAY FROM HIMSELF AND JOHN AND PROCLAIMS THE NEED FOR ISRAEL TO REPENT AND BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Now the message Peter preaches is powerful and Christological. John Stott said,+ “The most remarkable feature of Peter’s second sermon . . . is its Christ-centeredness” (*Acts*, p. 92). He aims this Christ-centered sermon straight at the “Men of Israel” (v. 12), who were flocking to see the lame man, Peter, and John. This is the kind of Holy Spirit led preaching that transforms people. In this message he communicates seven truths:

TRUTH #1 – Peter proclaims what the apostles didn’t do. **3:12**

Don’t gaze at us because this former lame man walking around has nothing to do with our power or our piety. Peter starts off by saying don’t stare at us because we didn’t do this.

This is so foreign to the phony faith healers of our day who love and crave the attention and want you to believe they are special pious agents of God. They advertise they are coming to the city and that they are going to hold a miracle crusade. They take out advertisements with their picture on it because they want the attention. Oh, they will toss in the name of Jesus every now and then, but frankly it is all about them. Not so with Peter and John who were real apostles. They said don’t look at us; look at the One who actually did this, Jesus Christ. They give all of the credit to Jesus Christ.

I love something Kenneth Gangel said, “All effective ministries begins with self-denial” (*Acts*, p. 46).

TRUTH #2 – Peter proclaims what God the Father did. **3:13a**

Peter wastes no time in linking Jesus Christ to Israel and the Old Testament starting with Genesis. Jesus Christ has been glorified by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus Christ is the glorified child/servant of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The word “the servant” (τον παιδα) actually is a word that refers to a small child who is under the direction of someone. Peter says, don’t you men of Israel understand that Jesus, who once stood right here in Solomon’s porch, was the glorified child under the direction of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You missed who He was.

TRUTH #3 – Peter proclaims what they did to Jesus Christ. **3:13b-15**

These Jews did horrible things to this glorified Son of God. Three horrible actions are described here for which these men of Israel are accountable:

(Horrible Action #1) - You delivered up Jesus. **3:13c**

What this means is that instead of accepting Him and believing in Him, you turned Him into Pilate for sentencing. What is interesting here is that Peter seems to somewhat exonerate Pilate and puts all of the blame on these Jews.

(Horrible Action #2) - You disowned Jesus. **3:13d-14**

Not only did they disown Jesus as their Messiah, when given a choice between letting the Holy, Righteous Jesus or a convicted murderer, Barabbas, go free, they chose Barabbas. What this means is that they refused to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah.

(Horrible Action #3) - You murdered Jesus. **3:15**

There are two ways the blood of the murdered Jesus may relate to you: 1) It does condemn you; 2) It may cleanse you!

You killed Jesus, the author of life, but God raised Him back up from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a key foundational doctrine of the Church Age. It is stressed over and over again in the book of Acts. Jesus Christ is the only living Savior who can save you.

TRUTH #4 – Peter proclaims what they need to know about the name of Jesus. **3:16**

Jesus' name is the only thing that can save and deliver people. The phrase “the name of Jesus” occurs thirty-three times in the book of Acts. This is a critical phrase because this is the only saving name. It was faith in the name of Jesus that made that lame man walk; and notice carefully, it is faith that comes through Him.

Everything about our relationship with God centers on the name of Jesus. In fact, if you carefully look at this context you may notice the names that Peter uses for Jesus: Jesus Christ the Nazarene (3:6) which means Jesus that Galilean Nazarene was the Jewish Messiah; He is the Holy and Righteous One (**3:14**); and He is the “Prince of life” (**3:15**).

True apostolic preaching and teaching proclaims the name of Jesus. It proclaims the truth that believing in His name is all you need to do to be saved.

TRUTH #5 – Peter proclaims why they did what they did to Jesus. **3:17-18**

What I find amazing in **verse 17** is that after charging them with horrific crimes, he calls them “brethren.” Peter was a Jew but he was also a sinner who needed a Savior, and that made this a family issue. These Jews killed Jesus Christ and there are two reasons why they did what they did to Him:

Reason #1 - Because of their ignorance. **3:17**

Imagine Peter standing in the Temple of Jerusalem and telling all these Jews, the reason why you did the things you did is because you are ignorant, without knowledge. Peter says, you had no idea what you were doing or who you were doing it to.

Reason #2 - Because of God's sovereignty. **3:18**

Now having brought out this point of their ignorance, He informs them that God used their ignorance as part of His prophetic, sovereign plan. When Jesus was here He said no man could take His life from Him (John 10:18). He just told them they killed the only One who could save them, but now He tells them, that is the sovereign reason God allowed them to kill Him. He had to die to save you. Those O.T. prophets clearly spoke to this fact.

TRUTH #6 – Peter proclaims what they need to do. **3:19a**

Here is an amazing grace offered to those who killed God's Son. **These men of Israel needed to repent and return to a relationship with God.** Probably one of the most misunderstood words is repent, because most believe it means to be sorry for sin or to turn away from sin. That is not at all what it means.

As we have said, the word “repent” (μετανοεω) is a word that has to do with **changing one's thinking or mind, specifically about what will get one into a relationship with God.** It is a word closely linked to the sin-issue and Jesus Christ in that **Biblical repentance means that one changes his thinking and mind about what will save him from his sin.** To repent means that you come to terms with the fact that only Jesus Christ can save from sin and get you into a relationship with God. That is what Peter means by repent. There needed to be a change of mind about Jesus Christ. He is our only Savior.

There are some who think we should never preach repentance, but it is a Biblical doctrine and Biblical word. It needs to be preached, but it needs to be preached properly. George Whitefield, one of the most powerful evangelists to ever preach, used to preach “repentance” and he saw some amazing responses. This idea of repentance though is always in a context of stop rejecting Jesus Christ. In other words, one needs to change his mind and thinking about Jesus Christ's saving work.

TRUTH #7 – Peter proclaims why they need to change thinking about Jesus Christ. **3:19b-20**

There are five reasons why they needed to change their thinking

Reason #1 - So that your sins may be wiped away. **3:19b**

Many years ago the minister John Stott was told by a man who ran a mental institution that he could send half of his patients home tomorrow if only they could find forgiveness (Cited from James Montgomery Boice, *Acts*, p. 69).

Here is the ultimate reason for believing only in Jesus Christ - He is the only One who can wipe your sins away. Luke uses a rare Greek verb here (εξλειφω) which means Jesus Christ is the only One who can wash your sins to the point that they are wiped out and wiped away (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 159). Jesus Christ is the only One who can obliterate your sins so that they are gone.

You may be here today carrying a heavy load of guilt because of sins you know you have committed. Your slate can be wiped clean if you will by faith turn to Jesus Christ.

Reason #2 - So that you may have times of refreshing and blessing from God. **3:19c**

If we put this in the context of having sins washed away, then when you know that Jesus Christ has wiped away your sins, your soul and your spirit will be refreshed. There is nothing more refreshing than to know your condemnatory sins are gone.

These two phrases “times of refreshing” (v. 19) and “time for God to restore everything” (v. 21) have caused commentators to “scratch their theological heads for years” (Kenneth Gangel, *Acts*, p. 47).

One thing is very contextually clear, and that is God’s sovereign prophetic plan that included Christ’s death will also determine God’s time of refreshing and God’s time of restoration.

There are two ways to apply this. Israel may apply this nationally and we may apply this individually. **One point of this is that Israel will repent before Jesus will come again to fulfill national things, and she will be refreshed and blessed as a nation.** H. A. Ironside said when Israel finally repents she will become a means of blessing to the whole earth.

This time of refreshing will come from the presence of the LORD. But this is also true for the individual. In other words, if you want a refreshing life and an abundant life that is filled with the blessings of God, it starts with changing your thinking about Jesus Christ.

Reason #3 - So that God might send Jesus as your Messiah for you. **3:20-26**

Keep in mind that this is a Church Age, Grace Age message and it truly zeroes in on Israel. The Church has not replaced Israel and it needs to understand dispensational theology about Israel.

Peter says to these men of Israel, if you don’t change your thinking about Jesus Christ, you will weep when your Messiah returns and not rejoice. God will not send His Son back until Israel has had a national repentance. There are certain Messianic truths brought out here specifically for Israel.

Now one question arises and it is this: If Israel, as a nation, had repented and believed on Jesus Christ, would He have established her Kingdom on earth? The answer is yes!

(Messianic Truth #1) - Jesus had to be received into heaven until the time of prophetic restoration . **3:21**

Do you get this point - heaven honors Jesus Christ; heaven has received Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is right now in a literal, physical place called heaven.

There is a predicted time of restoration coming for Israel. Right now one may experience forgiveness and times of refreshing, but there is a future plan in which Christ will return and fulfill all prophecies, including all those for Israel.

(Messianic Truth #2) - Jesus is the prophet spoken of by Moses who is to be obeyed in everything. **3:22**

In Luke's Gospel he recorded that Jesus taught all things pertaining to Himself, staying with Moses (Luke 24:25-27). Moses specifically said that God would send One through Israel who was His special prophet. He would be raised up, and they needed to listen to everything He said. Instead of listening to Him they killed Him.

(Messianic Truth #3) - Jesus is not to be disobeyed or they will be destroyed. **3:23**

Do not miss this message. If you do not believe on Jesus Christ, your soul will be destroyed. That word "destroyed" (εξολεθρευω) means God will bring utter destruction to the soul of one who rejects His Son. This speaks of an eternal burning.

This message is for every person. Salvation is about what happens to your soul when you die. That heretic from Grand Rapids had better look carefully at what that early church taught. All people will not be saved. Any person who does not turn to Jesus Christ and trust Him will be destroyed.

(Messianic Truth #4) - Jesus Christ was predicted by all prophets starting with Samuel. **3:24**

Every prophet in Scripture predicted truth about Jesus Christ. He is at the center of everything that relates to God.

(Messianic Truth #5) - Jesus Christ gives Israel a covenant relationship with God. **3:25**

He is the promised seed upon whom all covenant promises with Israel hinge.

(Messianic Truth #6) - Jesus Christ was sent to Israel first. **3:26**

Will you, by faith, turn right now from your wicked sin and turn to Jesus Christ? If you will, you will have all your sins washed away and you will experience times of refreshing and you have a bright future in store.