

“Peter’s Second Sermon”

Acts 3:11-26

Baxter Exum (#974)
Four Lakes Church of Christ
Madison, Wisconsin
June 15, 2008

Four Lakes Church of Christ



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Introduction:

This morning, I would like for us to jump back into a brief series of three lessons that we began two weeks ago—a series of three lessons beginning with the healing of the lame beggar in **Acts 3** and ending with the first real persecution of the Lord’s church in **Acts 4**. You might remember from two weeks ago that we looked at the first ten verses of **Acts 3**, and we considered the healing of a man more than 40 years old who had been lame from the time he was born. **»PPT»** All of this happened right after the church was established in **Acts 2**. In our pew Bibles, the passage in **Acts 3** starts on page 1703. Two weeks ago, we discovered that the lame man had been carried to the temple gate so that he could beg for money. But as he is being carried to the gate, he sees Peter and John, they make eye-contact, and the man starts asking Peter and John for money. Peter says, **“I do not possess silver and gold, but what I have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!”** The man, of course, jumped up and started praising God.

As we studied that passage two weeks ago, we were looking at the question: What was it that made the early church so effective at reaching out to those who were lost. We found several answers to that question, 1.) **»PPT»** First of all, we found that Peter and John saw a need and they were open to being interrupted, 2.) **»PPT»** Secondly, we discovered that Peter and John paid attention—they took the time to address the situation head on, 3.) **»PPT»** And then finally, Peter and John were willing to act on their concern as they gave the man not what he wanted, but what he really needed. The man was looking for money, but Peter and John went even further than that, as they healed the man in the name of Jesus Christ.

Last week we took a little break as we looked at Jonah during our Vacation Bible School. And so this morning I would like for us to go back to **Acts 3** as we look at the reaction—as we consider what happens as a result of the healing.

I hope we can get this picture in our minds. Here is a man who has been lame for more than forty years, he is healed, he is running and leaping and praising God, he starts holding on to Peter and John—in fact, the Greek word in **verse 11** goes back to a word meaning “strong,” and so he was holding on with all of his might. Today we might refer to it as a bear hug—he just could not let go. And as he is standing there clinging to Peter and John a crowd starts to gather. All of the people were running to see what had happened. And the Bible says at this point that Peter started speaking.

This morning, I would like for us to focus on Peter's sermon. It is a significant lesson—it focuses on the crucifixion, so as we look at what Peter said, I would like for us to go back to **verse 1** and look at the whole chapter. **»PPT»** If you will, please look with me at all **26 verses** of **Acts 3**...

- 1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.***
- 2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.***
- 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.***
- 4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!"***
- 5 And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.***
- 6 But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!"***
- 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.***
- 8 With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.***
- 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God;***
- 10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.***
- 11 While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement.***
- 12 But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"***
- 13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.***
- 14 "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,***
- 15 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.***
- 16 "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.***

- ¹⁷ ***"And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.***
- ¹⁸ ***"But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.***
- ¹⁹ ***"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;***
- ²⁰ ***and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,***
- ²¹ ***whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.***
- ²² ***"Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you.***
- ²³ ***'And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'***
- ²⁴ ***"And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.***
- ²⁵ ***"It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.'***
- ²⁶ ***"For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."***

And so we have looked at the apostle Peter's second sermon. For just a few moments, I would like for us to go back and try to apply Peter's words to our lives today.

I. One of the first things we notice is that PETER VERY CLEARLY IDENTIFIES THE SIN THAT THE PEOPLE HAD COMMITTED. And as he does so, Peter is also addressing OUR SIN. **»PPT»**

We find in **verse 11** that people were starting to gather around—people were starting to stare, and so he takes advantage of the opportunity, and he redirects their attention to Jesus. Jesus is the reason for the healing. Jesus is the power behind it.

And as he changes the subject from the healing to Jesus, Peter let them know that all of them were personally responsible for murdering the Son of God. You delivered Him over. **"Handing Him over"** is a legal term for turning someone over to the authorities. And so Peter says, **"You disowned Him."** You asked for a murderer to be released instead. That was the tradition—once a year, the Roman governor would let the people make an exchange—someone on death row could be released—not just spared crucifixion, but completely let go—released, exonerated, pardoned, cleared of all charges. Peter says, **"You disowned the Messiah and asked for a murderer**

to be released instead.” You killed the Son of God. Peter wanted these people to understand that they had personally sinned against the Lord.

He refers to Jesus (in **verse 14**) as the **"Holy and Righteous One."** He refers to Jesus (in **verse 15**) as the **"Prince of Life,"** as the **"Author of Life."** The idea is that Jesus is the **"Pioneer"** of life. Jesus went first. Jesus was raised from the dead. And so Peter was very clear as he accused them of murdering the Son of God. They had killed the Messiah. The creation had killed the creator. Perhaps we can try to imagine a painter painting a beautiful scene. He is there by the ocean with the canvas and the paints, and everything is going well, and it is all very beautiful, but just as he is about to finish, the paint suddenly jumps off the canvas and squeezes itself out of the tubes and starts attacking the artist—the paint kills the painter! That is what happened in the city of Jerusalem! The creation killed the Creator.

They had murdered the One for whom they had been waiting for hundreds of years. They had killed the Messiah. They had murdered the One whom God had raised from the dead. **"A fact,"** as Peter says, **"to which we are witnesses."** Very interesting! There was no arguing with the resurrection. Just a few weeks after it happened, Peter was able to claim that they were all witnesses. We learn here that Christianity is based on some very well-documented facts. The resurrection is a fact to which there were many witnesses. At this point, if they had had evidence to the contrary, someone could have objected. They could have said, **"No, Jesus did not come back from the dead, and here is His body to prove it."** But no one came forward. There was no arguing with the resurrection. But to the contrary, they were all witnesses. They knew it!

And Peter's point (in **verse 16**) is that this healing had taken place based on faith in the name of Jesus. And so even though Jesus was dead, He was still there. Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. Jesus was still alive and was still ruling from heaven.

And yet the fact remained: They were personally responsible for having killed the Son of God.

Before we distance ourselves from what happened there, we need to remember what Paul wrote in **Romans 3:23**, **"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** And then, Paul went on to say in **Romans 5:8**, **"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."** When Jesus died on the cross, He died for the sins of the world—for every sin ever committed. As Paul says, He died, **"...for us."** And so even though we might not have been there on that day, we are like the paint that jumped off the page and killed the painter. We are also personally responsible for killing the Son of God—our sins put Him on the cross.

In response to what we have done, we might expect God to retaliate. We might expect judgment. But please notice with me what happens next...

II. ...because in verses 17-18, we find GOD'S ANSWER TO OUR MURDER OF HIS ONLY SON. **»PPT»**

And God's answer is that we have been given a second chance! In **verse 17**, it is almost as if Peter discovers some kind of a loophole. He knows that all of us are guilty of murdering God's Son, but there is a ray of hope, and it all focuses on the idea that the people had "**acted in ignorance**." It reminds us of what Paul wrote as he spoke about the wisdom of God in **1 Corinthians 2:8**, "**...the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory**." In other words, if we had truly understood what we were doing, we would never have sinned—we "**...would not have crucified the Lord of glory**." God is assuming the best of us.

We remember the prayer that Jesus offered on the cross, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing**" (**Luke 23:34**). Even the apostle Paul, a highly educated Roman citizen, looked back on it and said, "**I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus**." Although he had sinned, Paul was able to say that he had "**acted ignorantly in unbelief**" (**1 Timothy 1:12-14**). Paul's ignorance did not let him "off the hook," so to speak, but Paul at least had a chance with God. God provided an answer to Paul's sin, because Paul had acted in ignorance.

Normally, we would be offended if someone referred to us as being "ignorant." But at least in this situation, being considered ignorant is a blessing. Thank God we were ignorant! All of this leads us to the idea that God has provided a solution. God has provided the answer for sin. But as we have already noted, we killed the solution. We killed the answer. But thankfully, God is willing to consider that we have acted in ignorance.

We notice in verse 18, "**...the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled**." In other words, God's eternal plan has now been fulfilled! God has now provided an answer for sin. God has now given the cure—through the sacrifice of His only Son! Forgiveness is now available! This is good news!

III. And with that, we go back to Acts 3, and we find that having made the offer of salvation, God is now calling for OUR RESPONSE. **»PPT»**

We notice at the beginning of **verse 19** that Peter says, "**Therefore repent and return so that your sins may be wiped away**." The word "**repent**" refers to turning around, to having a change of heart. We are to repent and return. What are we to repent of? Some would say that we are to repent of having broken the Law of Moses. But no! We have never been accountable to the Law of Moses. According to

the next few verses, we are to repent of ignoring the words of Jesus. According to **verse 22**, we are to **"...give heed to everything He says to you."** According to **verse 23**, every soul that does not listen to Jesus Christ will be destroyed!

We know that giving heed goes even further than just listening. We are to listen to Jesus—yes! And yet we are also to do what He tells us to do. We will be held accountable to the words of Christ—ignorance is no longer an excuse. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote down what the Lord wanted us to know. We refer to their message as the gospel, or the good news. In response to God's offer, we are to obey the good news. We are to repent of falling short of the perfect example that Jesus set for us. We are to listen to the words of Christ, and if we do, Peter tells us that times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord. If we heed the words of Christ, our sins will be **"wiped away."**

The whole process is summarized by the apostle Paul in **Titus 2:11-14**, where Paul said, **"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."** And so the apostle Paul addresses the motivation for our repentance. We are motivated by the appearance of the amazing grace of God. We look at what God has done, and we turn away from sin.

We can see the evidence of repentance in the city of Ephesus. In **Acts 19:18-19**, the Bible says, **"Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver."** In other words, their repentance was concrete and expensive. They found the truth and they did something about it. You could look at their lives and you could see that a change had taken place.

Repentance involves changing our minds about the way we are living. We are to accept responsibility for what we are doing. We are not to rationalize or defend our behavior, but we are to change. We are to stop sinning.

Unfortunately, many people in our society look at God's offer, and they see it as being too narrow. They see the Bible and all they see is book of restrictions on their lifestyle. They see the Bible merely as a book that would crimp their style. They see it as narrow-minded. But for just a moment, perhaps we could imagine visiting a war zone—imagine we went on a visit to Afghanistan. And let's imagine that the soldier who takes us on a tour explains that we are about to go through a mine field, and that we are to step in his footprints exactly. He has been through this area many times before, and he explains that if we deviate from his footsteps that we will very likely be blown to pieces. How would we view his instructions? I would suggest that the soldier is not being legalistic, but that he is loving and gracious. He has warned

us of destruction if we turn aside to the right or to the left, and his warning is an act of mercy. That warning is an act of love.

In the same way, God has warned us about the danger of sin. God has told us the importance of repentance. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. The way might be narrow, but the message of repentance is a message of love and mercy and grace.

Conclusion & Invitation:

This morning, we have considered the apostle Peter's second sermon. He came right out and convicted all of us of sin. And although we were not there, the Bible still teaches that all of us are responsible for the death of Christ. We did it! But in response to our murder of Jesus, we find God's answer, as God (in His great mercy) fulfilled all of the prophecies in Jesus Christ. And in response to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we find that we are to turn away from all forms of sin. Lord willing, I hope we can conclude next week by looking together at the reaction to Peter's second sermon and the first real wave of persecution against the Lord's church.

This morning, if you understand from the Scriptures that you are living in sin, we would invite you to obey the good news. The good news is that Jesus died, He was buried, and He was raised up on the third day. We respond to that message by turning away from sin, by confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, and by allowing ourselves to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. If you have any questions, we hope you will ask, but if you are ready to be baptized right now, you can let us know as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: church@fourlakescoc.org