

July 28, 2020

Acts 3:12-19

I know we dedicated a lot of time to Acts 2...thank you for your patience. I still believe the Pentecost story is an integral part of Christian life. Now, we move forward to Luke 3, and what I hope will be a one-day discussion. If not, thank you for your patience.

The context for our study today, July 28, goes back to the Gospel of Luke. Remember that Luke wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. In his Gospel, Luke tells about:

- The chief priests and scribes “sought how they might put him to death” (Luke 22:2).
- Judas’ betrayal and Jesus arrest (Luke 22:47-53).
- Peter’s denial (Luke 22:54-62).
- The mocking and beating of Jesus (Luke 22:63-65).
- The council of the elders of the people who found Jesus guilty (Luke 22:66-70).
- Jesus’ trials before Pilate and Herod (Luke 23:1-12).
- The crowd’s choosing Barabbas rather than Jesus (Luke 23:13-25).
- The crucifixion (Luke 23:26-49).
- The resurrection (Luke 24:1-12).
- Jesus’ appearance to two men on the road to Emmaus and to the gathered disciples (Luke 24:13-49)
- Jesus’ ascension (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11).

As a reminder, Luke points a finger at a number of people who failed Jesus:

- Judas, of course, but Peter as well
- The chief priests and elders, of course, but also the crowd
- Pilate, of course, and also Herod.
- Roman soldiers carried out the execution and joined in the mocking (Luke 23:36), as did the one of the thieves who was crucified with Jesus (23:39).

In other words, when Jesus was crucified, many hands were bloodied. Their guilt forms the background for our text today.

The context leading up to our study today is the healing of a man who was lame from birth (3:1-10).

Does anyone want to share what the “lame man” story is about?

It should be familiar...we even have songs about the event.

### ACTS 3:12.

**12.** *When Peter saw it, he responded to the people, “You men of Israel, why do you marvel at this man? Why do you fasten your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him walk?”*

Peter sets out to correct the errors in their thinking, but first, ***he preaches.***

## ACTS 3:13-15.

**13.** *The god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified his Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. 14. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15. and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, to which we are witnesses.*

### **13a. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers”**

The phrase, “the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac,” goes back to the time of Jacob (Genesis 28:13).

The identification of God with all three patriarchs goes back to Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:15). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the seed stock of Israel.

### **13b. “has glorified his Servant Jesus”**

God’s glory has been revealed to humankind in three ways:

- Through God’s presence, as in the tabernacle and the temple
- In acts of salvation
- In judgment.

Moses asked to see God’s glory, but God said, “...for man may not see me and live.”

Peter speaks of Jesus as God’s “servant.”

### **13c. “Jesus, whom you delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to release him”**

To understand the healing of the lame man, these people must first understand Jesus, who made the healing possible—so Peter tells them about Jesus, and he makes the point that they were responsible for handing Jesus over to death—for rejecting their messiah.

What would be the Jewish thought on “rejecting their messiah”??

### **14a. “But you denied the Holy and Righteous One”**

This is Peter’s second use of this word, “rejected”. It was this rejection of the messiah that was the core of this crowd’s guilt.

In what ways are Christians/Jews still denying the Righteous One?

### **14b. “and asked for a murderer to be granted to you”**

Note the irony—the crowd demands the release of the murderer, Barabbas, whose name means “son of the father” and demands the murder of the Jesus—the Son of God.

### **15a. “and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead”**

Again, note the irony. These people killed the Author of life—the one who came to give them life.

In what two ways is Jesus was the Author of life?

### 15b. “to which we are witnesses”

Peter’s first proof of Jesus is his resurrection which he and the other apostles have witnessed.

Now he offers a second proof—the healing of the lame man.

How did he connect the healing he and John performed to Jesus?

### ACTS 3:16.

### 16. “By faith in his name, his name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which is through him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all”

In this early Christian/Jewish culture, a person’s name was more than a label. People believed that something of the person was connected to his/her name.

The fact that Peter repeats a thought in two parallel sentences is significant I believe.  
How so?

The question is, was the lame man’s faith or Peter’s faith that proved effective in harnessing the healing power of Jesus.

Your thoughts? Any examples?

### ACTS 3:17-19

**17.** *“Now, brothers, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18. But the things which God announced by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,*

### 17. “Now, brothers, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did also your rulers”

Peter has already told the crowd that they handed over God’s servant Jesus to be killed, but now he calls them brothers, (I think “friends” is more emphatic) and acknowledges that they acted in ignorance.

I also believe Peter is opening the door to God’s forgiveness for those who crucified Jesus.

Your thoughts?                      When did Jesus also forgive them?

### 18. “But the things which God announced by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled”

Take a look at these scriptures to find the Old Testament connection.

- Isaiah’s suffering servant passage (Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12).
- Jeremiah’s “gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter” (Jeremiah 11:19)
- Zechariah’s “I will pour on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and *they will look to me whom they have pierced; and they shall*

*mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and will grieve bitterly for him, as one grieves for his firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10).*

FOR A LITTLE EXTENDED READING, CHECK OUT THESE CHAPTER IN... The book of Psalms for writings that point to the crucified Christ (Psalms 22, 31, 34, 69).

Tell me and others what you found common in Peter’s sermon and the Psalms scripture.

### **19. “Repent therefore, and turn again”**

- The Greeks believed that a change of one’s mind would naturally lead to a change in one’s actions, because beliefs determine behavior.
- In current day psychological disciplines today, feelings as the determinant of behavior. I think this means that to change behaviors we must first “get in touch with” and change feelings.
- In recent decades to understand beliefs as the determinant of actions. Beliefs constitute the starting point in the action-cycle. A change of thinking has the power to change both feelings and actions.

A little heavy I know, but what are your thoughts?

### **19b. “that your sins may be blotted out”**

- Many commentaries note that repentance, turning to God, has the power to untangle conceptions that sin has made of our lives.
- It not only opens the door to God’s forgiveness, but it also puts us on a new path that leads from darkness to light.

*Some thoughts in anticipation of next week’s study from chapter 4: Chapter 4 is one of my favorites because of Peter and John’s defiance of the religious leaders*

- The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees had Peter and John arrested because they “taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (4:2-3).
- “But many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to be about five thousand” (4:4).
- The religious leaders call Peter and John before their council to explain their authority, but that simply gives Peter another opportunity for a sermon (4:5-12)...surprise, surprise!!
- Because of the witness of the healed man, the power of Peter’s preaching, and the crowd’s approval of Peter and John, the council issues an order to Peter and John to stop preaching—(I LOVE THIS)—an order which Peter rejects while still in their midst (4:13-21).