

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

NOTES 11

ACTS 3:11-16

FORMER ADVENTIST FELLOWSHIP BIBLE STUDY

When Peter and John had healed the lame man in the temple portico, the people ran to them while the beggar continued to cling to them. Immediately Peter denied that he and John had healed the man by their own power or piety, and Peter launched into his second sermon. He reminded his hearers that the God of the fathers is the one who glorified “His servant Jesus” whom they rejected and disowned, delivering Him over for arrest and execution even though Pilate was preparing to release Him.

Peter’s reference to Jesus being God’s servant echoed Isaiah 52:13-53:12 where the prophet foretold a “suffering servant” who would be abused and rejected but would make intercession for transgressors.

Isaiah’s prophecy said God’s servant would have no physical attractiveness to draw people to Him. He would be despised, rejected, and a man of grief. He would carry their sorrows and would be afflicted and wounded for our transgressions. He would be oppressed, and God would lay on Him the iniquity of everyone. He would die with the wicked even though He had no deceit and would have done no violence.

Moreover, Isaiah tells us that it was the will of the Lord to crush him and put him to grief when his soul makes an offering for guilt. By the knowledge of Him many would be made righteous; He would bear their iniquities, and he would be satisfied with His suffering and make intercession for transgressors.

In Acts 3 Peter articulates that Jesus is the One who fulfills God’s promises. He connects Jesus to God’s promises to the patriarchs by saying the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the One who glorified Jesus His servant. The Jews would have understood what Peter was saying; they knew the Isaiah prophecies, and they were expecting the Messiah. Peter tells them that they have rejected and killed the Promised One, and he demonstrates that Jesus was God by healing the lame man by the name of Jesus.

Peter also echoed Isaiah 42:1-4. By doing this miracle and connecting it with Jesus and His power to heal, he demonstrated that as Jesus’ apostle he had Jesus’ power to continue His work. In Jesus’ name Peter was doing the work of Jesus and identifying Him to the Jews as God’s Promised One whose power and purpose could not be stopped even though they had put Him to death. Peter and John were simply continuing Jesus’ miraculous healing ministry which identified Him as the Messiah.

Matthew 12:11-21 records Jesus healing the man with the withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Enraged, the Pharisees conspired to kill him. Matthew records, “Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

Peter was revealing to the Jews who had only recently been in the crowd that disowned Jesus two things: first, that the Lord Jesus

was not stopped by the Jews refusal to accept Him. Death could not hold Him, and His power was continuing to mediate the healing of God on earth. Second, Peter and John were proof that Jesus’ power was not limited to His being physically present. Jesus was pouring out His grace and mercy through those who knew and believed Him, and no human interception could stop that.

GLORIFIED BY THE GOD OF THE FATHERS

This second sermon of Peter’s focused especially on a call to the Jews to repent. His first sermon had been more focused on identifying Jesus as the Messiah, but now he drives home the necessary response to knowing who Jesus is. His emphasizing that the God of the fathers is the One who glorified Jesus was not primarily to give Jesus legitimacy in their eyes but to identify Him as God the Messiah. In other words, Jesus was not only a prophet or a miracle-worker; He was the fulfillment of God’s promises to the fathers. He was God with them.

In Matthew 22:29-32 Jesus said: “But Jesus answered them, ‘You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.’”

In this passage Jesus explained that the Jewish leaders did not understand God’s power, and they did not know the Scriptures. He pointed out that the fathers were not gone, even though they were dead. He quoted Scripture and reminded them that God called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God is not the God of the dead but of the living.

In this verse Jesus brought the concept of spiritual life into focus, and He also clarified that those who have God’s life are not dead. They have not ceased to exist, because God is not the God of the dead.

This God of the living is the One who glorified the Lord Jesus. Jesus’ resurrection and power were evidences of Jesus’ identity as God’s own Son, because the God of the living does not glorify someone in a temporal way. When God glorifies and gives life, those things are eternal and are evidences of the actual power and glory of God Himself. They are not merely physical “fixes” that rescued a suffering man; God’s glory is eternal.

Again in Acts 5:29-31 Peter will say, explaining why the apostles continued to preach after being told to keep silent and after being miraculously released from prison, “But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.’”

The Jews fancied themselves the only ones who truly honored God. They had rationalized their rejection of Jesus and had justified His death to themselves. Peter doesn’t let them rest in their delusion. After being arrested for preaching Christ and being released from prison, he tells the Jews that he and his brothers will not be silent

because they have to obey God, not men, and then he proclaims the gospel in one succinct statement. The “God of our Fathers” raised Jesus from death and exalted Him to His right hand. Moreover, Jesus is God’s appointed one who is Leader and Savior, the One who gives repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

In the middle of this statement, Peter reminds the Jews that they killed God’s chosen One. They, the punctilious protectors of the law who imagined they were the only true people of God, rejected and killed the one glorified and honored by the God of their fathers. Their ethnic legacy counted for nothing in light of this supreme treason. They had rejected and attempted to destroy the very One whom their fathers foretold. They disobeyed God while priding themselves on being the recipients of God’s promises to the fathers. They completely missed the One for whom they waited, and Peter is clear that they were not innocent. Their rejection was willful, and their lack of faith and obedience to God was irrefutable.

Similarly, Stephen used the phrase “the God of your fathers” when he recounted the history of Israel in his sermon just before being the first martyr for Christ. In Acts 7:30-33 he tells the story of God’s appearing to Moses in the desert in a flame in a burning bush. As Moses gazed at the burning bush which was not consumed, he heard a voice say, “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob,” and Moses was told to remove his sandals because the ground was holy.

The promises to the patriarchs shaped the entire story of Israel and also of the whole world. Throughout Israel’s history, God’s people recognized God as the One who made unconditional promises for their future to their founding fathers. Every time God would identify Himself as the God of the fathers, He was confirming His promises which He made to them. He is the faithful One; His calling and commission of the fathers and His promises to them were God’s sure word that He would rescue and redeem them. He would send a Messiah. When Peter and Stephen used the reference to the God of the fathers, they referred to this unconditional promise, and they systematically applied this reference and promise to the Lord Jesus as God’s fulfilled word.

In Acts 22:12-15 Paul is giving his defense to the Jews. As he tells about his Damascus Road experience, he remembers Ananias coming to him to pray and restore his sight. As soon as Paul could see, Ananias said to him, “The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.”

Once again God’s command is confirmed by identifying it as coming from “the God of our fathers”. It is God who promised a Redeemer who appointed Saul to “know his will, to see the Righteous One,” to hear His voice, and to be His witness. Ananias, under God’s inspiration, connects Saul/Paul’s life-changing experience and his revelation of the Lord Jesus with God’s promises to the fathers. Paul has been given a role to play in declaring God has fulfilled His promises to send a Savior. His life has changed because God chose him and appointed him to explain His purposes and His will in sending His Son as the unforeseen reality that lay behind His promises to the fathers.

This same Paul wrote in Romans 15:8-9, “For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, ‘Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.’”

God’s promises to the patriarchs which He made hundreds of years before were not null, lost in the passing ages. God’s word is true; He Himself is truthful. What He says, He will do. Paul, arrested and blinded by the Lord Jesus whom he hated, experienced the transformation of conviction of sin, forgiveness, and life from the Holy Spirit. Born anew and completely changed, he became a powerful witness of God’s truthfulness, of His faithfulness to keep His promises. Paul spent his life demonstrating that the Lord Jesus was the fulfillment of all God’s promises to the fathers.

So, when Peter connects the healing of the lame man in the temple court with the power of the One glorified by the God of “our

fathers”, he was driving home the point that Jesus was the fulfillment of every promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Jews could not ignore Jesus just because he no longer walked among them. His power was present on earth, and nothing could stop it, because His power and the power He gave His witnesses is the power of God. Because of Jesus, the world would now receive the blessings God promised the fathers centuries earlier.

Peter was calling the Jews to repentance. He was calling them to accept the reality that the Lord Jesus was God’s Messiah, God’s own provision for their sin and bondage. There was still time to repent of their arrogance and willful blindness.

In Romans 15:8-9 Paul emphasized the absolute surety of God’s promises: “For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, ‘Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.’”

This passage clearly confirms that the Lord Jesus was the confirmation to the Jews that God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were certain. He promised them Seed, land, and blessing, and in the person of the Lord Jesus, He gave them the promised Seed. Through Jesus, Abraham’s descendant of promise, He was already delivering the blessing. Just as surely as the Seed and the blessing are certain and confirmed, the promise of the land is also sure. The reality of the Lord Jesus is the confirmation of all God’s promises to the patriarchs.

Interestingly, Paul didn’t stop by saying God was confirming His promises to the patriarchs through Jesus. He goes on specifically to bring the gentiles into the picture. He doesn’t assume that the promises to the patriarchs automatically speak of God’s blessing to believing gentiles. Instead, he makes a point to say that Jesus’ becoming a servant to the Jews was not only to confirm God’s promises to them, but also it was for the purpose of the gentiles glorifying God for His mercy. Jesus’ servant status among His own ethnic people was for the purpose of the gentiles being brought into worship and praise and salvation. Jesus’ ministry to the Jews set in motion the events that opened the door of grace and mercy to the gentiles as well.

HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS ONE

Peter declares that his audience was responsible for denying the “Holy and Righteous One”, asking for a murderer to be released instead of Jesus. His phrase “Holy and Righteous One” is a messianic term echoing Isaiah 53:11: “Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.”

Peter used this phrase because his Jewish audience would recognize it from the Isaiah prophecy foretelling their coming Messiah. This phrase was widely recognized, a fact evidenced in the episode recorded in Mark 1:23-25. Jesus was in the synagogue when a man with an unclean spirit who cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

Jesus rebuked him and ordered the evil spirit to come out of the man. Even though the spirit correctly identified Jesus’ identity (interestingly, the evil spirits knew who Jesus was even though the Jews refused to acknowledge Him), he spoke about Him mockingly, in a manner designed to generate distrust and fear and disbelief. Evil cannot give a truthful witness, even when it uses facts in its declarations. Jesus did not defend His identity nor did He confirm or deny the spirit’s words. He cut below the presenting words and addresses the foundational reality: the man was possessed by an evil spirit that was him to speak the spirit’s unbelieving words to promulgate doubt and fear.

Jesus revealed the hidden evil and rebuked it, freeing the man from its grip. He did not address the spirit's words; we are never to engage with evil on its terms. We cannot win an argument with evil; we can only declare truth, and God will reveal what is hidden in darkness.

Stephen also used this well-known Messianic term. In Acts 7:52, just before he died, he declared: "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Peter echoed this phrase in his first epistle when he wrote, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water."

Peter's experience with Jesus was profound, having denied Him and then being restored and given the responsibility of overseeing the birth of the church. He knew who Jesus was, and he did not fail to identify Him as the righteous One, the only One who possessed God's own personal righteousness and could set people free.

John also identified Jesus as the righteous One in his first epistle (1 John 2:1): "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Because of Isaiah, the Jews were expecting a righteous Redeemer to come to them. It is significant that Jesus came in a manner that didn't fit their expectations. In spite of the prophecies about Him, the Jews had developed a corporate expectation for their Deliverer. Jesus did not fit their expectations, and they refused to believe.

Their unbelief and thwarted expectations mirrors our natural tendency to expect God to reveal Himself to us in ways that make "sense" to us. Because we desire and seek to have our "natural" needs for love, care, and acceptance filled by the people we believe ought to care for us, we tend to miss God's miraculous provision for us because we're looking for peace and acceptance and provision from "expected" venues. God's provision for us almost never appears to be what we think it ought to look like.

Our parents may fail to love us properly; we may lose income and relationships when we follow the Lord Jesus; we may not have natural children, or our children may disrespect us. When we offer these disappointments to God, we tend to expect Him to fulfill His promised blessing to us by fixing those broken connections or by giving us replacements. We don't usually expect Him to give us what we lack through means that look different from the relationships that are broken.

As long as we hold stubbornly to our hurt and our desire to have the exact spot filled in a way that makes sense to us, we will close ourselves to God's revelation and provision. What He brings us is infinitely more healing and satisfying than "replacements" or recognizable provision. God brings us His own peace and healing and acceptance and love in whatever way He desires, knowing that part of our being able to receive what He has for us involves releasing our internal demand for what we lack. We have to be content to trust Him to give us all we need, and only when we release our demands and desires to Him will we begin to be open enough to recognize His provision and to open our hearts to receive His healing and care through the unexpected means He delivers to us.

MURDERED AND RESURRECTED "AUTHOR OF LIFE"

In verse 15 Peter emphasizes again that his audience murdered the Author or Prince of life, but God raised Him from the dead. This declaration is repeated throughout the book of Acts. He made the same point in his Pentecost sermon when he said in Acts 2:23-24, "this

Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken."

Acts 4:8-10 records Peter repeating this declaration when he was brought before the high priest and his council for questioning. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well."

Again when Peter and John had been released from prison by an angel and were brought before the council for questioning after breaking the orders not to speak of Jesus, Peter said, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

In Acts 10:39-41 we see Peter repeating this same message as he preaches to Cornelius's household as God brings the first Gentiles into the church: "And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead."

Acts 13 records Paul's first missionary journey. After Peter unlocked the way into the kingdom of God for the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles, Paul's ministry to the Gentiles planted the seeds of exponential growth in the brand-new phenomenon of the church. Setting the pattern for his ministry, Paul went on this first journey to the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch to preach until the Jews would drive him out and he would turn to the Gentiles with his preaching. Acts 13:27-31 records Paul's sermon to his fellow Jews, and he delivers the same message Peter systematically delivered to the Jews. First he stated that the message of salvation had been sent to Abraham's family.

Then he said that those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus or the messages of the prophets that were read every Sabbath. "And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead."

These first evangelistic sermons recorded in the book of Acts continue to show us how we who are witnesses of Jesus are to speak when we meet unbelievers. We are to articulate the gospel. There is only one message that reveals salvation and the way to be right with God: the news that the Lord Jesus died for our sin, was buried, and rose on the third day.

Paul specifies this message as the only message that saves in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

As offensive as the cross and the blood of Jesus is to many people, as politically incorrect as this exclusive news of salvation is, this historic fact is the message we are to proclaim: the Lord Jesus died, was buried, and was raised from death on the third day. He took our sin to the cross, He nailed the law and its curse in His body on that tree, He died our death, and He defeated death by rising from the dead, thus giving us the right to have eternal life through Him.

There is no record of the apostles ever preaching the law as the first step in convicting people of sin or salvation. Rather, both Peter

and Paul preached the Lord Jesus and His death for all. The law pointed to Jesus; before the cross, if a Gentile wanted to worship the true God, he had to be circumcised and become a Jew, accepting the terms of the Mosaic covenant as God's prescription for true worship. He had to place himself under the authority of the law, recognizing his guilt and the curse that was on him for his sin.

After the cross, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the convicting evidence of sin. Jesus fulfilled all the functions of the law, including its revelation of our sin. Now, we have the bodily death of Jesus on our account to convict us, and the Holy Spirit is shed abroad in the world to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8-13).

Peter and Paul did not preach social responsibility or good behavior when they called people to salvation. They preached only one message: Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and raised to life on the third day. This is the only message that saves. All the rest of the messages of godly living are instructions for discipling people who have already become believers. Only after a person is born again does the message of living a godly life by the power of the Holy Spirit make sense.

There is only one way for people to be saved: to see the Lord Jesus and to recognize their own sin as the reason He died and rose again.

HEALED BY FAITH THROUGH JESUS

Peter has once again reminded the Jews that they put Jesus, the Author of Life, to death, and God raised Him from the dead. Now he reminds them again that the lame man was healed him by "the faith which comes through Him". In this passage Peter states the reality that believing faith is not something we generate in ourselves. "The faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:16).

At the beginning of this story, when Peter and John encounter the beggar at the temple gate, Peter said to him, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

Peter does not call on the man to believe for healing; he simply tells him that he has no money for alms but he does have one thing: he can heal the man in the name of Jesus Christ. Never does Peter ask the man to "believe"; this healing is done entirely by Peter calling on Jesus and Jesus glorifying Himself.

In verse 16, Luke (the author of Acts) reveals that the man had faith to believe that the Lord Jesus could heal him—but the faith he had came through Jesus. In other words, the healing was by the power of the Lord Jesus, the man's faith came from the Lord Jesus, and the entire miracle of healing and belief was a work of God. He granted the man the faith to accept the startling gift of healing, and He granted the man belief in the Lord Jesus at the same time.

Peter expounds on the power of Jesus to keep believers and to give them faith in 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

He states that our new birth is done by His power and is the consequence of His resurrection from the dead; He Himself is keeping an inheritance for us, and this inheritance is absolutely certain. It cannot perish, become defiled or corrupted, and it cannot fade. Moreover, we ourselves as born-again believers are being "guarded through faith" by God's power. We are being kept by God for salvation that includes glorified bodies. All of these things—our certain inheritance and we

ourselves—are guarded by God. Our faith is a consequence of God's power, and this God-generated faith keeps us anticipating the certain future we have in heaven: the consummation of our salvation in glorified bodies and eternity with the Lord Jesus.

Even the faith that gives us hope and keeps us faithful is a gift of God's power.

Paul confirms this fact in Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Our faith is always a gift from God. Contrary to what many "prosperity gospel" and charismatic preachers say, we do not receive "Holy Spirit experiences" and financial success by believing that we will. In other words, we are not blessed by believing we'll receive blessings. Our provision and blessings come to us as we believe God Himself.

God has told us what He will do: He will provide what we need to eat, drink, and wear (Matthew 6:25-34). He has told us He will do abundantly more than all we can ask or think (Eph. 3:20-21). He has promised He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5), and he has promised that nothing can snatch us out of His hand (Jn. 10:28-29). He has also promised that He will give us His gifts according to His own will (1 Cor 12:11).

He has not promised us prosperity, wealth, good health, handsome children, or fame. He has promised to give us a heavenly inheritance; He has told us we will suffer if we belong to Him, and He promises that he will make His strength perfect in our weakness (2 Cor 12).

Our blessings and success are not dependent upon our ability to drum up enough faith to receive. God gives us our faith, and the object of our faith is never to be faith in "faith", or confidence that we will have what we think we desire. We are asked to trust God, to believe in the Lord Jesus, and to believe His promises which He has actually stated in His word. We trust Jesus to do what He knows will glorify Himself and teach us to trust Him.

Our confidence is to be in Him—not in an expectation that He will do what we perceive we want. He gives us the ability to surrender our desires to Him and to accept His will. As we allow Him to be more real to us than our fear and need, He gives us Himself in ways we cannot explain or foresee. Belief in the Lord Jesus is not about having personal and financial success. It's about releasing our hold on material dreams and allowing the Lord Jesus to define us, to define our lives, and to make us holy. Knowing Jesus is not about our being "happy" but about His making us "holy" as we learn to live by His Spirit in submission to His will as He reveals Himself through His word.

MEDITATION

The Lord Jesus is asking us to trust Him, to allow Him to heal us in ways only He knows we need to be healed. He reveals the truth about our own lives to us as He reveals the truth about Himself, and He shows us that He alone is sufficient to fill our aching needs to be known, loved, respected, and affirmed. He asks us to trust Him and His promises and to be content with Him, knowing that He will do in and through us exactly what He knows will glorify Himself and mature and heal us. We can trust Him. What happens to us in this life is temporary, but our faith in Him has eternal significance.

The Lord Jesus asks us to offer ourselves to Him as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1) and to allow Him to teach us trust, to let His gift of faith plant us in peace and hope, letting go of our anxiety and control and trusting that He knows what we need and will provide it.

He has promised that His people will have what they need; He is faithful to His own word. We can let go of our human perceptions of what we need and trust His eternal perspective, knowing He has transferred us from the domain of darkness and had brought us into the kingdom of His life and light.

STUDY

In the first 10 verses of this chapter we see Peter and John healing a man lame from birth by the power of Jesus' name. In this next section, the apostles address the astonished crowd and declare that the One they killed, the Author of life, is the One who healed the man through faith in His name.

- 1. Peter immediately denied that he and John healed the man and credited the Lord Jesus. He begins his second sermon by reminding his hearers that the God of the patriarchs has honored Jesus, the One the Jews dis-owned. What Old Testament passage that his audience would have known did Peter's reference to Jesus as God's servant echo?**

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 _____

- 2. Additionally, this miracle and Peter's reference to the language of Isaiah should have also generated what other connection between Jesus' ministry and Isaiah?**

Matthew 12:11-21 _____

Isaiah 42:1-4 _____

- 3. This sermon of Peter's differs from his sermon in Acts 2 in that the first sermon developed Jesus' identity as Messiah, while this one focused more on a call to repentance. Why did he emphasize that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and "our fathers" is the One who glorified Jesus?**

Matthew 22:29-32 _____

Acts 5:29-31 _____

Acts 7:30-33 _____

Acts 22:12-15 _____

Romans 15:8-9 _____

4. Peter emphasizes in verse 14 that the Jews denied Jesus, the “holy and righteous one”, and delivered Him over to Pilate and asked for a murderer in his place. What was significant about the phrase “holy and righteous One,” and why did Peter specifically use this phrase?

Isaiah 53:11 _____

Mark 1:23-25 _____

Acts 7:52 _____

1 Peter 3:18-20 _____

1 John 2:1 _____

5. Peter builds in verse 15 on his recounting of the Jews’ denying Jesus and requesting a murderer in His place. He blatantly tells them they murdered “the Author of life”, but God raised Him from the dead, and they were witnesses of that fact. Why is this declaration such a recurring theme in the book of Acts?

Acts 2:23-24 _____

Acts 4:8-10 _____

Acts 5:30-32 _____

Acts 10:39-41 _____

Acts 3:28-29 _____

1 Cor 15:1-4 _____

6. In verse 16 Peter says that the man was healed by, or on the basis of, faith in Jesus’ name, and that “the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health.” Whose faith healed the man, and what is Peter saying about how faith comes to be?

Acts 3:6 _____

Ephesians 2:8-9 _____

1 Peter 1:3-5 _____

MEDITATION

How has faith in Jesus healed you? What difference does it make to you that Jesus was raised from the dead and that He is the Author of Life? In what ways is the Holy Spirit nudging you to act in faith, and what causes you to resist? What fear do you need to surrender to the Lord Jesus, knowing that you must trust Him because of His promises, not because of circumstances?

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” 1 Peter 2:24-25, NIV