

Second Sunday of Easter – 2024

Saturday, 4/6 at 4:00 | Sunday, 4/7 at 9:00



Text: Acts 3:11-21 NAS 1995

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: The next nine sermons will be based on passages in the book of **Acts**; these are some basics about the book of **Acts**:

- The Holy Spirit moved Luke, *the Gospel writer*, to write the book of **Acts**. It begins with Jesus' ascension and goes on to cover the first **32 years** of the NT church.
- When adding up the text in **Luke** and **Acts** (28%), we discover that Luke wrote MORE than any other NT writer – *even Paul, who wrote 13 of the NT books* (25%).
- The book begins with the focus on the Jews, *who were still practicing the OT Laws and festivals*; however, beginning in **chapter 10**, *the focus turns to Peter being led to proclaim Jesus to some Gentles*.
- In Acts **chapter 9** Paul became a follower of Jesus; then, beginning in **chapter 13**, Paul and his missionary team began their extensive missionary journeys.

We are not all missionaries or pastors, *but all Christians have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to live and speak for Jesus*. Let us continue to learn and practice such things!

Let's quickly move through **Acts** to today's sermon text:

- **Chapter 1:** Jesus ascended, and Judas was replaced.
- **Chapter 2:** The Holy Spirit was poured out, Peter preached a great sermon, and the believers had amazing fellowship: **"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer"** (Acts 2:42).
- **Chapter 3:** Peter – *in the name of Jesus* – healed a man who had been crippled from birth. Day-after-day, week-after-week, month-after-month, year-after-year, people saw that man crippled and begging at a gate of the temple. But then, *when people saw that same man walking and leaping and praising God*, **"they were filled with wonder and amazement..."** (10).

The true story continues in today's sermon text.

1. **Golden Opportunity:** ¹¹ **While the man** [*who had been miraculously healed*] **held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade** [*an area on the temple mount*]. ¹² **When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, 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 took no personal credit for the miracle, *but he did seize the golden opportunity to speak to the curious and open-eared people who had gathered.*
2. **Telling the Truth about Jesus:**
 - a. **Jesus Is God's Servant:** ¹³ **The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.** // Those who gathered were Jews, so Peter wisely connected Jesus to the God of Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob. The Jewish leaders thought Jesus opposed God, *but Peter proclaimed the opposite.*

- b. You Rejected 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.** // Peter spoke to his audience as if they were the ones who gathered at Pilate's palace very early on Good Friday to shout, **CRUCIFY HIM!** Peter did not sugarcoat his message – **YOU handed Him over, YOU disowned Him, and YOU killed Him!** Even more, **YOU asked for a murderer to be released instead!**
- c. God Raised Jesus: ¹⁵ **You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.** // Don't miss the sharp contrast – **YOU killed the very source of all life, BUT GOD raised Him from the dead!** Furthermore, we saw what **YOU** did, and we saw what **GOD** did – *raising Jesus from the dead!*

3. **How the Man was Healed**: 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 completely healed him, as you can all see.** // The man was crippled from birth. His face was **SO FAMILIAR** to Peter's audience, *they had probably seen him a thousand times.* The prospects of the man ever walking, let alone leaping, **SEEMED TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE!** Therefore, Peter explained what happened: The man was healed by ➡ the **POWER** of Jesus' name and ➡ his God-given trust in Jesus as his Savior!

4. **A Call to Repent**:

- a. Your Ignorance:¹⁷ **“Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. //** In other words, I know you acted the way you did *because you didn't know that Jesus is the Christ*. Peter did not excuse their sins **but let us know that sinning – when we know it is sin – is a more serious matter!**
- b. God's Plan:¹⁸ **But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. //** Isaiah 53 and other passages prophesied about the Suffering Servant. *Peter's audience were some who had caused that suffering.*
- c. God's Offer of Forgiveness: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 [God] may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you-- even Jesus. //** As Peter's hearers learned the **weight** of their sin, *they may have felt doomed*, but Peter gave them wonderful news: **Repent!** That is,
 - ✦turn from your sins to God,
 - ✦receive God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus, and
 - ✦live as followers of Jesus.
- d. The Urgency of God's Offer:²¹ **Heaven must receive [Jesus] until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. //** Since the day of Jesus' return is unknown to us, **it is extremely urgent for all sinners to repent NOW – before it is too late!**

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, as You moved Peter to seize his opportunity to proclaim Jesus, *use us to do the same among family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers!*

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