

Message Date: 06-21-20

Sermon Series: To the Ends of the Earth- ACTS Part 2: What Only God Can Do

Message Title: Week 2, Get Refreshed!

- **Last week: Story of man who had been crippled from birth, healed by Jesus through Peter.**
 - **QUESTION: If God is at work within us... power of God in our lives... What do we expect from God?**
 - **This man started the day expecting nothing more than something to help him cope- get by—expected no change in his true problem/ condition**
 - **WHAT HE RECEIVED, was a NEW LIFE. BEFORE, sought what would help him cope with his need... JESUS SET HIM FREE FROM THIS NEED.. gave him healing, but more, gave him HIS PRESENCE.**

- **Ended with important point- there are times when our faith journey with Christ DOES SEEM to be a one day a time- just enough grace to get us by and trust with tomorrow. BUT the journey of faith is one INTO FREEDOM, INTO HEALTH.. not just getting by with no change to our deeper challenges that can hold us bondage.**

- **NOW WE MOVE FORWARD IN STORY. As Peter, John, and this man exit the temple, a crowd has gathered, astonished at what has happened- sense of “I SEE IT, but I DON’T BELIEVE IT’.**

- **This QUES Peter for his second big speech/ sermon, and he’s going to connect this miraculous healing 100% to Jesus... but even more, he’s going to show how Jesus- who he is, what he is doing, and what he IS STILL GOING TO DO- is a continuation of what God has been doing since the very foundations of Israel itself.**

- **Peter STARTS by saying “WHY ARE YOU SURPRISED?..... Lets go to the story**

READ ACTS 3:11-26

- **So the people are astonished, and Peter asks “Why does this surprise you?”**
- **Peter is really saying “This SHOULDN’T surprise you, if you’ve been paying attention to what has been happening”...**
 - **Evidence that Jesus is messiah is EVERYWHERE- resurrection, events of Pentecost, the community of believers, PLUS in his first speech at Pentecost Peter had already powerfully demonstrated that Jesus is The Messiah**
 - **You shouldn’t be surprised because this is continuation of what you saw JESUS do, and it is what He continues to do NOW, though His followers.**

- **Peter’s question is telling. Why do you think WE DID THIS?**
- **You see, in a culture absolutely permeated by religion, by verbal and ritual statements about what GOD CAN DO, the people of Israel, as a whole, had come to settle for the best that man can do.**
- **THINK of it! This is all happening in the shadow of the TEMPLE- a structure whose every detail was designed to symbolize and proclaim the presence and power of GOD, and yet their lives had become dependent, and dominated, by the presence and power of MEN.**

- **Peter’s question made two points:**
 - **It is NOT BY OUR POWER that this man was healed. MAN cannot totally heal. MAN cannot impart new life. And for all our advance, this is still true today.**

- **God didn't do this because of OUR GODLINESS. Can also be translated 'Holiness' or 'Piety'. IN OTHER WORDS, God wasn't moved to do this because of our personal goodness, morality, or spirituality. ALL WE DID was give what we have... the name of Jesus... and this miracle was 100% HIS.**
- **This is important because we have a tendency to think that some people have a closer connection to God, a greater access to God's power, or a more direct connection to God's Truth, because of their morality, their knowledge, their religious devotion, or sense of spiritual presence or deservedness. BECAUSE THIS PERSON IS SO MUCH MORE GODLY...**
 - **God hears him more**
 - **God answers his prayers more**
 - **God works through him or her more**
- **No question that some people are more sincere or mature in their faith, the NT clearly teaches this. But the idea that a person's own 'godliness' moral performance, or spiritual deservedness somehow gives them greater revelation- OR moves God to act in situations where he otherwise wouldn't, this is distortion that can lead to great unhealth ... such as**
 - **Putting teachers and leaders on pedestals. The greatest of human theologians and teachers are still just that... HUMAN, and they can be wrong**
 - **Temptation of leaders to put THEMSELVES on pedestals.**
 - **Minimizes Biblical pattern of how God purposes to work through ALL believers, not just through a special class of ordained clergy or gifted leaders.**
 - **MOST damaging, it makes WORK OF GOD dependent upon performance of man, and it is all too easy for the awe and glory to go men rather than God.**
- **PETER SAYS... IT WAS NOT US, NOR ANYTHING ABOUT US, that healed this man. Peter and John were obedient to the Spirits prompting to engage this man on this day... but they didn't do or cause this healing.**
- **Then as story continues, PETER essentially says... LET ME TELL YOU WHO DID.**

13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.

- **What's Peter doing here? He is directing the people- Jews- to the full story of everything God had done since His creation of Israel... in a nutshell, he is referencing the ORIGIN STORY of Israel... going back to Genesis, ABRAHAM, and the PATRIARCHS ... and he is connecting this ALL to JESUS.**
- **In doing this, Peter gives two key thoughts. God/GLORFIED Jesus, and that Jesus is God's SERVANT.**
- **BOTH of these call back to the prophet ISAIAH, to TWO great messianic prophecies. First is Isaiah 52**

Isaiah 52:13-14 See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted-- ... even though people were appalled at him because his appearance was disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness...

- **Peter is being really intentional here.. As we've pointed out, most of the people here would have caught this reference. They were familiar with this scripture.**

- **THE Servant.. is humble, dependent, doesn't glorify himself but directs everything to his master... This was Jesus's relationship with God, and Isaiah's description of this servant being disfigured and marred is a clear connection to Christ' suffering. AND YET, this humble servant has been RAISED, lifted up, and EXALTED.**
- **LIKEWISE, through the power of God, Christ was RAISED- his resurrection- he was LIFTED UP- ascension- and He is now EXALTED- in a place of total victory and GLORY WITH GOD, AS GOD.**
- **IF YOU ARE JEWISH PERSON LISTENING... you just heard Peter say that the servant messiah, about whom Isaiah prophesied and your people have looked forward to for generations... THAT THIS IS JESUS. MIND BLOWN.**
- **AND IF THAT WEREN'T ENOUGH... Peter continues with an amazing contrast between the TOTALITY of the people's rejection of Jesus and the EVEN GREATER reality of who Jesus is and what GOD has done through him.**

¹³You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

- **FIRST... what had the people of Jerusalem done? (we would have done the same)**
 - **Handed Jesus over to be killed**
 - **When it looked like Pilate might release him, you took the betrayal even further, disowning and completely rejecting him**
 - **You chose a known murderer over Jesus**
 - **YOU KILLED HIM.**
- **THAT'S NOT GOOD! Peter is not pulling any punches, and his indictment is damning.**
- **NOW, Peter is about to get to the good news... but we can't miss this! To truly grasp and comprehend the good news of the gospel, we must grasp and comprehend the devastation of SIN, of what it means to reject Jesus- both for who he is, and his lordship- goodness and provision- in our life.**
- **Peter is making a case, and he has just told the jury- people of Jerusalem, and ultimately all humanity- in no uncertain terms- that they are the ones guilty of rejecting Christ, and therefore guilty of rejecting God.**
- **AND YET.. this reality of sin is overcome by the even greater reality of WHO JESUS IS, and WHAT GOD HAS DONE THROUGH HIM. Back at same scripture..**
 - **God has glorified Jesus... He IS GOD**
 - **Christ is the Holy and Righteous one.. imagery of Christ's identity as the messiah and as God**
 - **Jesus is the AUTHOR OF LIFE.. Phrase can be translated both "originator of life"- as creator- and "the one who leads the way into life". Jesus is very embodiment of life itself. REMINDED OF JOHN 1... "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind."**
 - **And to demonstrate and confirm all of this, GOD HAS RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD. And we are all witnesses of it!**

- **SO! Why should this not surprise you? HOW WAS THIS MAN COMPLETELY HEALED AND MADE STRONG? By faith in the NAME (person) of Jesus.**

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.*

- **FIRST TIME we see the concept of FAITH. Peter emphasizes two things.**
 - **FAITH IN.** Our faith- our belief- toward and in Jesus. This is a total trust I place in a person because of my FAITH in them. Implied in idea of REPENT... I turn TO GOD because I have faith IN GOD.
 - **Second, FAITH THAT COMES THROUGH CHRIST.**
- **MYSTERY of GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.** Christ is BOTH the object and the originator of our faith! We have faith IN HIM, but we also have faith BECAUSE OF HIM.
 - **Hebrews 12: "Pioneer (author) and perfecter of (our) faith"**
 - **Ephesians 2:8- (PARAPHRASE A BIT)" For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and (even) this (faith) is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God**
 - **WHAT CHRIST DID, WHAT CHRIST DOES through our faith... It is to us, it is for our benefit, but it is not OF US. CHRIST is at the center of everything He does, including our salvation.**
- **When Peter says "In the name of Jesus", what he means is the PERSON of Jesus... no magic in just saying the word "Jesus"... Peter's proclamation is that EVERYTHING that has happened- from Abraham and the foundations of Israel, through all the prophets, up to the healing of this man this day, is ALL centered in, and possible through, the person of Jesus Christ.**
- **Peter continues, says "I know you acted in ignorance- you and your leaders"... "Whew! Maybe I'm off the hook'.... But Peter essentially says... But you shouldn't have! All your prophets- which you know- they told of all this!**

¹⁸ *But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.*

- **Here Peter references what is probably the greatest of the OT messianic prophecies, which is the famous description of the suffering servant messiah of Isaiah 53.**

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering... ⁵ he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- **By pointing back to Isaiah, Peter is reminding the people of Jerusalem, AND US, that even though it was our sin and rebellion that put Jesus on the cross, it was also ALWAYS GOD'S PLAN.**
- **BOCK- "here we see human responsibility and divine design side by side".**
- **Even though the people had acted without realizing who Jesus is, they still were responsible for their actions. LIKEWISE, even though humanity today largely rejects Jesus- both passively and actively- we still are lost and without hope apart from him.**
- **SO- Peter has made his case of how Jesus is a fulfillment of prophecy... HOW GOSPEL is ROOTED in the work of God in the past. Now, he lays out the GOOD NEWS of what Jesus**

is doing in the PRESENT, and the ultimate hope of what Jesus will do in the FUTURE- and God's invitation for us to receive (enter, participate) this hope as our own.

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 he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

AMAZING STATEMENT!

- **REPENT! TURN TO GOD.** Covered this a few weeks ago... *this is what repentance is... not just turning away from sin, but turning TO GOD. When we take that step of faith, of trust, surrender... and TURN TO GOD, then God does the rest...*
- **SINS WIPED OUT. (BOCK)..** *strong term in greek- means 'wipe out' 'completely erase', even 'obliterate'. In ancient world, write on papyri, with ink that would dry on surface of the paper. This word described a process to remove the ink from the paper, leaving no trace of what had been there before. PETER IS SAYING- GOD IS SAYING TO US... TURN TO ME, and you are forgiven... COMPLETELY. Expand this into rest of NT, not just freed from penalty of sin, but from power of sin itself.*
- **TIMES OF REFRESHING MAY COME FROM THE LORD.**
 - *A little Greek... "hapax legomenon"- word or expression that occurs only one time in a literary work, in this case, the NT. These actually aren't uncommon, but they often need a closer look to translate their meaning.*
 - **TIMES OF REFRESHING** *is one such phrase, and it is powerful and evocative word*
 - *Time that includes rest and deep refreshment, healing*
 - *Cool breeze, or image of blowing on a wound to dry and heal*
 - *Just the verb 'refresh' is used to describe rest of slaves on Sabbath*
 - *IMAGINE... working hard in heat all week, worn out, parched, muscles hurt... near collapse... then come home, cool light rain, big glass of lemonade... AAHHH... rest*
 - **ADD TO THAT, - unpayable back tax bill-** *that through the week you were facing the prospect of losing your job, foreclosure on your house, and repossession of your truck, and arrest to debtors prison... right as you get home, you receive call that tells you all of the debt has been WIPED OUT... YOU ARE REFRESHED*
- **NOW...** *given this meaning, and what Peter is about to say, many scholars interpret these 'times of refreshing' as referring to the second coming... that this is the promise of what we will receive when we enter into eternal life with Christ... Heaven when we die*
- **BUT HERE'S THE THING...** *We already HAVE ENTERED INTO ETERNAL LIFE WITH CHRIST.. and these times of refreshing, while they will be made COMPLETE in our future eternity with God, they have ALREADY BEGUN NOW.*
- **BY FAITH,** *as we learn the fullness of WHO CHRIST IS, and WHO WE ARE IN HIM... WHAT IS NOW TRUE OF US IN CHRIST... these times of refreshing, of the hope, comfort, restoration, and peace of Christ... this is the life God is always working to draw us into everyday. THIS REFRESHING COMES FROM THE LORD. Nothing else...*
- **HAVING SAID THAT,** *Peter completes the journey into our ultimate hope of eternity..*

that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

- Here Peter ties all of the story together. Heaven has received Christ... **THE ASCENSION...** but the time will come when God will send the messiah back for his people, and in that day, that future season, God – through Jesus- will **RESTORE** everything to his original perfection, just as he has already promised.
- **ONE MORE NOTE** on this, something missed in the NIV... there are two periods of time here: **TIMES** (plural) of refreshing, and literally “**SEASONS**”, also plural in the greek, of God restoring all things. The sense is of one **GREAT EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME**, with the high point being Christ's return... the point being that this is a time we are **ALREADY IN**, and the emphasis of the text is what is true for **THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE** in this time... which are the gifts of **REFRESHMENT AND RESTORATION**.
- **THEN**, having proclaimed God's invitation to repent and respond with Faith in Christ, Peter tells the difficult but honest reality of what it means to reject this new invitation... He does this by going all the way back to **MOSES**.

²² For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. ²³ Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.’

- Moses was God's appointed deliverer for the Hebrew people from their bondage in Israel. Likewise, God has raised up **THE PROPHET**, the messiah, Jesus, as the appointed deliverer for humanity from the bondage of our spiritual death and rebellion against God.
- **JUST AS** refusing to follow and listen to Moses would have cut the ancient Hebrews off from their people- leaving them in slavery in Egypt, **SO ALSO** refusing to listen to Christ- his Gospel- repent and turning to God... will result from being cut off from the **NEW LIFE** and blessing of the **NEW COVENANT**.
- Finally, **PETER** comes full circle, tying this all back to the foundations of the old covenant and the blessing of Abraham.

²⁴ “Indeed, beginning with Samuel, (**Samuel.. prophet God used to raise up DAVID, from whose family line would come the messiah**) all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days.

²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’ ²⁶ When God raised up his servant (**JESUS**), he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.”

- **OLD COV** is **MOSAIC...** **BUT PETER** goes back further, to reference the **Abrahamic COV-** blessing we see in Genesis 12:3. By what God will do through His people, **ALL** people on earth would be blessed. What is that blessing? Peter tells us... **IT IS CHRIST**
- Jesus was ‘sent first’ to Israel. Peter himself likely doesn't realize it at this point, but that blessing will soon extend beyond Israel to all people
- **THE BLESSING** that comes through Jesus- **GOD'S PURPOSE AND WORK THROUGH JESUS...** is to turn us from our wicked ways. Hmmm. OKAY... but we can't miss this!
 - Defining characteristic of ‘wicked ways’ of human condition is not moral failure, but living in dependence upon **SELF** rather than God.
 - Turning from our wicked ways- is the choice to turn away from a life centered on our own wisdom, our own strength, where **WE** are in charge, **AND** turning **TO GOD**, to live a life of trust in **HIS** wisdom, **HIS** goodness, **HIS** strength, where **HE IS IN CHARGE, HE IS LORD**, so that we enter into the experience of restoration and refreshment!

- **KICKER HERE... it's subtle in English, but WHO DOES THE TURNING HERE? WHO IS THE CAUSITIVE FOUR in our being turned away from sin and toward God? Is it us, or God? IT IS GOD.**
- **ONCE AGAIN we have the miraculous mystery of God's sovereignty and grace, as from our perspective GOD calls us to make the choice to turn to him, but from the perspective of God's love and grace, HE IS THE ONE WORKING IN US TO TURN US BACK TO HIM, so that we may enter into the life of being blessed by him.**
- **What does that mean? It means YOU MATTER TO GOD! It means GOD, with Christ, by the Holy Spirit, is at work in your life... RIGHT NOW... to draw you to himself.**
- **CHURCH! Let me end with this. OUR FAITH IN CHRIST... our salvation...**
 - **ROOTED in the foundation of the past... what God has done**
 - **It looks forward with great expectation to the future, of what God WILL FULLY DO**
 - **And our faith LIVES, it is vibrant, and it is being refreshed and our lives restored... RIGHT NOW, in the present, in the midst of LIFE AS IT REALLY IS.**
- **That is good news.**

NEXT WEEK- Peter and John get in trouble with authorities for first time- and we will see THE REASON they got in trouble- the single and real reason the gospel was so offensive to people in authority THEN, and why this is same reason the gospel is offensive- to many-NOW.