

## Acts 3:11-19

### Faith In His Name

4/26/15

**11** While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. **12** And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? **13** The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. **14** But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, **15** and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. **16** And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all. **17** "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. **18** But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. **19** Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,

There is a false gospel out there today, and I hate when its infection creeps like mold and kills like gangrene.

This false gospel manifests itself in myriad ways. It metastasizes and kills like heroin does an addict or porn does a marriage. The false gospel is distorted and delusional and it shows up in the cartoonish antics of Benny Hinn and the Ponzi schemes of the rightly named Creflo Dollar. But maybe worst of all is the subversive, Osteen-ish, Eviscerated gospel that people love so much because it requires so little.

And while preachers get rich and people get duped, the world around us disintegrates into a sexualized spiritual prison, a sexualized spiritual prison-yard filled with empty souls that don't mind being locked up as long as they are amused. And that is what a false gospel does, *amuse*.

A false gospel keeps your attention on the miracle – on the spectacular – the quest for ecstasy. The false gospel keeps you focused on winning the lottery while emptying your pocket. The false gospel keeps you reaching for happiness or contentment or healing, reaching for gifts and not the giver. The *false* gospel is about gifts – the *real* Gospel is about the Giver.

Peter could've been a prosperity preacher. Everywhere he went, people were healed. In verses 1-10, a man who was crippled for 40 years was healed and walking around. In v. 11, the people are astounded and come running exclaiming about what Peter did in v. 12. "And when Peter saw it, he addressed the people: 'Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this or why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?'" In other words, Don't look at us! The most remarkable feature of Peter's sermon is the Christ-centeredness of it. He takes their attention away from the miracle,

he takes their attention away from John and him, and he presses the people with the Gospel. It's the only thing that genuinely matters.

## **The Gospel Heals Broken People**

### **The Gospel Always Starts With God**

Look how he opens the sermon in v. 12-13 – *And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.* I want to spend some time here in this description of God.

-V. 13. Peter calls him the God of Abraham – a faithful God. You remember back in Genesis 12 when God called Abraham to leave everything he knew, his home and family and surroundings and go to an unnamed place. The Gospel starts with a God who is faithful, a God you can trust. For some of you, living the Gospel means trusting God in the middle of uncertain times. The God of Abraham: faithful.

-V. 13 God of Isaac – He is a redeeming God. You remember Genesis 22 when God called Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, to put the thing he loved most on the altar. When you come to Christ, the true Gospel – unlike the Prosperity Gospel – calls you to surrender. You'll also remember that God honored the willingness of Abraham and provided a ram in the thicket, thereby giving us a picture of Christ whom God provides for us in our place. The God of Abraham is faithful; the God of Isaac is redeeming.

The God of Jacob, He is a forgiving God. I'm so thankful God allows himself to be called "God of Jacob." Jacob was a weaseling double-crosser, conning his brother out of his birthright, tricking his father and using his mother. His very name means "trickster" – Yacov. But down at the Brook of Jabbok, Jacob wrestles God and God changes him. He's a God who deals with your past and directs your future and this God forgives your sin. Take this title in v. 13, God of Abraham and Isaac, God of Jacob...the God of your fathers. That's exactly how God revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush.

-Remembering God – He remembers what you have been through. He knows we are dust. He remembers your frailties. He knows where you are and comes to the rescue of His people. Some of you think God has forgotten you. He is the same unchanging God who cares for his people. As Peter preaches, he tells them in v. 15, when they crucified Jesus, they killed the author of life. But God raised him from the dead, telling us He is a:

- Resurrecting God. V. 18 Peter tells them, “What God foretold by the mouth of the prophets, He has fulfilled. That is, He is a:
- Sovereign God. That means He has all things in His hands - all situations, your whole brief life that so many of you can't seem to see beyond. Man is

but breath – here today, gone tomorrow. Yet this sovereign God has given you this shining moment to turn your life toward Christ. You see –

The Gospel heals broken people – The Gospel starts with God.

### **The Gospel Always Confronts Sin**

This sermon is really something when the people gather. Peter tells of a Holy God and he confronts their sin. He tells them they delivered over and denied Jesus. In v. 14, he tells them they are depraved. They had the Holy and Righteous One and, instead, asked for a murderer, Barabbas. Then he confronts their decision-making. In v. 15, he tells them, “You killed the Author of Life. Do you see the irony? Jesus is the one who gives life and you took his life. You took the life of the life-giver.”

It’s what sin does, clouds our minds so that we make backward decisions, staying in relationships that are killing us; pursuing dreams that unravel us; rejecting the very one who can save us. Peter is telling them that, in their sin, their conclusions about Christ are all wrong. And for many people here, you don’t seem to “get” that your sin has separated you from God, distorted your sense of reality and muted your hearing. You can’t even hear God and you need to know that the Gospel Heals Broken People – It always starts with God, always confronts sin and

### **The Gospel Always Centers on Christ**

The Christ-centeredness of this sermon serves as an example and reminder: what people need most is the Lord Jesus. Notice how Peter presents him. *The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.* His servant – God’s servant. The serving one, Jesus himself said, “I didn’t come to be served but to serve,” and the way He serves us is by being our substitute and Savior, by being our Redeemer and Friend. In v. 14 Peter calls Him the Holy and Mighty One. Because we are sinners with no hope of being righteous, we need Him as our substitute, because, as Peter says in v. 15, He is the Author of Life. Don’t you see that God is Holy and you are a sinner? Don’t you see that Jesus Christ is sent by God as the Holy and Righteous One, the Author of Life? Then Peter points to the cross in v. 18 with Jesus as the suffering one. He suffered for sinners. Peter preached the Gospel, the Gospel for broken people.

The Gospel always starts with God...The Gospel always confronts sin...The Gospel always centers on Christ...

### **The Gospel Always Demands a Response**

In v. 17, Peter softens his tone. *“And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your*

*sins may be blotted out, **20** that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,*

After heaping guilt on them, Peter softens his tone and calls them to repentance. Notice the two phrases in v. 19: "repent" and "turn again." Peter puts these two together for emphasis. "Repent" means "turn 180 degrees around, turn again"; it means "Go in the opposite direction you were headed." You know what Peter is saying here: change your conclusion about Jesus. Make the right conclusion and, when you do, Peter says in v. 20, times of refreshing will come, relief and rest, echoing the words of Jesus: "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." It's a Gospel for broken people.

*(Pastor prays)*