

This man is running around screaming with joy. You couldn't stop but notice it. He was making such a hoopla you would have thought that he won a million dollars. People stopped what they were doing, you could see the smiles on their faces when they heard the man shout for joy - then, you could see the shock on their faces as the realization came over them that the man making all the commotion, the man who was running, jumping and yelling was a man who had never walked a day in his life.

This man had sat at the gate called beautiful in the Temple for over 40 years. In over 40 years no one had ever seen him walk, stand or run. They look once, they look twice, and yes it is indeed the man who cannot walk - and he is running and jumping around.

So when Peter and John go back out to the outer court where Solomon's Colonnade was, everyone follows them. They have to know what is going on, they have to know what has just happened.

What had happened was that Peter seized the man who had never taken a step in his life and pulled him to his feet while saying the words, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk," and the man walked, the man jumped, the man ran.

But there is more.

This man who was healed, this man had more than his feet healed, this man was made whole, inside and out. We see in verse 16 that the man is made complete, he is made whole. This means more than a physical healing, this means more than restoring his ability to walk, the man was healed, and then some.

Now, there is a lot in this passage this morning, but the key I want to focus in on for us today in verse 19. That's a verse to mark in your bibles. We read in verse 19, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord"

The word refreshing in the NIV that we read today, is figuratively, a recovery of breath, a revival. This man is not just made normal like everyone else, this man is not just given what everyone else has - the ability to walk - this man is given a new life - this man is literally given Jesus Christ.

Ignorance and Understanding

Acts 3:11-26

2

Look at verse 20, “and that he may send the Christ.”

See what has happened is that the Holy Spirit has come upon the man, and not only gave him healing, but gave him new life. This man is literally refreshed, made new.

Peter, then explains, how this all works. Peter explains how we can enter into a time of refreshment, which I just said earlier is figuratively a recovery of breath, a revival.

You need refreshment in your life? Let's look at God's holy Word to see how such a thing can happen in our life too.

I am going to give you the answer right here in the beginning so that you do not miss it: Repent and turn to God - it's right there in verse 19 - Repent and turn to God. Let me ask you this question for you to think about during the sermon: Of all the things you have been doing in your relationship with Jesus Christ, bible reading, prayer, studies, talking to others about it - when was the last time you spent time in repentance?

Repentance isn't big in America is it?

Now you'll notice that after the man is healed Peter and John walk over to Solomon's Colonnade. This was a large area in the outer court of the Temple, it is a place that had quickly become the place for believers to meet. This is where the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ would meet to worship together. So it is natural that Peter and John head on over to the Colonnade.

I love it the guy who was healed is just hanging on to Peter and John as they head over to the Colonnade, the man doesn't want to lose these two does he?

Notice, I said believers met at Solomon's Colonnade and didn't say Christians. At this point the followers of Jesus Christ are not known as Christians, they are known as Jewish people. Some of them called themselves, “The Way,” but they ALL are Jewish, and all worship in the Jewish Temple, and all practice the customs of good Jewish people. Since everything around them is Jewish and everyone gathered is also Jewish, Peter explains Christianity from a Jewish perspective. So Peter starts with the three great patriarchs of Israel in his explanation - Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Now it makes sense that Peter is the one who speaks here instead of John. Peter is much older than John, who probably is as young as nineteen years old. The Gospel of John, the Epistles of John and Revelation were all written by John when he was much older, here John is the young apostle tagging along with the mature man Peter. It would be expected in Hebrew culture that Peter would be the one who speaks because of the obvious age difference.

First off, Peter makes it clear that it wasn't by his power. He directs everything toward Jesus Christ, because remember the book of Acts is all about Jesus Christ first, the Apostles and the church a distant second. The goal of Peter's speech is to explain where the power to heal came from and to further explain how this power can become a part of your life.

Where did the power come from? How you can have the power too.

Peter explains this for both the crowd and for the man who was healed - least he somehow imagine some kind of voodoo, psychic healing or witchcraft is going on here. This is from none other than Jesus Christ.

Again, Peter starts with the phrase, "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," to coach everything under a Jewish perspective. Peter is using the words that Yahweh spoke to Moses when He spoke from the burning bush, (Ex 3:6,15). Peter is framing everything so that these people know they need more in their lives. Up to this point they may have been the best and most observant Jews on the planet, but that isn't good enough, what they need isn't religion, what they need is relationship.

Think about it this way: Faith is complete in Jesus. God had not forgotten his covenant. God had remembered, and in His time God came to bring the one he had promised. Today many folks who started off Jewish and then later on in life became believers of the Lords Jesus Christ call themselves completed Jews. Because they had a faith in God, but now their faith is complete because they now have Jesus Christ in their lives.

As a matter of fact, Christianity isn't something that is new and out of the blue, Christianity is the completion of Judaism. Christianity not only has its roots in Judaism, with the advent of Jesus Christ, Christianity, in a sense picks up where Judaism leaves off.

People, especially here in America will say, I believe in God, but here we see that isn't good enough. Look, all these people Peter is speaking to believe in God, why they are at the Temple to worship God - but you will notice Peter tells them that there is more, and what is more is great!

James 2:19 "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder."

When Peter starts off his speech in verse 13 it is a Hell, Fire and Brimstone sermon that quickly comes out, doesn't it? God glorified Jesus, but you had him killed. Whew, what a way to win over a crowd Peter.

When Peter says disowned (NIV) there in in verse 13, we see in the Greek it is to deny. By their action, or inaction, they denied Jesus Christ. They refused to even be associated with Jesus, they denied the validity of who Jesus is. By their denial, they turned their back on Jesus. By this denial, they killed Jesus.

Interesting words from the man who denied Jesus three times.....

Peter did exactly what these people did: He was a coward, he was a failure, he denied Jesus Christ three times in a row. Peter, is exactly like all those people gathered around him, except for the fact that through his actions Peter just healed a man!

It is all because of Jesus Christ.

Peter does not let the people off the hook, He is very clear that it is by their denial they killed Jesus. So....do you think it was the denial of just those people in Jerusalem at that time and place that killed Jesus...or does the denial of Jesus transcend time? Is it just these people Peter is speaking to, or do his words transcend time?

He hammers it home: You handed him over to be killed, you handed him over to Pilate, you denied him and asked for a murder to go, you killed the author of life....OK Peter I get it, we did Jesus in by our denial.

Peter doesn't let them off the hook, Peter places the blame on them - but he doesn't condemn them. Peter places all this blame on them...and then talks about faith.

Where did that come from? I'm sure the people were surprised. I'm sure they thought what was next was that Jesus was going to get them for what they had done to him, Jesus was going to take them out for their denial, but no, instead of talking about revenge, Peter talks about faith.

The very people who could have saved Jesus from death, now have the opportunity to be saved from death - by the one they choose to deny.

See Peter clarifies that it was not some kind of technique, it was simply faith. Wait, that's not what it says is it? It isn't just faith. Take a look there in verse 16.

What does it say?

"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 given this complete healing to him, as you can all see."

Wow, those are powerful words.
By faith in the name of Jesus.

Let's pick that verse apart for a moment. First we see that it is by faith....specifically in the name of Jesus. Look, if you have the biggest strongest faith in the world, and it is not a faith in Jesus, it is worthless. See, let me clarify something many people miss: Many people think that they have to have this enormous faith to accomplish anything, but actually, you don't need an enormous faith. See, the amount of your faith isn't what is essential, it is who you place your faith in, and who you place your faith in is Jesus Christ.

Think of it this way: Teeny tiny faith - Great Big God.

Peter places his faith in Jesus, not in himself and he is transformed from a coward to an Apostle.

Further we see in that verse, "It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him," So we see further that the name of Jesus is very powerful along with the faith that comes through Jesus. Did you see that? Again it isn't simply faith, it is specifically faith in Jesus.

A small amount of faith, through the person of Jesus - the impossible happens.

Now does it matter that they acted in ignorance?

No, it does not.

These people did not know what they were doing when they denied Jesus Christ when they acted, but still they are guilty. You might say, if they knew who Jesus Christ was, if they knew who He really was, then they wouldn't have denied him. Therefore, God is not fair, for if these people had known they would have acted otherwise....

...."But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ.'" (Mark 8:29.) Peter knew who Jesus was, Peter even confessed who Jesus was, yet Peter STILL denied Jesus.

This has nothing to do with what is fair and what is not fair, and I need to note right here that the Bible never teaches that God is fair. To place the concept of fairness upon God is alien to the Bible. This isn't about what is fair or what isn't fair, and these people would be very happy about that because if God was fair, none of these people would be saved, they would all be condemned without hope.

Fairness? Prophecy foretold all these events, Jesus accomplished the events, the prophecy was fulfilled. Now we as Americans may find prophecy and fulfillment as an odd thing, but to these people standing at Solomon's Colonnade, it made perfect sense for they were waiting for this very thing to happen. 18 "this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer."

Now, Verse 19 - take a look.

First word of salvation is repent.

Repentance allows us to be open to the will of God. Repentance places us in the right place before God. Repentance brings about forgiveness. Repentance gets the ball rolling.

First word of salvation is repent.

Without repentance there is no salvation.

I know that there are some here who are struggling to come to terms with God. There are some here who want to believe, they desire to believe...but they don't believe. I have received your notes and I have pondered and prayed about your dilemma. Well, first things first. Try this: Approach the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance, honest, true, heartfelt repentance. Give it time and see what happens.

Next you'll notice there in verse 19 that we are to turn to God. By turning to God we turn away from ourselves. By turning to God we turn away from our sin.

Then what happens to us? See, if we repent and turn to God, our sins will be wiped out, which in the Greek is, to be covered over, and my friends, our sins are covered over with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we repent and turn to God, we see here in context, that through faith in the Lord Jesus our sins are plastered over.

Then comes the surprise there in verse 19 - we are refreshed, a recovery of breath, a revival.

Now first this is a reference to the new age that the prophets had been referring too, an age sent by God. This refreshing is first cosmological and second it is very very personal.

Now remember, at the beginning of this sermon I said that the man was not just made normal like everyone else, but he was given, by faith, a new life. This refreshing we see here is a kind of restoration in our lives.

Restoration here means to not restore to original, but to restore and make even better. A better way to say it is to say, made new. Where it would normally be one and one equals two, with God it is one and one - and here I hold one hundred.

The story we find in Genesis about the young man Joseph is a perfect example of how God ultimately restored Joseph not to his previous existence as a shepherd boy, but to the second most powerful person in Egypt. Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers, falsely accused attempted adultery, and sent to prison to rot. Then God refreshes Joseph, not to who he was, but to something new.

Let me end with this:

Years ago, I had the classic New Jersey car accident: I was hit from behind as I stopped for someone in a crosswalk. I guy actually got out of his car threw up his hands and exclaimed, "What the blank are you stopping for?" I got out of my car and motioned to the crosswalk, "I stopped for the guy in the crosswalk!"

There was quite a bit of damage in the back of the car, however, this was an old car and it had dents and scratches all over it - I mean it had some major dents, in the front and on the sides. We were in Seminary, we were broke, we didn't have money to fix the car.

Well, he had great insurance and the insurance man came out, looked over the car and told me, "Go to this body shop, and they will fix your car." So I show up at this body shop, and here is where it gets a little odd. Behind the counter is this tiny old lady who shouts at me in a very heavy Italian accent, "Whadda ya want?"

I tell her, "I would like to get my car fixed. I have the paperwork form the insurance company." So she slowly gets up, takes a look at the paperwork, and whisper's, again in a heavy Italian accent, "Just a moment, please." After a few minutes, this little old man appears behind me.

Remember the movie 'Chariots of Fire'? Remember there was a guy who was a trainer for one of the runners, he was the guy from Italy - This was the guy standing in front of me! Mustache, straw hat, the whole nine yards. He looked at the paperwork and announced, in a even heavier Italian accent, "Peter, we fixa your car. Comea back in a week."

A week passes and I get a call to pick up my car. I arrive at the shop and go through the same routine: Little old lady yells then whispers, little old man appears behind me and announces, "We fixed your car...please wait for a Nick to show you out." In a few minutes this huge man, very nicely dressed arrives and says in a very deep voice, "Peter, let's take a look at your car."

So we go outside and, I am not kidding, the whole crew from the body shop must be gathered around my car. They are all smiles, and they all individually ask me, "Peter, what do you think of your car? Nice huh?" It did look great. They made me walk all around the car. I said thanks and went on my way.

Right after I picked up my car I went to pick up Katie from work. As she got into the car Katie said, "Where's the big dent?" "What dent, I asked. "The huge three foot long one on the passenger side."

I got out of the car and, there was not a dent or a scratch anywhere on the car! This body shop had not only fixed the rear end damage, they fixed every dent and every scratch and even gave the car a brand new paint job!

I have no idea what happened, but, my car looked better than a brand new car - and this is what Jesus does for us - Jesus doesn't restore us to the way we were, but makes us something new.

This is what God will do for you. He will not just bring you back, but make you something new. We read in Ephesians 3:20, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." What will God do? More than we can imagine.

However the first step is repentance.

Repent. Turn to God. Be refreshed, be made anew.