

# Acts 3

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[ 0 : 00 ] I would invite you to turn back with me to the portion of scripture we read earlier on, so this is Acts chapter 3 and we will be looking at the second part of that Peter's speech is his sermon from verse 11, Acts chapter 3.

I was reading recently an interview with a footballer, an interview where this footballer spoke of the practical jokes that were played on him by his teammates and his fellow professionals. So these guys, his fellow players, they didn't like the fact that this player in question, that he was, as they saw, a bit of an intellectual, which I think for footballers basically meant that he used to occasionally read a book or two.

But they didn't like this. So on one occasion, what they did, without his knowledge, was they took a pair of scissors and they cut out, what a terrible thing to do, they cut out the very last paragraph of this long novel that this guy had been reading.

And in this interview, I was reading, the player spoke of his dismay. Imagine reading this novel for week after week after week and then in his words he said, he was now unable to properly grasp the story because of the absence of a few crucial words.

[ 1 : 37 ] Now, a great practical joke, I'm sure you would agree. But I think the player's words there can equally be said of this week that we've got in front of us, the book of Acts.

Because when we consider Acts, if we fail to just have a few key words in our minds, then we're also going to fail to grasp much about what is really happening in this book.

Because you see, in chapter 1, right at the beginning of Acts, in Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, the author, Luke, what he does is he really sets out his skull.

So there, in chapter 1 and verse 8, what he does is he tells us what's to come in the rest of the book. So he tells us that Acts is going to show us the disciples being Jesus witnesses, first in Jerusalem, then to all Judea and Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth.

That is how the book of Acts is going to be structured. And that means, of course, that what we've got before us this evening, in this first part of the book of Acts, is an account of the advance of the gospel, not in Judea and Samaria, exactly.

[ 2 : 54 ] It's not an account of the advance of the gospel to the ends of the earth. What we've got in front of the earth. What we've got in front of us is an account of the advance of the gospel in the city of Jerusalem.

Something that we'll see tonight is crucial to any proper understanding of Acts chapter 3. So with the theme for tonight, in our minds, the theme that is all about Jesus, that is all about Jesus, let's consider our first of three points.

And let's consider that the speaker here was all about Jesus. The speaker was all about Jesus.

Now, we know, having just read it, what the background is here, don't we?

Peter has just healed this crippled beggar. So this man, who was suffering from a congenitive, debilitating disease, he has been healed to the extent, you see it, that he's now followed Peter and John into the temple courteous.

And you see how he's managed to do that? He is now walking, and he is jumping, and he is praising God. And then this miracle seems to draw a crowd, doesn't it?

[ 4 : 17 ] Let's think about that. These people, who were familiar with this cripple, so people who would have walked past this cripple thousands of times on their way into the temple courteous.

They see the guy, now we're in the distance, and he's walking, and he's jumping, and so, they run towards him. And they're desolate to find out what's going on, what's happened.

Forget this, this is the important thing. clearly their attention is actually specifically on Peter and John isn't it?

It isn't so much on that guy but on Peter look what Peter has to say to this large guy of Christus here he says why do you stare at us as if by our own power or piety we have made this man walk you see the attention is on Peter and John and what I would dearly love for you to see and appreciate this evening is how Peter redirects that attention group because surely think about it see at that moment in the temple warrior Peter's the man isn't he?

I mean every eye is on Peter he's got this crowd that's before him on tender looks but he doesn't observe bask in the glory of the healing does he?

[ 5 : 47 ] I mean he doesn't just pause for a minute and enjoy the line right there does he? you know not a bit of it look immediately without even a second thought look he moves the focus away from him and he moves it straight to Jesus Christ look at this look at what he says why do you stare at us?

the God of Abraham has raised his servant Jesus so he directs or redirects he diverts he deflects the crowd's attention and he deflects it to Jesus Christ and note as well that he doesn't do that just to explain what's happened in this miracle with the crippled bear right he doesn't sort of just deflect attention to show that it was Jesus power rather than his own that's healed this man I mean yeah okay he is going to do that and he'll tell them that but before he does that what does he do?

he seizes this moment of attention doesn't he? and he presents to this crowd that's before him in the temple some of the key events of Jesus before he speaks about this miracle with the crippled he speaks about Jesus' betrayal and he speaks about Jesus' day and he speaks about Jesus' resurrection so what we've got is Peter redirect redirecting attention from himself to the glory of the risen Christ now folks please hear this we currently live in a culture that really exists in antithesis to the attitude that Peter displays here don't we?

I mean Peter here lives to deflect attention away from himself where our culture is absolutely obsessed with drawing attention to the individual we in the 21st century we live in a self-free society don't we?

we live in a culture where everything everything is about self-promotion our TV shows like the X Factor or what's the other one Britain's Got Talent you know they show us sneaking crowds of thousands of hopefuls all just desperate for some sort of deserving time in the spotlight don't they?

[ 8 : 29 ] the internet has made it easier for us to upload videos of ourselves to YouTube or upload pictures of ourselves to Facebook I think you could probably also sustain an argument for saying that popular music has changed you know songs about unacquainted love or protests a few decades ago to songs today that kind of just say look at me look how much money I've got look how many cars I've got look how many girls I can get we are perhaps more than any other time in history firmly immersed in this look at me culture a self-free society and so please friends I urge you tonight just to look at Peter and see that the Christian life must hold entirely different values to that that instead of us following that sort of pervasive self-promotion society that we consider the apostle and we see this we see that the

Christian life must be in essence a life of redirection that we should in everything that we do seek not glory for ourselves but in everything that we do we seek to promote the glory and the honour of Jesus Christ that if we do attract attention to ourselves that it's only through our good works that Peter with his cripple but that only so that we can redirect people to the fruit of the cross friends I hope you see this clearly what we've got here under what is it Solomon's portico is a paradigm and it's a pattern for the whole of Christian life that we live to direct attention to our saviour we live to direct attention to our Lord the speaker here is Peter and the speaker was all about

Jesus let's know because secondly that the scriptures are all about Jesus the scriptures are all about Jesus okay let's go back and consider the text in a little bit more detail so we've seen that Peter has taken this miracle and the resultant intrigue of the crowd and he has used that to speak about what to speak about God's action in Jesus Christ but there's something we need to notice about the manner in which he does this and there's something we talked about right at the beginning of the sermon because in this speech the sermon in the city of Jerusalem what we've got in front of us is actually a very Jewish presentation of the gospel a very very Jewish presentation now do you see what I mean by that if not observe firstly the way that Peter addresses the crowd what does he say he calls them men of Israel then observe how he speaks about

God what does he call God what does he speak about God he says the God of Abram the God of Isaac the God of Jacob the God of our fathers then observe especially how Peter speaks about Jesus what does he say God has done here think about this he says that God has glorified his

servant Jesus now that might not mean all that much to us in here but it would have jarred the first century Jewish audience wouldn't it that would have sent them straight back in their minds to Isaiah 52 and to the exaltation of the suffering of the servant wouldn't it and it's the same with this other messianic title that he uses here you see that the holy and righteous one do you see what's happening do you see what Peter is doing here he's showing the crowd that this man that he is talking about

Jesus of Nazareth that he was the one that the Jews had been waiting for he's saying that this man I'm speaking about Jesus of Nazareth he was the one that dares the old testament was pointing to and we may listen to him just now think okay maybe I see that maybe look at the second half of the sermon Peter makes his point so explicit because he is effectively saying to this crowd before him in the temple friends the old testament is all about Jesus look what he says verse 18 God foretold the sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth in all the prophets verse 21 Jesus was promised long ago by the holy prophets verse 22 Moses spoke of the government of Jesus verse 24 Samuel and all the prophets thereafter spoke about these days what is the days of Jesus

[ 14 : 02 ] Nazareth's death and resurrection everything in scripture Peter says to this Jewish crowd everything in scripture is about this man that has just been put to death Jesus of Nazareth but I would urge you not to read Acts 3 and think of it as a dry monotonous lecture where Peter mechanically points out where Jesus pops up in the Old Testament it's not a lecture this is a man in the temple giving this heartfelt evangelistic appeal to these people why?

because Peter could see that by this crowd not recognising Jesus of Nazareth as the one Old Testament spoke of him that they were rejecting and renouncing their own longed for Messiah I mean this is not about missing a sort of detail or a technicality about identity this was about denying their Christ and with that please allow me to pose to you a couple of crucial questions firstly when you read your Bible at home and I assume what you do when you read your Bible at home are you seeing Jesus are you see when I was studying for the ministry a few years ago we had a teacher a lecturer!

and he would say the same thing every year to his class and he would tell us if you have something important to say to an audience what you do I'm sure you've probably heard this before from someone else what you do is first of all you tell the audience what it is that you are about to tell them and then the second thing you do is you tell the audience what it is that you have to tell them and then the third thing you tell the audience what it is that you have just told them but you isn't it but isn't that what God has done for us with Jesus Christ in scripture isn't it and he has foretold the coming of the important effect and then he has told us in detail about Jesus ministry and then he has explained to us again the significance of all of that so I wonder are you finding some of the parts of the old testament really difficult

I mean are you finding them sometimes almost impenetrable I wonder tonight do you see that this here what Peter says to this crowd is the key to it all that we must read the bible read scripture and we see Jesus that we read even those really difficult parts of the old testament I mean do you not read them in isolation we read them as they sit in God's perfect plan of redemption that reaches its apex it reaches its zenith at the cross now do you do that I wonder is that how you are using your bible when you go to Genesis you see that the seed of the woman points to Jesus you see that Ruth's kinsman redeemer points to Jesus you see that Noah's ark of salvation points to Jesus you see that Noah's fish of deliverance it points to Jesus that Jesus is the everything and the every layer of scripture and without him there is no understanding of the riches and truths of the word of God and then the second question is to those here who are perhaps not yet saved it's a question to you tonight if you're not a Christian friend with all respect do you see that you're making the same mistake as this Jewish crowd because you see the old testament came to them and it spoke very very clearly that the messiah would suffer and they rejected him but we're told look at the end of the section we're told in verse 26 that the gospel came first to the Jews but as we saw at the beginning of the sermon the gospel would go out of Jerusalem and it would go to all the nations of the world and you see the truth is that tonight as you sit here in this church the gospel has come to you look around you look at how many bibles are in this place you have the good news and it tells you very very clearly that Jesus is the

[ 19 : 25 ] Christ friends do not keep on making the same mistake as this Jewish prayer do not deny Jesus the one that all scripture speaks about so the speaker was all about Jesus and the scriptures are all about Jesus so thirdly let's conclude let's consider that the consummation will all be about

Jesus so the consummation the end times will be all about Jesus and again let's let's use our imagination and let's picture the scene that we're reading about in Acts chapter 3 okay so Peter is at the side of the temple in Solomon's portico right in the side of the temple and he's spoken to this crowd and he's not sugar coated it has he

I mean he's really underlined for these people their clear culpability that God has promised a suffering saviour that that suffering saviour has come and they have rejected him here's the thing surely the question that arises for that crowd is what now what now given their sin given what Peter has just pointed out given their denial of Christ is there any hope for them is that what they're asking or is it too late are they beyond saving well what Peter does here Peter not only tells them what they need to do to be saved but he also tells them exactly what that salvation will lead to so what does he say is the only way to be saved do you see it in verse 19 as clear as day

Peter announces the only way of salvation he says what's the word repent repent turn to God turn from that denial of Jesus turn to Jesus and see that his name is the name that's above all other names so he tells the crowd the way of salvation but when he's done that he then speaks of what happens to those who are saved in Jesus Christ now what does he say I would ask you to soak these in okay he says verse 19 that repentance will lead to sin being wiped out that great divine record of wickedness is blotted out from Jesus Christ he tells us that then he tells us that through repentance times of refreshing will come that just like the cripple that will stand in the side that salvation will involve a wonderful new lease of life in Jesus but thirdly and we're going to end with this one

Peter tells the crowd that if they turn from their denial of Jesus that God will send his son again that repentance in Christ will lead to a glorious view of the second coming of Christ and do you see what Peter says will happen when Jesus returns what will happen he says that verse 21 through Christ God is going to work he is going to restore everything he is going to restore all things that not only are the speaker and scriptures all about Jesus Christ but the consummation the restoration the future is going to all be about Jesus Christ that he will return that his creation will be made new by his power that his people will be transformed that his city the new

Jerusalem that it will be inhabited that his power that his wiped away sin that it will then wipe away all tears and all pain that his songs of glory will be sung that his crowns of glory will be handed out that all attention of every single person will be fixed upon the one who unlike us is actually deserving of all the focus and of all the praise and of all the glory that the consummation will all be about him Jesus Christ friends all of that is the wondrous fruit of repentance in Christ now the obvious question I have to finish with is have you turned from your sin have you really stopped denying the saviour can you see this evening that your life your hopes you know your future your affections above everything else it must all be about

[ 25 : 15 ] Jesus Christ do you see that it must be do you know what's beautiful that we learn in verse four of the next chapter that many of those people before Peter they saw it for the first time and we are told that they were saved I wonder tonight do you see it do you see that it's all about Jesus have you really repented of yourself let's pray let's pray Thank you.