

# Restoration in Jesus Name

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to turn now to God's Word, so please turn to Acts chapter 3, and you'll find that on page 9-1-1. We're picking up a series that we began a few weeks ago, and we'll continue this morning, this evening, and the next few Sunday nights in the first chapters of Acts.

And so chapter 3 picks up Luke's account just after the day of Pentecost. Acts chapter 3, and we'll read through to the end of the section, chapter 4, verse 4.

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a man, lame from birth, was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, that is called the Beautiful Gate, to ask alms of those entering the temple.

Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, look at us.

And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you.

[ 1 : 23 ] In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up. And immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple, asking for alms.

And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's.

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.

[ 2 : 33 ] But you denied the holy and righteous one, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. And you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead.

To this we are witnesses. 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.

And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring of all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

Moses said, The Lord will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.

[ 4 : 01 ] And all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and those who came after him also proclaim these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed.

And the number of the men came to about five thousand. Amen. Well, may the Lord bless to us the reading of his word this morning.

[ 5 : 07 ] Well, please do turn to Acts chapter 3, page 9-1-1.

Do you and I have shriveled gospel?

Do we have an anemic Christian gospel? I wonder if the instinctive answer to the question, what is the gospel, might for us be a little narrow sometimes.

Perhaps it's all about the forgiveness of sin. Now, that is certainly part of it. But the gospel is certainly more than that.

Perhaps it's all about the good life now. What God can give you today. General well-being, happiness. Perhaps we read the opening chapters of the book of Acts.

[ 6 : 13 ] And we think the gospel is all about healing and things like that now. Now, these thoughts all have a grain of truth. But they are not the whole picture.

Our passage this morning gets to the very heart of the gospel. About what it is and when it is. What does the apostle Peter say?

We'll just look at what he says at the very heart of our passage this afternoon. Look down to verse 18. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring of all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

Peter tells us that in light of who Jesus is and what he has done, we are to repent. And then three things he mentions.

[ 7 : 29 ] Yes, our sins are blotted out. But not just that. Times of refreshing come. And also, the restoration of all things. That is the big picture.

Christianity is not just about the forgiveness of sins, of your sins, of my sins, but it is more. It is ultimately about the restoration of all things.

That is what Acts chapter 3 is really all about. It is about the restoration of all things. Cosmic restoration. And it is about that restoration being found only, only in Jesus' name.

And isn't that wonderful news? Restoration of all things. Isn't that what your heart longs for? There is so much brokenness, disorder in our world.

You don't have to think for a long time for a whole multitude of things to come crashing into your mind. Broken relationships. Broken families. Broken bodies.

[ 8 : 35 ] Broken workplaces and organizations. Broken economies. Broken governments. A broken planet. Where earthquakes shatter and tsunamis sweep away.

Does not your heart long for a world where these things are unbroken? Well, this is what Acts chapter 3 is all about. It is about the restoration of all things.

Cosmic restoration. And it is about that restoration being found only in Jesus' name. But it's also a chapter that helps us to get our timings right.

What is being restored and when? It helps us to get the right perspective. What are we to expect today? As Christ reigns now from heaven.

And what must we wait for when Christ returns and reigns over his new creation? We'll look at this chapter in three sections.

[ 9 : 34 ] And it mirrors very much the structure of chapter 2. There's this extraordinary event. And then we get Peter's explanation of that event. And then we see the response of those who listened to Peter's explanation.

So firstly, verses 1 to 10, we see God's restoration exhibited. The gospel is all about the renewal of all things. Look down there at chapter 3.

It's a pitiful and hopeless scene, isn't it? We read about Peter and John going up to the temple and they pass a lame man. This man has been unable to walk from his very earliest days.

People carried him to the gate of the temple every day and there he begged. And he'd been doing this for years. We read later on in chapter 4 that this man was at this stage in his 40s. Day after day, month after month, year after year, sat at the gate of the temple, eking out the living. It is a picture of absolute hopelessness. But by the end of the paragraph, the picture is a very different one indeed, isn't it?

[ 10 : 44 ] No longer is this man camped outside the temple. But verse 8, he's entered the temple. And he's done so in his own two feet. He's able to walk. But more than that, we get this wonderful description, don't we?

And leaping up, he stood and began to walk and enter the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

It is a wonderful graphic illustration of God's restoration. From being lame to walking. From being outside the temple to being inside and praising God.

And it was in Jesus' name that this man was healed and restored. It was because of the resurrection of Jesus, his rising from the dead, that this man was able to be restored.

And this is just what was promised by the prophets. Jesus has fulfilled what was promised. He is bringing about the great restoration.

[ 11 : 44 ] And that is the link. That is the connection that Luke intends us to make with his repeated references to this man walking and leaping and praising God.

He is pointing his readers to something that Isaiah said. Now Luke doesn't need to say, now I'm making a reference to Isaiah 35 here, in particular these verses, his repetition of leaping and dancing and lame walking should do that for us.

Let me give you an everyday example. My daughter just has to ask one simple question in a sing-song sort of voice. And I'm transported to a whole other world of meaning.

She just has to utter the words, do you want to build a snowman? And I'm transported to a place I really don't want to be. The world of the Disney princess. She doesn't need to say, Dad, I'd really like to pretend we're living in the land of Disney's Frozen.

I'm Princess Anna and you can be the talking snowman. She doesn't need to do that because she knows that I know that when she's singing those songs, I'm thinking about that film.

[ 12 : 56 ] She knows that I know. And so too here, Luke knows that his readers know something of Isaiah. He's already made lots of references already, not just in the second part of his account, the book of Acts, but in his first part, his gospel.

Again and again, he's made references back to the book of Isaiah. And he's also made the same reference to these same verses back in Luke chapter 7. And he's making this link to Isaiah 35.

Let me read you the words from that chapter. Luke has already referred to that passage in his gospel, when Jesus describes his ministry as one in which the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

These verses in Isaiah anticipate that in the coming day of salvation, in the coming day of restoration of creation, there will be shouting for joy in Zion, and the lame will leap like a deer. And in light of all that we've seen in the first two chapters of Acts, this healing of the lame man in chapter 3 is yet more evidence that with the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, the last days, those days that were promised long ago, are now here.

[ 14 : 34 ] The restoration of all things has now begun. And it is a real restoration. The restoration that Jesus brings about is real.

It's not merely spiritual, but also physical. The new creation that we look forward to, it is a real, physical, solid new creation.

A place where those who are Christ will live in resurrection bodies. And this healing of this lame man is a demonstration. It's an exhibition of the reality of that restoration that will one day be complete at Christ's return.

But Luke doesn't just record the bare event. He records for us Peter's explanation. And it's an explanation that gives us certainty and clarity about the events we've just recounted.

And so our second point as we look on verses 11 to 26, we see God's restoration explained. The gospel is proclaiming restoration in Jesus' name according to God's timetable.

[ 15 : 46 ] The people who witness this incredible event are, verse 11, absolutely astounded. Look at what they do. They rush to go and see Peter and John. They can't believe what they've seen.

And Peter is quick to deflect attention away from himself, away from John. And just look at his opening question to the crowd. Why do you wonder at this? Why do you stare at us as if we did this?

No. This is all because of Jesus. It is his name that has restored this man. Jesus is the one who is able to restore this man because Jesus is the one who has been glorified by the God of our fathers. Notice that Peter there in verse 13 grounds all that he says in the historical faith of Israel. This isn't some new religion, says Peter. No, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob has glorified Jesus.

And you killed him, says Peter. But God raised him from the dead and we are witnesses to that. And it is because of who Jesus is and what he has done that this lame man now walks.

[16:59] You shouldn't be surprised at what you're seeing here because this is always how it was going to be. This is what God promised in the scriptures. And with God's raising Jesus from the dead, the scriptures are fulfilled.

Restoration is now coming. That is what the prophets promised. And with Jesus coming, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, the beginning of that fulfillment is now here.

Restoration is now coming, says Peter. But we need to be careful with our timings. Restoration is not simply something that is past, nor is it something only for the future, nor is it all about the present.

Peter is careful here, and we must be too, as we think about the restoration that Jesus brings. Now is the time of restoration because it begins with Christ's resurrection.

We see that there in verse 15. You killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead. That is the key moment in all history. Death is undone.

[18:09] Christ has risen from the dead. That is a past event, a historical fact. It is his resurrection that guarantees the resurrection of all who believe in his name.

But does that mean that we should expect all the blessings of God's promised restoration now? Are we suddenly free from death in this life? Should we be rushing to all the hospitals in Glasgow and do what Peter and John did here?

Well, no. That is Peter's answer. Just look at what he goes on to say from verse 19. We see here what restoration looks like now and in the future.

He says, repent, therefore. Turn again. And here are the consequences of repentance. That your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring of all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

So three things result from true repentance. Firstly, your sins are blotted out. Now that is something that we enjoy, isn't it, in part now, because our sins are blotted out, past tense.

[19:36] If we trust in the name of Jesus, we are no longer dead in our sin, but alive in Christ. We are no longer counted sinners. We still struggle with sin, don't we, but we're no longer counted sinners.

We don't quite experience the full implications of our forgiveness in this life. Only when Christ returns. So our sins are blotted out, but secondly, times are refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

I'm not entirely sure what this means, but it certainly seems to be something that we enjoy, at least in part, now, as believers. That is the experience of Christians all through the ages.

The Lord is kind to us, kinder than we deserve. We can all point, I'm sure, to moments where we truly know that the Lord has refreshed us, not least as we gather week by week.

Here is a church. We enjoy fellowship together. It is the place where God promises to be, to presence himself with us. Wherever there are two or three gathered in my name, I will be there.

[20:41] But thirdly, we see that he will send the Christ when? At the time for restoring of all things.

And that is not yet. The full and final restoration of all things will only come when Christ returns at the appointed time.

Then and only then will the restoration of all that was promised in the scriptures be finally and ultimately fulfilled. Only then will every deaf man hear, every lame man walk.

Only then will physical restoration be complete. And so we must wait for that full restoration. And we must be clear in what we believe and what we proclaim about the Christian gospel.

It is about a real restoration. A real physical restoration of all things. but it is a future restoration.

[ 21 : 47 ] And that is surely a restoration that we want all people to enjoy. And so we must point people to the future restoration and to the only route to that restoration.

And the route to that restoration is not found in our own efforts. It's not to be found in recycling. It's not to be found in our own moral efforts. It's not to be found in scientific and technical advances. But only by turning to Jesus. Only in his name. Only repenting in his name is the true hope for people like you and me to experience that restoration.

Only in Jesus is the restoration that we crave for found. notice a stark warning with Peter's words in verse 22.

Only in Jesus you shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.

[ 22 : 51 ] only in Jesus is this restoration to be found. And so it's not surprising then that our third point is this. God's restoration estranges.

God's restoration estranges. The gospel provokes opposition but it also calls many to repentance. So we're looking on to the start of chapter 4 here.

Now God's restoration is truly wonderful isn't it? As you think about all that was promised in the prophets of that great restoration to come. It's wonderful.

Who doesn't want to see the restoration of all things? But it does mean repenting. That is the only way we'll know and experience the full restoration that Jesus promises.

And that flies in the face of my desires and yours. We don't want to be told what to do. We don't want to be told that the restoration of all things is out of our hands.

[ 23 : 53 ] We don't want to be told that we must submit ourselves to Jesus' lordship. We by nature hate that. And so we see again as we already have done as we will continue to see through the book of Acts the responses to that gospel that call to repentance.

And we see that God's promised restoration divides. It is met with opposition. People are hostile. But it is also met with repentance.

Look at those first verses of chapter 4. We see the temple authorities, they come and arrest Peter and John because of what they've been saying. It's because, verse 2, they've been proclaiming in Jesus alone the resurrection from the dead, that great restoration one day.

that's why they're so hostile. But also, verse 4, many of those who heard the word believed and the number of men came to about 5,000.

So Luke wants us to be clear not only about the fullness of the gospel, it's about the restoration of all things. not only does he want us to be clear about the timings of that restoration, yes, it's already begun with Christ's resurrection.

[ 25 : 14 ] Yes, we enjoy something of that now, but it will only come to completion when Christ returns. But he also wants us to be clear that as we hold to these truths as we proclaim them, we will be opposed by some, but many will also believe.

That is a wonderful prospect, isn't it? That people we share this with as we proclaim Christ, they will, as they repent, enjoy with all who believe in Christ that wonderful restoration one day.

That is what we look forward to. So some questions then as we close, questions to ponder, questions that we can ask of one another after the service over a coffee during the week.

I was really quite struck with something that Peter Adams said this past week, and I'll mention this now. He made the point that we, that is all of us together here this morning, we all have a responsibility for each other.

We have a responsibility to help each other grow in the Christian life, to grow into maturity. And he quoted from Colossians chapter 3, verse 16, which says this, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.

[ 26 : 40 ] So we have that duty, one another, to teach and admonish. And we do so in all wisdom. So we pray for wisdom, and we teach and admonish one another.

So let's develop that habit together of teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom. So let me put some questions to you now for you to think about and to ask each other after the service.

First question is to those who have never repented. That is Peter's own application, isn't it? Having just spelt out who Jesus is, what he has done.

He says, verse 19, repent, therefore. And so my question is, will you repent? In fact, it's more than a question, it's a plea.

Repent. Repent. You've never turned to Christ. Repent. for it shall be that every soul who does not listen to Jesus shall be destroyed from the people.

[ 27 : 51 ] That's what Peter says. Turn to Christ. Only through the repenting of your sins will you enjoy the forgiveness of your sin. Only in repenting will you enjoy that ultimate restoration that Jesus is bringing about one day.

So will you repent? Well, my second question is for those who profess faith, for those who have repented, my question is this.

Do our priorities in church life, as well as our personal lives, do our priorities reflect the fact that ultimate, full and final restoration comes only through Christ and only when he returns?

So are you looking for the sorts of things now that will only be delivered when Christ returns? Are you trying to find in your life now the things that will only be true when Christ returns?

Some things will never be fixed in this life. Only when Christ returns will all things be restored. And so that must be where our focus lies. As a church, we point ourselves and others to that final restoration.

[ 29 : 08 ] That is where our hope is. Do you expect that everything will fall into place now because you've repented? Well, we're not promised that for now.

Yes, one day, one day everything will be restored, everything will fall into place, but not yet. Only then will every tear be dried. Only then.

So do you think about the restoration to come? Is it something you think about, look forward to? How amazing will that day be when all things are restored, just as the prophets spoke of? It's truly wonderful, isn't it? Let's encourage one another to look forward to that day.

It is coming. As surely as Christ's resurrection happened, that will happen in the future. It's a sure thing. So let's encourage one another to look forward, but also to tell others that they might repent.

[ 30 : 09 ] For it is only in Jesus' name, only in listening to his words, that people, people just like you and me, can look forward to with certainty that great day of restoration.

It is coming. And it's only in turning to Jesus. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that all you promised has been fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, would you help us to believe what we've read this morning? Help us to trust in Jesus that one day when he returns, there will be that great restoration of all the things promised.

So help us to live in light of that future certainty, to live with hope and joy for all that you've promised. And help us to point others to that same reality, only in Jesus.

So please help us to live by faith and not merely by what we see today. Help us, for we ask it in Jesus' name.

[ 31 : 45 ] Amen.