

“Restoring All Things” (Acts 3)

February 28, 2016

Brian Watson

Acts 3 (ESV)

¹ Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ² 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. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. ⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ 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.¹

You don't need me to tell you that everything is not right in the world. Every week, we have reminders that not everything is right in the world. On Thursday of this past week, a man in Kansas shot and killed three people and injured another fourteen people. There was also a story of three men who were found killed in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The week before, a man in Michigan shot and killed six. Just this morning, I saw a story that in India a man killed fourteen of his relatives with a knife and then killed himself. There are environmental concerns, like lead in the drinking water in Flint, Michigan and the Zika virus. Even if we set aside all the things we see on the news, there are reminders in our daily lives that things are not the way they should be. We experience aches and pains. We have problems in our relationships. We have regrets about the things we did and did not do. In all of this, we may wonder, “How is God going to fix everything?” We may also wonder, “What does this have to do with the church? What does this have to do with the gospel?”

Two weeks ago I started preaching through the book of Acts. Acts tells the story of what happened in the thirty years or so after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. I explained that we're looking at this important book in the New Testament because it says a lot

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

about the church and the gospel and how God is making a people for himself. Today, we'll see what this book has to say about how God is restoring all things in and through Jesus Christ.

So let's start to look at Acts 3. The first verse says, "Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour." They were going at the "ninth hour," which would be about 3 p.m. According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, this was when one of the twice-daily sacrifices was made.² The temple was the center of worship for Judaism, where sacrifices for sins were made. But the temple building in Jerusalem was never intended to remain forever. I said last week that one of the things happening in Acts 2 is that God was making the church the temple. Not only that, but while on earth, Jesus referred to his body as the temple (John 2:18-22). And the rest of the New Testament makes it clear that the church is now the temple, the place where God dwells on earth (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; 1 Pet. 2:5). The "place" where God is worshiped is Jesus. He is the Lamb of God, the true sacrifice for sin (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7). He is the great High Priest (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:5; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11). In other words, Jesus made the temple building in Jerusalem obsolete. So why were the disciples still going there?

One reason they might have been going is because it took some time for them to realize that they no longer needed the temple. But I suppose that, as the author of history, God had them continue to go to the temple for a time to contrast the temple that is the church with the Jerusalem temple.³ We see in the next few chapters in Acts that the church is where life and healing are found. We see that true worship is happening in the church. We also see that the Jewish religious leaders who rejected Jesus, the ones in charge of the temple, were not God's people, while the Jews who put their trust in Jesus were God's people.

And God's people still gathered at the temple. But there's no mention of them offering sacrifices at the temple. At the very end of Luke's Gospel, we find that the disciples "were continually in the temple blessing God" (Luke 24:53). Acts 2:46-27 says, "And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." So perhaps they met at the temple

² *Antiquities* 14.65. See Num. 28:1-8 for a description of these sacrifices.

³ I think Luke wants us to think about the temple, because we find the word used six times in the first ten verses of Acts 3.

simply to praise God and tell others about Jesus. They had no need to offer sacrifices for sin because Jesus was the once-and-for-all true sacrifice for sins.

When Peter and John come to the temple, they see a man who couldn't walk, and who was placed at the gate of the temple courts in order to beg. We see this in verses 2-3:

² 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. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms.

The "Beautiful Gate" was probably the Nicanor Gate, which separated the outer temple court, the so-called Court of the Gentiles, from the inner courts of the temple, where Jews could worship. It seems that this disabled man wasn't allowed to enter into the inner temple courts to worship. In the Old Testament, there are verses that forbid disabled priests from serving at the tabernacle and temple (Lev. 21:16-24).⁴ The idea was that both the animal sacrificed and the one sacrificing it had to be unblemished. Those who were handicapped or had various diseases were regarded as unclean. Now, it wasn't their fault that they had a disability, and it wasn't because of any sin that they had done. But the point was that diseases and disabilities are the result of sin in the world in the general sense. Because sin entered into the world in Genesis 3, there all kinds of problems. We are separated from God and each other. We're separated from our true selves. We have disordered desires. There are environmental problems, like droughts. And people have disabilities and diseases. And, of course, there's death. In Old Testament worship, only the "clean" and the "holy" could be near the temple. Anyone considered unclean was on the outside. This was a reminder that God cannot dwell with sin or the effects of sin.

The temple was supposed to be a place that recalled the garden of Eden. It was supposed to be a way to return to God. But this disabled man couldn't even get into the temple to worship. Instead, he was placed at this gate to beg. And as Peter and John pass by, he asks them for help.

Peter responds not by giving him money, but giving him what he really needs: healing. Let's read verses 4-10:

⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" ⁷ And he took him by the

⁴ See also 2 Sam. 5:8. Apparently in later Jewish tradition the standard for animals and priests was applied to worshipers.

right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ 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.

Peter and John look at this man. They noticed his condition. They knew his need. This man probably expected to get a coin from them. But Peter says that he doesn't have any money. Instead, he has the power of Jesus. He tells the man to walk, and then he helps the man get to his feet. Notice that when the man is healed, he is now able to go into the temple. The people inside the inner courts of the temple recognize him and they are amazed that he was healed.

Luke is showing us that the apostles are continuing the ministry of Jesus. Jesus wasn't afraid to spend time with "unclean" people. Peter healed this man the way that Jesus healed the paralyzed man who was brought to him by his friends. In fact, the language here is similar to the language that Luke uses about that event in his Gospel (cf. Luke 5:25-26; Acts 3:8-9). Jesus' miracles were signs. They pointed to what Jesus came to do. Jesus came to save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He saves his people by dying in their place on the cross. His death pays the price for our rebellion against God. That's how he cleans us up. That's how he heals us. The reason anyone is blind, or handicapped, or dies is because of the presence of sin in the world. So when Jesus healed the blind and the deaf and the lame and rose people from the dead, these were signs of what he was doing. Also, these miracles are a foretaste of what will happen when Jesus returns: All his people will be resurrected in perfect bodies, bodies that don't have conditions and diseases, bodies that can never die.

Luke is also saying something about the old temple building in Jerusalem. This man who couldn't walk was brought to the temple every day, but that old temple couldn't heal him. It didn't make him praise God. But when Peter and John, disciples who were part of the new temple, the church, came to this man, they healed him. They couldn't offer him money, but they offered him something better: The power of Jesus. The new temple, the church, offered healing

to this man. The new temple, the church, was able to help this man truly worship God. The lame beggar was able to leap over the barriers that had kept him from God.⁵

Before we go on, let's think about what this has to do with the church. The church should be a place where people find healing. The church should be a place where people can truly worship God. They should find life among us. Now, I'm not guaranteeing we can perform miracles. In fact, I've never seen a miracle performed. I think that miracles were prevalent in the time of Jesus and the apostles to provide witness for their ministries. As I said last week, "signs and wonders" were found most prominently in the time of Moses and Joshua and in the time of the prophets Elijah and Elisha and the time of Jesus and the apostles, when God was revealing himself in special ways. God hasn't promised us miracles, even though I continue to pray for them. But the church is where people should find Jesus. The church is where people should find love and grace. The church is where people find healing from sin and healing from all the scars they've acquired in life.

It's sad that sometimes churches aren't places where they can find healing. Churches can be full of people who are proud. Churches can be full of people who forget that they are just beggars telling others beggars where to get bread. Churches can be full of people who are hypocrites, who wear masks, who fight. I want this church to be one that is full of grace and truth. To be full of truth, we can't just tell the truth about Jesus. We have to tell the truth about ourselves: We are sinners saved by grace through faith in Jesus. We're not good, but we know a Savior who is more than good. We are united to a Lord who is perfect. We were wretches saved by his amazing grace. So let's be truthful, and let's be gracious.

And if we're a church of grace and truth, we should realize that the most important thing we offer is the gospel, the good news that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the grave for our justification. His death and resurrection make it possible for those who were separated from God to be reunited to him. So we offer the gospel. We offer a relationship with the one, true, living God. This is far greater than any silver and gold. Whenever someone contacts the church asking for help, I try to tell them that we are happy to meet their needs if we can, but the greatest need that anyone has is to know Jesus. I used to handle a lot more of these situations at my last church in Washington State. People often contacted the church looking for

⁵ I got this language from Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 155.

grocery money, gas money, and rent money. I often erred on the side of being generous, but I always tried to tell them about Jesus. If we're committed to ending suffering, we should first be committed to ending eternal suffering. We should be gracious and generous, and we should be generous in telling people the truth.

(As an aside, I read this week about the thirteenth century theologian and philosopher Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Thomas was with the pope at the time, Pope Innocent IV, who was counting a large sum of money. The Pope said, "You see, Thomas, the church can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" And Thomas replied, "True, holy father, neither can she now say, 'Rise and walk.'"⁶ The point is that a church that has become corrupt through greed—not to mention false doctrines—can no longer provide healing.)

So how does God set things right in this world? He does it through Jesus. He heals people through Jesus. He fixes broken people and broken situations through Jesus.

Now let's move on to the rest of chapter 3. What's interesting is that the miracle we just read about wasn't understood by everyone. They were amazed and astounded, but they didn't understand what had happened. So Peter has to explain what had happened. Peter does that in verses 11-16:

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.

One of the main points that Peter makes is that he didn't heal this man. It wasn't his "power or piety" that healed him. It was Jesus that healed this man. It was because Peter had faith in Jesus and his ability to heal that this man was healed. And Peter explains why this is so.

⁶ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 77-78.

First, Peter tells them that God—their God, the God of the Patriarchs—glorified Jesus. This shows that Christianity is a continuation of the story of Israel. In Acts 2, Peter said that Jesus was the Messiah, the promised anointed King who was the Son of David. Here, he says that Jesus is the glorified servant who is the “Righteous One.” He’s referring back to Isaiah’s “suffering servant.” Isaiah 52:13 says:

¹³ Behold, *my servant* shall act wisely;
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted.

And Isaiah 53:10-12 says:

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall *the righteous one*, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

God’s servant, the righteous one, Jesus, died for the sins of his people. This was God’s plan. But it was also the result of what people had done in Jerusalem not long before Peter’s speech. Peter reminds them that they delivered Jesus over to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Pilate offered to release Jesus. But the Jewish people in Jerusalem—the ones who didn’t believe Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God—they chose to have a murderer named Barabbas released instead of Jesus (Luke 23:1-25). Jesus died so a murder could go free. By accusing Jesus of blasphemy, and by refusing to have him released, these people “denied the Holy and Righteous One” and “killed the Author life.” It seems that Peter is saying that they were

responsible for killing God, because God is called the “Holy One” and he truly is the “Author of life.”⁷ That’s a great irony—the one who gives life died.

Jesus was able to die because he was not just God, but also man. And he truly was and is human. He was capable of dying. And he died for the very people who would betray him and hand him over to the occupying Roman Empire.

Peter says that God raised Jesus from the grave, and he and the apostles were witnesses of that. That continues the theme of witnessing. Peter was boldly telling these people that they were responsible for what they had done, that Jesus had indeed died, and that he had been raised from the dead. And it is the risen Lord Jesus Christ who is able to heal people.

But Peter doesn’t just tell these people that they were guilty. He says that there is hope. These people acted ignorantly, but they now have an opportunity to turn back God. Let’s read verses 17-26:

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, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. ²² Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. ²³ And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’ ²⁴ And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. ²⁵ 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.’ ²⁶ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”

The people who denied Jesus and led to his death acted out of ignorance. On the one hand, they should have known better. If they had known the Old Testament Scriptures well and paid attention to what Jesus did and said, they should have known who he was. Peter says that Jesus was the prophet that Moses spoke of in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Moses and all the other prophets that followed him, like Samuel and Isaiah, spoke of Jesus. So the people should have

⁷ God is called the “Holy One” many times in Isaiah. See Isa. 40:25; 41:14, 20: 43:3, 14-15; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 60:0, 14. See also Ps. 78:41.

known. They should have listened to him, because he spoke the words God the Father gave to him (John 3:34; 12:49; 15:15; 17:8, 14).

Yet there are some passages in the Bible that say they really didn't know what they were doing. After all, if they knew he was God in the flesh, would they have killed him? So Paul writes, in 1 Corinthians 2:8, "None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." And Jesus himself said, on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). That shows what Jesus is like. He is willing to bless those who cursed him (see Rom. 12:14).

Also, as I said earlier, though these people were responsible for their wrong-doing, it was God's plan for Jesus to die. Peter says that God had spoken through the prophets that Jesus had to die.⁸ As Peter said in Acts 2:23, Jesus was "delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God."

And this shows the grace of God. He knew that humanity would fall into sin. He knew that these Jewish people would reject his Son. He knew we would often ignore him and misrepresent him. But he calls us to turn back to him. Peter tells his audience, "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (vv. 19-20). If they would only turn away from their own selfish and sinful agenda and turn to God, they would experience "times of refreshing." They would start to experience the healing that the lame man experienced.⁹ They may not have their physical ailments cured, but their souls would be healed. The final healing for all of those who are united to Jesus will come when Jesus returns. It is then that he will restore all things.

Peter reminds the crowd that God had made a covenant with Abraham, their forefather. God told Abraham that he would bless all the families of the earth through his offspring (Gen. 12:3; 22:18). We know from elsewhere in the Bible that Jesus is the offspring through whom God would bless all the families of the earth (Gal. 3:16). And Peter says that God sent Jesus to them first, which implies that he will later be presented to Gentiles, which we see later in Acts.¹⁰ But here's what is amazing: Peter says that Jesus was sent to bless those who had done wicked things. He says, in verse 26, "God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless

⁸ In addition to Isa. 52:13-53:13, see Jer. 11:19; Zech. 12:10; 13:7; Pss. 22; 31; 34; 69.

⁹ I should note that the language of this man recalls Isai. 35:6. Isaiah 35 tells of salvation and the ransomed coming to Zion. It speaks of a time of healing and joy.

¹⁰ See Paul's statement in Rom. 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.” This is amazing. God blesses those who have done wicked things. He is willing to bless those who killed his Son.

This is amazing. I think that those of us who have known the gospel for a long time get a bit numbed to its power. God is willing to bless and forgive those who are wicked, those who have ignored him, those who do what they know to be wrong, and those who even killed his Son.

God is willing to forgive us. Though we were made to know God, love him, and represent him, we turn our backs on him. We act as if we were the center of the universe. We don’t bother to learn about God. We don’t really care to know what he’s like, or what he wants of us. When we’re in a bind, we offer up a desperate prayer, but otherwise, well, we’re fine on our own, thank you very much. And even if we do know God’s commandments, we must admit that we often break them.

We’re just as responsible for Jesus’ death as the Jews in Jerusalem almost two thousand years ago. It’s because we sinned that Jesus died. We’re part of the problem. We, along with all other human beings, have turned away from God.

And yet God takes on human flesh and comes to seek and save his people. He is willing to leave his home in heaven to pursue those who aren’t pursuing him. He is even willing to die for his people so they can be forgiven for their crimes.

On Friday, I read a story in the *Boston Globe* about the sentencing given to Philip Chism, who raped and killed a Danvers High School teacher named Colleen Ritzer on October 22, 2013. Though I wasn’t living in Massachusetts at the time, I remember hearing about the murder because Chism was a student—only 14 years old—the murder was gruesome (he used a box cutter), and I grew up about a mile and a half from Danvers High. Chism was tried as an adult and received a life sentence with the possibility of parole after twenty-five years. But he’s also serving two 40-year terms concurrently for rape and armed robbery.

What struck me was that Colleen Ritzer’s father, Tom, said this, “I hate Colleen’s killer and will never forgive him. He is evil, pure evil, and he must be punished.”¹¹ It’s hard not to relate to what her father said. I don’t know what it’s like to have a child murdered, but I can imagine the feelings of anger and injustice. But it made me think about what would happen if a

¹¹ Laura Crimaldi, “Chism sentenced to at least 40 years; family calls it ‘unacceptable,’” *The Boston Globe*, February 26, 2016, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/02/26/sentencing-hearing-colleen-ritzer-murder-case/LOCVw0XUdtIbQPsrFiQvFM/story.html> (accessed February 27, 2016).

father in such a situation offered forgiveness. Imagine a different scenario. Imagine a similar situation, where a man has murdered another man's child and the murderer is brought to trial. Imagine that the father of the murdered child is the judge. And the murderer had committed a whole host of other crimes. And the father, who is also the judge, sees all the evidence against the murderer. He has it all laid out before him, and he knows this murderer is guilty. And then he says to the murderer, "If you would only turn from you ways, I will forgive you, and I will set you free." You might imagine the murderer would be puzzled. Then the father, the judge, says, "I want to bless you even though you have done a wicked thing." The murderer's attorney speaks up and asks, "So he's innocent?" And the father-judge says, "Well, no, we all know he committed murder and many other crimes. But I'm going to set him free." The prosecutor stands up and says, "How is that possible?" And the father-judge says, "Because someone else will pay for his crimes." The prosecutor and the defense attorney both ask, "Who?" The father-judge says, "My child. I will credit this man's crimes to my own child. He deserves the death penalty, but my child paid that penalty for him. Now he can go free, if only he would ask for forgiveness."

That is, more or less, what God the Father does for those who put their trust in Jesus, who repent of their sins and ask for forgiveness. They can go free because Jesus has already paid the penalty for their crimes.

That story about Colleen Ritzer's murderer also had another striking element. Her father, Tom also said this: "A dad's job is to protect his family. I didn't protect Colleen. A dad's job is to fix things. I would do anything to fix this for Colleen." There are so many things that happen that we can't fix. There are many things that simply can't be fixed in this life. But when Jesus returns, he will restore all things. Those who have repented and turned to Jesus will have all their problems fixed. They will live in perfect bodies in a perfect world with a perfect God. Jesus once told his disciples, "You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy" (John 16:20; see also Ps. 30:11). When Jesus returns, there will be the restoration of all things. Until that time, there will be no utopia, no paradise regained. Until that time we must tell people the good news that Jesus died to save sinners, and that the God who was spurned is the God who blesses.

I want to end with some thoughts about what this passage says about proclaiming the gospel. First, notice that Peter first performs a good work. In this case, it's the healing of the man who couldn't walk. The people are amazed at the miracle, and it seems they were willing to think

that it was because of Peter's "power and piety." Peter then has to explain to them that it wasn't his power, or his goodness, that healed the man. No, it was Jesus who did it. And then Peter goes on to explain a bit of the gospel message.

That shows us that it's not enough to do good works. We need to tell people about Jesus. Otherwise, if we do good works and don't tell people about Jesus, they'll simply assume we're good people. Francis of Assisi is supposed to have said, "Preach the gospel always; if necessary use words." That's a pithy little saying, but it's bad theology. The gospel is a message that needs to be proclaimed. We need to use words, or else our good works might end up glorifying ourselves, and not Jesus. And that means we need to know how to tell other people about Jesus. If all else fails, tell them that God is good, we've done wrong, and Jesus died for sinners like you and me who repent and put their trust in him. In fact, tell them you're a bad person. Other people may find that disarming. It will get them to think. Then you can explain the gospel.

Second, we need to be bold in love and bold in truth. Peter and John took notice of a broken, hurting man and they gave him what he needed. But Peter was also bold in telling the truth: The Jewish people in Jerusalem had rejected Jesus, effectively signing his death warrant. But, once again, Peter shows bold love. He tells them that they can find refreshing and blessings by repenting. We need to be full of grace and truth. Jesus is full of both. Christianity demands both. We can't really have one without the other.

Let's be a church where people find grace and truth. Let's be a church that gives real and thoughtful answers to people who are searching for them. Let's be a church that will offer people healing and refreshing. Let's be a church that tells people there is a God who blesses, a God who is capable of restoring all things.