

Lesson 4 (Acts 3)

"Repent Therefore, and Turn Back"

Some time after the incredible events of Pentecost, another amazing thing happens in the heart of Jerusalem. Peter heals a lame beggar in the temple courts. Once again, a large crowd gathers in wonder and amazement at what has happened and Peter is given another unique opportunity to proclaim the good news of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. However, the apostles are also led into the first of several conflicts with Jewish authorities who are determined to silence any further preaching in Jesus' name. We'll focus on Peter's message to the crowd in Acts 3 and the resulting confrontation with the Jewish council in our next lesson.

"Now Peter and John ... "

We often find these two together in the New Testament. They very well may have been friends from their youth in Galilee.

- They had been partners as fishermen (Luke 5:8-10)
- Along with James, the brother of John, they seem to have been a kind of "inner circle" of Jesus'. apostles:
- O They were eyewitnesses of Jesus' transfiguration on a high mountain (Matt 17:1-8)
- O They were permitted to watch as Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mark 5:35-43)
- O They were taken further into the Garden of Gethsemane
- They were sent on the Day of Unleavened Bread to prepare the Passover for Jesus and his disciples (Luke 22:7-13)
- Later that night, John—who was known to the high priest—took Peter into the house of the high priest where Jesus had been taken for trial (John 18:15-16)
- They were fishing together after the resurrection (John 21:1-8)
- They will go to Samaria together and pray for new believers, laying their hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17)
- They will perceive the grace given to Paul and have influential input in his mission to preach to the Gentiles (Gal 2:7-10)

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- Later that night, John—who was known to the high priest—took Peter into the house of the high priest where Jesus had been taken for trial (John 18:15-16)
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 “Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1). Luke will make frequent reference throughout the book of Acts to specific times of day. Jews began counting the hours of a new day at sunrise—approximately 6:00 AM. Keeping that basic detail in mind, the “ninth hour” would be approximately 3:00 PM. Here’s a sampling of other references to time in Acts:

- “These people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour (9:00 AM) of the day.” (Acts 2:15)
- “About the ninth hour (3:00 PM) of the day [Cornelius] saw clearly in a vision an angel of God.” (Acts 10:3)
- “Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour (12:00 PM) to pray.” (Acts 10:9)

⇒ Take a moment to reflect on Luke’s description of the man in Acts 3:2. What does he want us to understand about this man?

⇒ Peter says to this lame man, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” (Acts 3:6) We will hear references to “the name of Jesus” several times in Acts (2:38; 4:18; 5:40; 9:27; 10:48; 16:18). Notice specifically Peter’s statement to a man named Aeneas in a similar situation (Acts 9:32-35). What did the apostles mean when they invoked “the name of Jesus”?

⇒ How would you describe the lame man’s reaction to his healing in Acts 3:7-9 in your own words?

⇒ Do you remember the account of Jesus’ healing the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19? Think about your own life experiences. Have there been times that you were completely dependent upon the compassion and care of God but you neglected to thank and praise him afterward? As you reflect on the rest of Acts 3, ask yourself: “Could the unashamed witness of what God has done for me produce opportunities for others to hear the good news?”

The First Christians Began to Have an Impact
And the Lord added to their number day by day
those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47b)

When we are wholeheartedly devoted to a cause much larger than ourselves, the people around us will notice. Intense feelings of awe will have a practical effect on our everyday lives and interactions. Unselfish compassion will stand out in this dark world. Authentic unity is increasingly rare. These first Christians were the sort of people God could use as salt of the earth and light for the world (Matt 5:13-16). When Christ the Lord is genuinely honored in our hearts, we should be prepared to give an answer for our hope, because people will want to know the reason behind our manner of life.

=> THOUGHT QUESTION: "The Lord added to their number ... " What does this little phrase tell us about the Lord? And what is this "number"? Is the Lord still adding to this "number"? If so, in what way, and what part does he expect us to play?

A-C-T-S made personal
Based on my study of Acts 2:42-47

A - doration: God is worthy of my praise because...

C - aution: this section of Scripture reminded me to evaluate ...

T - rust: my faith in my Savior has grown because ...

S - trength: I was particularly helped and encouraged by ..



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