



The Acts of the Spirit

GATHERING THE CHURCH

ACTS 3:11-26

"THE CALL"

JULY 23, 2023

AT A GLANCE

Pastor Tom reminded us that we, too, need this **ESSENTIAL CONTENT** of the Gospel to align ourselves with the **NECESSARY RESPONSE**, which is **REPENTANCE** through **FAITH** in the name of Jesus.

CONTEXT

The book of Acts is the theological history of the Church. In the previous weeks, we explored how God's people (the Church) have become where heaven and earth meet. After the Holy Spirit's coming, Peter preached the good news, and 3,000 souls came to faith in Jesus. They are all figuring out what new life in Christ looks like. They submit themselves daily to the apostles' teaching and practice this new Christian community's way of life (sharing meals, singing, prayer, generosity, etc.).

Last week, Peter and John just healed a lame beggar in the name of Jesus. Together they enter the temple in joy and celebration. A crowd gathers in wonder as Peter addresses them about the miraculous healing...

SERMON SUMMARY

Pastor Tom's sermon gave us a contextual understanding of what it would have been like to stand on Solomon's portico (the front porch of the Jewish temple) hearing Peter speak. In this very spot, the crowd and religious teachers would have seen Jesus preach numerous times. Not far away, they would have also seen him writhe in agony as he was crucified. In using this spot for their teaching, the early Church is seeking to force the issue and extend the ministry Jesus gave them to bring new life in his name.

As the crowd gathers in wonder at the healing of the lame beggar, Peter uses this opportunity to explain the **ESSENTIAL CONTENT** of the Gospel and invite them all to the **NECESSARY RESPONSE**.

Pastor Tom highlighted that while the crowd was concerned with who healed the lame beggar, Peter was more concerned with answering these five essential questions:



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- 1 - **Who is Jesus?** God
- 2 - **What happened to him?** Crucified and Resurrected
- 3 - **Who killed him?** The people executing God's prophecies plan.
- 4 - **For what purpose?** For our salvation and the blessing of all people.
- 5 - **What should they do?** Repent and Turn-back to God.

DISCUSSION

Expand our Awareness

Pastor Tom spoke about what the crowd on Solomons Portico might have been experiencing. To fully appreciate the text's message, we must be aware of the original audience.

- What would it be like to have been listening to Peter while standing near the very place where Jesus taught/healed/and was crucified?

Peter confronted the crowd's reverence for the Jewish faith fathers (their heritage and highest authorities) by telling them that Jesus was greater and the one they pointed to.

- What might it have felt like as a first-century Jew to hear that Jesus was God and superior to Abraham?

It is normal to want evidence for claims that radically change our life. But knowing what evidence to look for is vital.

- What evidence do you think the crowd might have been looking for that would have confirmed Peter's claims about Jesus?

Peter appeals to their need for refreshment/blessing that comes from the presence of the Lord. But at the time, they believed God's presence was in the temple and refreshment was to come through sacrifice and political liberation.

- What might it have been like for a first-century Jew to hear refreshment/blessing comes through faith and repentance?



This document can be used for either personal or group reflection.

Group facilitator: you do not need to ask every question but can select the best ones for your group dynamic.



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Extract the Truth: (Scripture) Read Acts 3:11-26

Peter is providing evidence to support his challenge to the crowd. Each claim, therefore, is meant to persuade the crowd to adopt the truth.

- What evidence does Peter cite that confirms Jesus's deity?
- How should proving Jesus's deity change their response to his teaching?

Peter shows that Jesus' death and resurrection were actually God's prophesied plan fulfilled, not theirs.

- Why do you think Peter mentions the prophecies, and how might they have impacted the Jewish leaders/crowd?

Peter appeals to their desire for blessing and refreshment that comes through the presence of the Lord.

- How does this challenge the first-century Jewish view that refreshment would come through sacrifice/political deliverance by the Messiah?

Explore the Self: Personal Experience

We, like the crowd, have false views of who God is and how we should respond to him.

- Who are authorities, however good (like Abraham, Issac, and Jacob), that we may elevate that crowd out the voice of God?
- Like the crowd, what false evidence are you for God's power and love are you looking for that have already been fulfilled in Jesus?

Like the crowd, we have ideas of how to receive refreshments.

- What do you think real refreshment looks like?
- What do you believe you have to do to find that refreshment?
- Does that match the kind of refreshment Peter describes?



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Experience Transformation:

Peter was clear that the necessary response to the Gospel is to REPENT and TURN BACK to receive refreshment.

Pastor Tom explains that REPENTANCE is a **change of mind** (back to God), and TURNING BACK is a **change of behavior** (aligned with our belief in God). We must get specific on those two pieces if we are going to :

Repentance:

- What is one area of your life that you need to change your thinking about God and His ways?
- What do you need to confess to Him to receive refreshment?
- What specifically needs to change in your thinking to return to God?

Turn Back:

- What small achievable behavior can you change to align with that refreshed belief in God?
- How can you specifically build that behavior into your upcoming week?
- Who can help you make that change, and how can they help?

PRAYER

Prayer of Praise: God has made a way to refreshment through repentance. He offers it freely.

Prayer of Want: Awareness and assistance to seek refreshment through repentance.

Prayer for Others: Opportunities to build bridges of grace that will bear the weight of the truth of the Gospel.

**PREPARE FOR
NEXT WEEK:**



Read Acts 4:1-22