

Sunday, May 25, 2025 | Filled

Week 9 | Acts 3:11-16 | “Jesus: Yahweh’s Servant, Pt. 1”

READ: Acts 3:11-16 (ESV)

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.

In Homer's *The Odyssey*, Athena gives Odysseus some advice, saying, “Fear not, but be bold: a decent boldness ever meets with friends, succeeds, and e’en a stranger recommends.”

Boldness makes quick friends, helps a person accomplish a given task, and is greatly admired by all, even strangers. There's something about bravery that people can't help but admire. The more confident a person is, the more credible they appear.

In today's passage, Peter is as bold as a lion. He stands before his fellow countrymen and gives it to them straight. He does not pull punches or shy away from potentially uncomfortable or controversial topics. This sermon is the sort of speech that defies the modern notion of political correctness. Undoubtedly, had the Lead Apostle preached this message today in the town square, at best, he would’ve been “canceled,” or worse, cut down.

Peter’s boldness ought to inspire Christian evangelism. Billy Graham said, “Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened.” Believers need not apologize for the claims of Christianity. Paul says, “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” (Rom. 1:16). Timidity in the church leaves the world asleep at the wheel, while bravery keeps it from careening off a cliff.

And, who knows? Perhaps, if followers of Jesus began boldly proclaiming the gospel, as Peter does here, they might be surprised to find that such boldness won’t always turn people away; it

may be the exact thing that brings them near. After all, a fire burning brightly draws those lost in the dark.

Peter's sermon addresses two issues:

i. Vs. 11-16 – Israel's Culpability

Vs. 11 – Luke tells us that the once-lame man “clung to Peter and John.” He didn't need to cling to the apostles. We know he was healed. It seems he did not want to let go of either apostle. This miracle was such a spectacle that “all the people...ran together” just to glimpse the man who had been healed. And everyone was “utterly astounded.” Not just astounded, but *utterly* astounded. This crowd was beside itself with amazement. The specific location was “the portico called Solomon's.” This enclosed area lined the outer wall of the Courtyard of the Gentiles (cf. Jn. 10:23). It would quickly become a favored spot for the early church to hold its services (cf. 5:12).

Vs. 12 – Noticing that he, John, and the formerly lame man had drawn quite a considerable crowd, Peter took this opportunity to proclaim the gospel. And he begins by acknowledging the crowd's “wonder.” But there was a problem. The apostles could tell that the people were given them the credit for this miracle. Peter asks the crowd, “Why do you stare at us?” Did they really think that it was by Peter's and John's “power or piety” that enabled the lame to walk? Peter knew that he did not have the power to heal anyone. He also knew that no amount of piety could produce a miracle.

Vs. 13 – Peter says that the one who should get the credit is “the God of Abraham...of Isaac...of Jacob...of our fathers.” The God of the Old Testament is the one who did this miracle, not Peter and John. The Christian faith is rooted in the Jewish faith.

And it is Israel's God who also “glorified his servant Jesus.” This is quite the statement for two reasons.

- (1) First, I want you to notice the term “glorified.” The term “glory” refers to someone's reputation or dignity. So, to glorify someone is to exalt or magnify a person's station; it is to praise them. But amazingly, Peter says that it is God who glorified Jesus. God is the one who is supposed to be glorified (cf. Lu. 18:43). If he glorifies anyone, it will always be himself. The Lord shares his glory with no one else (e.g., Herod in 12:21-23; Satan in Isa. 14:14). God said in **Isa. 42:8**, “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.” And, again, in **Isa. 48:11**, the Lord says, “My glory I will not give to another.” So, for God, who does not share his glory, glorifying Jesus implies that Jesus must also be divine. In fact, this is something

Jesus says about himself multiple times (cf. Matt. 9:6; Jn. 8:58). So much so that he prayed in **Jn. 17:5**, “Father, *glorify* [emphasis added] me in your own presence with the *glory* [emphasis added] that I had with you before the world existed.” You don’t ask God to glorify you if you yourself aren’t already God.

(2) Second, I want you to notice how Peter refers to Jesus as God’s “*servant*.” This is not a generic term, referring to a simple minister of God. This Old Testament moniker referred to the famed “servant of the Lord” in the so-called “Servant Songs” of the Book of Isaiah. There are four of them: Isaiah 42:1-9, 49:1-17, 50:1-11, 52:13-53:12.

READ: Isaiah 42:1-4 (ESV)

¹ Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ² He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³ a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴ He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.

READ: Isaiah 52:13-15 (ESV)

¹³ Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. ¹⁴ As many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—¹⁵ so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

Peter then reminds his audience that this Jesus, who was glorified by God and was also God himself, is the same one “whom [they] delivered over” to be crucified. The Jews crucified God’s servant, and they also crucified their God. They even “denied [him] in the presence of Pilate.” The Israelites, God’s own people, rejected their messiah and God before a pagan ruler! And, if that wasn’t bad enough, Peter reminds his people that Pilate, a corrupt Roman politician, had “decided to release him.” When someone of such loose and dubious morals disagrees with your actions, you can rest assured that such actions are probably evil.

Vs. 14-15 – Peter doubles down on his accusations. Rather than allow Pilate to release Jesus, the crowd “denied” Jesus and traded him for “a murderer.” Jesus replaced a man named “Barabas,” a well-known insurrectionist (cf. Jn. 18:40). If anyone deserved to be crucified, it

was Barabbas. Yet, Jesus took that murderer's place, the just for the unjust (cf. 1 Pet. 3:18), the righteous for the unrighteous, the Son of God for a son of Satan (cf. Jn. 8:44).

To underscore the sheer insanity of the circumstances surrounding Jesus' death, Peter attributes Jesus with three divine titles:

- (1) "the Holy [One]" – Jesus is pure, having no spot or blemish (cf. Isa. 42:7). But this is also a title for Yahweh (cf. Lev. 11:44-45; Psa. 77:41). The demons know who the Lord's identity: "Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God" (Lu. 4:34).
- (2) "the Righteous One" – Jesus is just, having done nothing wrong (cf. 1 Pet. 2:22). In Lu 23:47, we're told that after Jesus' death, one of the centurions exclaimed, "Certainly this man was innocent!" But this term directly equates Jesus with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53:11. And God says in Jer. 23:5-6, "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'"
- (3) "the Author of Life" – Jesus is life (cf. Jn. 14:6). The writer of Hebrews says, "[Jesus] upholds the universe by the word of his power" (Heb 1:3). The Lord created all things, and through him, all things continue to exist. He is the one who made life possible and makes eternal life possible.

Jesus—i.e., the Holy One, the Righteous One, and the Author of Life—was rejected by his own people and traded for a known terrorist. He was murdered (e.g., JFK).

Despite this, "God raised [Jesus] from the dead." The Jews murdered Jesus, denying him and renouncing everything that he stood for. In contrast, God raised Jesus from the dead, affirming and accepting everything he stood for. And Peter and John stand before the crowd as "witnesses." Despite the crowd's best efforts, Jesus lives. In fact, Peter and John were the first of the apostles to see the empty tomb (cf. Jn. 20:1-10). They also saw, touched, and conversed with the resurrected Lord later that same day (cf. Jn. 20:19-23).

Vs. 16 – The crowd would not deny something miraculous happened as it was done "in the presence of [them] all." This man who had been healed of his lameness was one whom the crowd recognized easily ("whom you see and know"). But how did this happen? Peter says it was "by faith in his name...the faith that is through Jesus" that this man, who had been lame for

forty years, was made “strong” and given “perfect health.” Peter and John did not heal this man; God did. And this healing was not accomplished through Peter and John's name but through Jesus' name. And this miracle was proof that faith in Jesus, not in Peter and John, is what can restore broken humanity.

So, what's the takeaway? Faith in Jesus' name fixes the flaws and failures in humanity.

READ: John 14:12-14 (ESV)

¹² Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

A little faith in Jesus' name will accomplish great things through his name.

Video Description:

Filled | Week 9 | “Jesus: Yahweh’s Servant, Pt. 1” (Acts 3:11-16)

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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