



NG Study Guide: Acts 3:11-26 “The Church Flourishes” [7.31.22]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: We must remember and be rooted in the truth that the gospel we proclaim is a gospel of healing, grace, mercy, and a free gift offered to us because of Jesus’ sacrifice.

Subject: Peter empowered to preach the gospel

Object: Embrace the gospel and be transformed

1. The Power of Christ (11-12)

As we jump into these first few verses this morning we start to the power of God active through transformation! If we look back at verse 2 of this chapter we read

“... [this] man who had been unable to walk from birth was being carried, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order for him to beg for charitable gifts from those entering the temple grounds.” -Ver 2

This man whom Peter and John just healed has not known what it's like to walk, or use the full function of his legs since his birth. So I can imagine the roller coaster of feelings this man was experiencing. This man just experienced to a great length the power of transformation. Everyday he was carried to the temple to sit there all day asking for money, and on this random day these two men walk pass him they tell him,

“Look at us!” ...“I do not have silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!”

Ver 5-6

Once again, actually never walking in his life, this man takes Peter’s hand, stands up and is able to walk. Imagine with me the rush of excitement, joy, surprise, and fear this man was probably feeling in this moment. As people start to recognize this man walking around the word travels fast, as all the people ran together to the entrance of this porch. We see Luke (the author of Acts) make it a point to mention where this interaction happened saying, “they all ran together to the porch which is called Solomon”.

This was the same place that in John 10, when the jewish believers ask Jesus if he was the Messiah that old testament scripture spoke of, and Jesus tells them he is God as he said in John 10:31,

“ I and the Father are one”

Because this man was healed, and all these jewish believers run to see what’s going on, we start to see the beginning of Peter’s response to this amazed and bewildered crowd.

“12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people:

Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? "

Peter looking at this crowd gathering around him realizes that the marveling, astonishment, and the amazement of this crowd wasn't being placed in power of God through this mans transformation, but rather it was for Peter and John. As Peter sees this misplaced awe he doesn't sit and embellish in the glory that the people are giving him but Peter makes an effort to bring their focus to the holy spirit, the power of God, and there teaching of the old testament as well as the teaching of Jesus. Once again they were at the temple surrounded by people who not only knew of the old testament scriptures but they also studied extensively and memorized many of the passages and prophecies pointing to Jesus. In verses 13-19 we see Peter preach out this idea that:

2. Transformation in Christ (13-19)

Peter realizes that he has an opportunity to do what he has been tasked with to do, that being making disciples. So as Peter continues his address to the crowd that has gathered around him he makes it incredibly clear that healing of this man, was made available because of the work of Jesus. As we see in verses 13-15

a. the sacrifice of Christ (13-15)

By referring to God of Abraham, Issac, Jacob and of "our fathers" Peter is making it incredibly clear that he is speaking of God, speaking of the Yahweh whom the jewish people studied and worship. He continues to state that God glorified Jesus, but Peter is explicit in using the phrase, "glorified His Servant Jesus" This phrase His Servant is a reference to Isaiah 53. If we look at Isaiah 53:5 we read this:

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

- Isaiah 53:5

Peter makes it clear that Jesus wasn't just some guy who came to serve God but he makes the clear distinction that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah, as Jesus alluded to back in John 10. As Peter establishes the holiness and glory of Jesus being God's glorified servant, he takes a deep jab at the these people as he jumps into the shedding light on the fact that the jewish people knowingly betrayed Jesus during his trial.

In Matthew 27, Jesus was brought to Pontius Pilate by the jewish people asking him to sentence Jesus to death. After interrogating Jesus, Pilate recognized that Jesus was innocent but because the Jewish people where so admit to punish Jesus he gave the people an option. He gave them a choice to either let a well-known criminal go free or let an innocent perfect man go free! He game them a choice to choose one of two mean to be scented to death... Jesus (an innocent perfect man), or Barabbas (a known murderer and evil man) . As read in Matthew 27:21-23 the people choose to free Barabbas and to unrightfully punish Jesus.

As the messiah was unrightfully sent to a tortuous death, God raising Jesus from the dead and by doing so defeated death and the power of sin...because the guilty man went free and Jesus the righteous holy man was punished unjustly his sacrifice allowed a us to be in the position to receive the power of his transformation! His sacrifice made transformation available to all who placed there faith in as Peter explains in verse 16 that Transformation is found through faith in Christ:

b. faith in Christ (16)

As Peter continues to speak of the incredible power that Jesus has he circles back to the man whom was just healed. He drills into the fact that this man was not healed by the mere power, will, or determination of John and himself but rather he once again reminds the crowds that this man was healed by the power in the name of Jesus! He follows ups with this idea that this man's transformation required faith in the power of Jesus.

"...[it was] through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know."

Peter spoke with a deep faith, he spoke with a deep confidence in the power and authority of Jesus, and because of his deep faith in Jesus' transformative power this man was healed.

As we sit and contemplate that fact that Jesus made this man's transformation possible we must also rest in the truth that the transformation this man experienced has also been offered to us because of the sacrifice of Jesus! Now I'm not saying that if we have faith and we put our hope in Jesus we can go around saying, "in the name of Jesus..." he will start to give us whatever we ask him for but stop and consider this with me:

What if we believe that God can do the things he has promised?

If we put our faith in Jesus, and completely surrender to God, serving and honoring him in all we do, embracing the transformative power of the gospel our lives WILL BE radically changed. As we continue into in verses 17 and 18 we see that many prophecies fulfilled by Christ!

c. The suffering of Christ (17-18)

The people failed to remember the things which God foretold through his prophets over the years, pertaining to God's plan with Jesus, as we read in Isaiah 52:

13 Behold, My Servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. 14 Just as many were appalled at you, My people, So His appearance was marred beyond that of a man, And His form beyond the sons of mankind. 15 So He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what they had not been told, they will see, And what they had not heard, they will understand."

-Isaiah 52:13-15

Despite all the atrocious things that happened to Jesus, despite all of the torture, mocking, the outright evil things that they did to Jesus right before his death.... GOD'S PLAN WASN'T GOING TO BE STOPPED!

In fact Christ had to suffer so that he could go to the cross with our sin, or wrong doings, our atrocities towards God, so that through his power we would experience the transformation offered to us through his sacrifice! Transformation was made available only by Jesus, transformation requires faith in him, we see that many prophecies were fulfilled by Christ and Peter reminds us that restoration requires repentance!

d. the forgiveness of Christ (19-21)

Peter cuts straight to the point here in verse 19, he calls the people to repent. Peter uses this beautiful illustration to convey this idea of what repentance looks like as he describes his idea of blotting something out.

Blotting out encapsulates the idea of making something insignificant, or to wipe out and destroy something. This is such a beautiful illustration Peter uses because, ink from the ancient world didn't have an acidic base or an acidic compound like we do now so if you were to take wet rag to some parchment with fresh ink on it would be able to wipe away everything written on that parchment, like you would with a white board. Meaning repentance and intentionally choosing to follow God equates to their sin being wipe clean, as if there was no record at all of their sin! Peter's intention was for these people to embrace the gospel of transformation by welcoming repentance in their hearts!

The power of Christ's forgiveness is a powerful, life changing thing and Peter is trying to convey this power...

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

-1 John 1:9

God is faithful to blot out our sins! Meaning there is never a time when it is inconvenient for him to extend his healing love and grace to us. He is faithful in wiping away every unrighteous thing... meaning he capable and faithful to wipe away ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING less than perfect. Peter also speaks of the refreshing available from the Lord!

"19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

To be in the presence of Lord's is one of the most magnificent, breathtaking, liberating, satisfying, energizing and refreshing things that we as believers get to enter into!

Christ has made it possible for us to experience transformation, as we in faith embrace the fact that we are in need of him and we recognize that only by the sacrifice of Christ has our transformation been made possible can we then reap the rewards of the Covenant with Abraham being fulfilled!

3. Christ fulfills prophecy (22-26)

As we pick up and read in verses 22- 24 Peter quotes Moses' address to the Jewish people recorded in Deuteronomy 18 in verses 15, 18, and 19 as he says:

22 "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days."

Peter takes the time to remind his fellow Jews, that since the beginning of God's people, all of the prophets have been teaching about and pointing directly to Jesus!

He reminds them that Moses, the man who freed their ancestors from slavery, spoke of the coming of Jesus! He reminds them the prophet of Samuel spoke a prophecy directly speaking of the coming of Jesus in, 2 Samuel 5. These prophecies the Jewish people have been studying for generations all point to the coming of their Messiah, they all point to the coming of Jesus! Peter reminds us as we read in verse 25, that the promises of God have been extended to all people, not just the Jews.

25 'You are the children of those prophets, and you are included in the covenant God promised to your ancestors. For God said to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

Peter reminds Jewish people that their people extend back many generations, and he reminds them that the prophets that they study and learn from are their people. They are the sons and daughters of Abraham. He reminds them of the promise God made with Abraham right after he stops him from sacrificing Isaac:

"By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

-Genesis 22:16-18

This was the covenant that God promised to Abraham that, all of someone from his bloodline, would be the reason that all the nations, that all people groups of our earth would be blessed. Jesus was the promised descendant of Abraham, that came to set free not only the Jewish people but to set all people as Romans 8:1-4 reads:

"Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit"

-Romans 8:1-4

As this crowd surrounds Peter and John, they stood amazed over the fact that this crippled man was healed, yet empowered by the Holy Spirit Peter sees the true need not only for this lame man but also for each and every one of the Jewish believers who surrounded him. Their true need, my true need, your true need, our true need, is the need for radical transformation in our lives that comes from the free gift of salvation that was made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus! The sacrifice that blots out every single one of our unrighteous motivations, thoughts, and actions. God fulfilled the covenant made with Abraham so that we can experience the blessing of Christ Peter reminds us of in verses 26 we read this beautiful truth that we get to celebrate in:

"26 ...God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

God looks at our hearts, and he knows our pains, he knows our fears, our struggles, our temptations and he is moved by love to offer us freedom from a place of brokenness, to a place of joy, a place of hope, a place of satisfaction and a place of healing. God being full of compassion and mercy sent his son to die for us on the cross giving us a free invitation to put our faith in him, recognizing he has been working since the fall of Adam and Eve to redeem our hearts, leading us away from our iniquities and our sins onto a path of righteousness and closeness with God.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. Share a time when you experienced the transformative power of the gospel?

Q2. What are some obstacles in day to day life that prevent us from putting our faith in Christ?

Q3. What are some ways we can model Christ's faithfulness in our lives?

Q4. How have you experienced the refreshment Christ offers?

"Digging Deeper" (optional or alternative study)

1. The one-another statement of the Church:

<https://www.mmlearn.org/hubfs/docs/OneAnotherPassages.pdf>

2. An alternate resource on Acts 2:

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Act/Act_2.cfm

Love your neighbors (inside + outside the group) better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationships with their neighbors inside or outside the group?

2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbors inside or outside the group?

Disciples who make disciples:

1. Who would like to share how they recently sought to make disciples?

2. Here is a disciple making idea to consider for the weeks ahead:

Invite one person who may be in need of community to your NG next week.

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible. A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.

2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.

3. The "Disciples Who Dig Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.

As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Disciples Who Dig Deeper" section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.

4. Every time you meet consider asking:

a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing? If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.