

In Acts chapter 3 we move from the birth of the church to its daily life and ministry. Jesus has ascended, the Holy Spirit has been poured out, and now we watch how the risen Lord continues His work through ordinary people who trust Him.

3:1 – Peter and John at the hour of prayer

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. (Acts 3:1)

The Jewish day began around six in the morning, so the ninth hour was about three in the afternoon. By that time the evening sacrifice had been offered, and as the smoke of the sacrifice rose, the people gathered for prayer.

Peter and John did not go to offer animal sacrifices—they knew that Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross fulfilled what those sacrifices pointed to. But they still went at the hour of prayer. In the early days, followers of Jesus in Jerusalem did not see themselves as leaving Judaism to join a different religion. They saw themselves as Jews who had found the promised Messiah and now worshiped God with a deeper understanding. The feasts, the temple, and the Scriptures all took on new meaning in the light of Jesus.

Peter and John themselves were very different men. Peter was active and impulsive—a doer. John was more reflective—a thinker and a dreamer. Yet in Christ, two very different personalities walked together in unity and love. That is what Jesus still does: He brings very different people together around Himself.

Application for believers:

God is not looking for one “type” of personality. He can use the active and the quiet, the practical and the contemplative. The key is not your temperament; it is your availability. Like Peter and John, are you showing up at the “hour of prayer” in your life, bringing your real self before God?

3:2–5 – A lame man at the Beautiful Gate

And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful... (Acts 3:2–3)

At the gate called Beautiful—a richly decorated entrance to the temple courts—lay a man whose life was anything but beautiful. He had been lame from birth and depended on others to carry him and set him down to beg. Day after day he watched worshipers go by, while he stayed outside, broken and dependent.

Seeing Peter and John about to enter, he did what he always did: he asked for money. Peter fixed his eyes on him and said, “Look at us.” The man looked up expecting a coin, maybe a few. He was hoping for a handout; God was about to give him a completely new life.

Application for believers:

We walk past “Beautiful Gates” every day—places where human brokenness and God’s presence intersect. Do we move through life on spiritual autopilot, or do we let the Holy Spirit interrupt us to really see the people around us?

3:6–8 – “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk”

*Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you:
In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6)*

Peter did not have money, but he did have something far greater: a living relationship with the risen Lord Jesus and faith in His name. Taking the man by the right hand, Peter lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones were strengthened. Luke the physician uses precise medical language here to describe bones and joints suddenly brought into proper alignment.

The man did not just stand; he walked, then leaped, then followed Peter and John into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. The one who had always been stuck outside the gate was now inside the temple, worshiping the God who had healed him through Jesus.

Application for believers:

We often feel the pressure to give what we do not have—more money, more resources, more cleverness. But the most important thing you can ever give is what you do have in Christ: the gospel, prayer, love, and Spirit-led obedience. Ask the Lord, “What have You put in my hands today? Help me give that.”

Invitation for non-believers:

The lame man is a picture of all of us without Christ—stuck, unable to walk the way God designed us to live. Jesus did not just come to improve our lives; He came to give us a new life. He shed His blood on the cross to take away our sins, and God raised Him from the dead to show that He is truly God, Savior, and Lord. He can lift you up from the inside out if you will trust Him.

3:9–12 – The crowd’s amazement and Peter’s correction

Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people...ran together to them...greatly amazed. (Acts 3:11)

Everyone recognized the man who used to sit begging at the gate. Now he was walking and praising God, clinging to Peter and John. Naturally, the crowd assumed Peter and John were the source of the miracle.

Peter refused to let that misunderstanding stand:

*“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?”
(Acts 3:12)*

Peter knew the danger of people exalting the instrument instead of the God who uses the instrument. He would not let the spotlight stay on himself.

Application for believers:

When God uses you, people may be tempted to make much of you. That is a crucial moment. Do you quietly soak in the praise, or do you clearly point people to Jesus? It is a serious mistake for anyone, especially spiritual leaders, to suggest that their “special holiness” or “special power” is what brings results. God alone gets the glory.

3:13–15 – You rejected the Author of life, God raised Him up

Peter begins exactly where his Jewish audience lives:

“The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.” (Acts 3:13)

They knew the story. Pilate had wanted to release Jesus, but the crowd had insisted on the release of Barabbas, a murderer, instead.

“But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.” (Acts 3:14–15)

“Prince of life” carries the idea of “originator” or “author.” They had killed the very One who is the source of life, but God overturned their verdict by raising Him from the dead. The cross was not a tragic accident; it was God’s plan to show the depth of His love. Jesus willingly shed His blood to pay for our sins, and the resurrection declares that He truly is God, Savior, and Lord.

Challenge for believers:

Peter does not soften the truth, but he speaks it with a view to repentance, not condemnation. Are we willing to tell people the truth about sin and the cross, not to crush them, but to call them to the Savior who was crucified and raised for them?

3:16 – Faith in the name of Jesus

“And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know.” (Acts 3:16)

The power was not in Peter, and it was not in a formula. It was in the living Jesus, and in the faith that Jesus Himself stirred in Peter’s heart. Even the faith was a gift of God’s grace, not something Peter worked up by effort or technique.

Sometimes God gives a special confidence in a specific moment—a settled assurance that He intends to act. At other times we walk by faith without that special sense. In both cases, the object of faith remains the same: Jesus Himself, who died for our sins and rose again.

Application for believers:

Do not obsess over the “amount” of your faith. Focus on the Person you are trusting. When the Lord prompts you to act or pray boldly, obey Him. When you feel weak, bring your weakness honestly to Him. The power is in Jesus, not in you.

3:17–18 – Ignorance and fulfilled prophecy

“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.” (Acts 3:17)

Peter is not excusing their actions; he is explaining them. They did not realize who Jesus truly was. Even so, their actions fulfilled what God had foretold:

“But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.” (Acts 3:18)

From passages like Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, God had already revealed that the Messiah would suffer and die. The cross was not God's Plan B; it was His plan of love from the beginning, so that sinners could be forgiven and reconciled to Him.

3:19–21 – The call to repent and the promise of refreshment

Here Peter moves from explanation to invitation:

“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.” (Acts 3:19)

To repent is to change your mind and turn around—to agree with God about your sin and about who Jesus is, and to turn from self-rule to His rule. To be converted is to be turned to God and transformed by Him. When that happens, God blots out your sins; He does not merely cover them. Because Jesus shed His blood for you on the cross, God can wipe your record clean.

Then come “times of refreshing” from the presence of the Lord—seasons of restored joy, spiritual renewal, and deep peace that flow from fellowship with Him.

“And that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 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.” (Acts 3:20–21)

Jesus is now in heaven, but not forever. There is coming a “restoration of all things”—the final fulfillment of all that God has promised in the prophets: the renewal of creation, the healing of what sin has broken, and the full manifestation of God's kingdom in righteousness. In the end, everything will be brought under the loving rule of Christ—every promise kept, every wrong finally and justly dealt with, every tear wiped away for those who belong to Him.

Application for believers:

Repentance is not only how we begin the Christian life; it is a continuing posture of heart. When the Spirit convicts you, do not resist Him. Turn quickly, and you will find that God's presence is still a place of refreshment, not rejection.

Invitation for non-believers:

If you carry guilt, shame, or a sense of being far from God, this is God's word to you: “Repent...that your sins may be blotted out.” Jesus died on the cross to pay for those very sins. He rose again so you could have a living hope and a real relationship with Him. He invites you to turn to Him today and receive forgiveness and new life.

You might say to Him right where you are:

“Lord Jesus, I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I turn from my sin and my own way, and I ask You to forgive me, cleanse me, and lead me. I surrender my life to You as my Savior and my Lord.”

3:22–26 – Jesus, the promised Prophet, and God’s blessing

Peter now anchors his appeal in Scripture again:

“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. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’” (Acts 3:22–23)

Moses had pointed forward to a coming Prophet like himself—mediator, lawgiver, leader—but greater. Peter declares that this Prophet is Jesus. To listen to Jesus is to respond in faith and obedience. To refuse Him is to reject the only One who can save, and to place yourself outside the people of God.

Peter continues:

“Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ 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.” (Acts 3:24–26)

From Abraham onward, God had promised a blessing that would reach all nations through his “seed”—ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. God raised Jesus from the dead and sent Him first to the Jewish people, not to crush them, but to bless them by turning them away from their sins.

That blessing did not stop with them. Through the preaching of the gospel, it has gone out to all the families of the earth. Jesus shed His blood on the cross so that anyone—Jew or Gentile—who believes in Him can be forgiven. His resurrection proves that He is truly God, Savior, and Lord, and that His promise of eternal life is trustworthy.

Final challenge and invitation

For believers:

Acts chapter 3 asks us some probing questions:

- Are we people of prayer, like Peter and John, who make space in our days to seek God together?
- Are we willing to be interrupted by human need at our own “Beautiful Gates”?
- Do we point people clearly to Jesus when God works, or do we quietly accept the credit?
- Are we living lives of ongoing repentance, letting God turn us from our sins and refresh us by His presence?

Ask the Lord today to renew your availability to Him:

“Lord, make me a person of prayer, a person of compassion, and a person who points others to Jesus. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that my life bears witness to Your love.”

For non-believers or unsure hearts:

You may feel like that lame man—stuck, ashamed, or spiritually outside, watching others draw near to God. The good news is that Jesus has already done everything necessary to bring you in. He shed His blood on the cross for your sins. God raised Him from the dead to show that He truly is God, Savior, and Lord. He calls you, not to clean yourself up first, but to turn to Him in faith.

If you sense Him speaking to your heart, do not ignore it. Turn to Him now. Call upon His name and ask Him to forgive you, to save you, and to give you a new life. As Peter said, *“Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*