

**Sunday morning June 8<sup>th</sup> 2014 at CBC  
Sermon outline: An 'arresting' sermon  
Acts 3:11-26**

In the final section of chapter 2 we are told that it was given to the apostles (not all) to do miraculous signs. Now, here in chapter 3, on this particular afternoon, we see an example, and we also see the reason for it.

**[1] AN UNUSUAL DISPLAY OF GOD'S POWER**

The account of the miracle must be taken at face value. If we don't want to believe in the accounts of the miracles in the Bible we shall end up with something that certainly cannot be called the Christian message.

**[2] AN 'OBVIOUS' MESSAGE THAT WAS NOT GIVEN**

'When Peter saw this, he said to them...'

Imagine we don't know what comes next. We have to guess...

Many Christians today would assume that having done a miracle in the name of Jesus, Peter would call upon anyone in the crowd in need of healing to come forward. Yet that is exactly NOT what happens!

**[3] A SERIOUS MESSAGE THAT WAS GIVEN**

So, what did Peter say? How did he follow up on the miracle? We can see four elements, broadly speaking, in what he says.

[a] The present position and activity of Jesus

[b] The serious implications which the hearers must consider

[c] The essential response which they needed to make

[d] The ongoing benefits which respondents will receive

It is clear that there were more important things to say.

### **[a] The present position and activity of Jesus**

Peter repeats, in a different format, what he had said on the day of Pentecost. God had glorified Jesus – ie raised him from the dead to the position of authority at his right hand. On this occasion, the sign of this glorification was the healing of the man – see verse 13.

### **[b] The serious implications which the hearers must consider**

*You handed him over to be killed*

*You disowned him before Pilate*

*You disowned the holy and righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.*

*And – (irony of ironies) – you killed the author of life.*

Peter could not have been more direct.

What God had done in raising Jesus from the dead was great. What Jesus's contemporaries had done in putting him to death was appalling. It is summed up in the statement: *you killed the author of life.*

It is this attitude to Jesus which has revealed the hearts of the people in Jerusalem at the time: *See Acts 3:19 and Acts 3:26*

It is of course true that the charge which Peter brought against his contemporaries in Jerusalem was historically unique. It was not a charge that could be levelled in the same format, say, at

an audience in Athens or Rome. It is not a charge that can be levelled at anyone today, in the strictest sense.

But what is true is that when we consider the person and teaching of Jesus as revealed in the gospel accounts, we are bound to see, sooner or later, our own sins and failings illuminated by the light of his holiness and goodness.

**[c] The essential response which they needed to make**

That was the issue facing Peter's audience. If they took seriously what he was saying about Jesus, what could they do?

**[i] They could gratefully accept that God knew the extent of their guilt**

Peter points out something that Jesus himself had mentioned in prayer for his tormentors while he was on the cross. They were guilty, but they did not understand the full extent of their sins.

**[ii] They could repent and turn to God**

Notice that, in Christian terms, repentance always involves turning to God.

**[d] The ongoing benefits which respondents will receive**

Peter mentions three distinct benefits:

**[i] your sins may be wiped out**

William Barclay (quoted by John Stott): 'Ancient writing was upon papyrus, and the ink used had no acid in it. It therefore

did not bite into the papyrus as modern ink does; it simply lay upon the top of it. To erase the writing, a man might take a wet sponge and simply wipe it away.'

The promise to everyone who turns to God in repentance and faith in Jesus Christ was and is that your sins will be erased from God's record, wiped away.

### **[ii] times of refreshing may come from the Lord**

God does not forgive you and send you away. All those who find forgiveness in Christ inevitably find spiritual refreshment, after all they have entered into liberty.

### **[iii] the appointed Christ will be sent**

Peter goes on to explain that Christ currently remains in heaven until God's appointed time for the restoration of all things. Notice how he insists that this message that now centres on Christ is anticipated in the Old Testament scriptures which predict him and point to him. See 3.13, 3.18, 3.21, 3.22, 3.24-25

## **CONCLUSION**

Two responses to this sermon are recorded:

*Many who heard the message believed* – the numbers were growing (4.4).

But we also find that the religious authorities *'were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.'* (4.2)

So we must naturally ask ourselves this morning, on which side do we stand?