

Lesson Text

Acts 3:11-21 (NIV)

¹¹ While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

¹⁷ "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

Today's Lesson Aims

- **Learning Fact:** To learn how saving faith relates to committed trust in the risen Jesus.
- **Biblical Principle:** To recall key points from Peter's speech in the temple.
- **Daily Application:** To demonstrate saving faith by affirming God's blessing of spiritual wholeness.

Introduction

Five-Tool Players

When looking for a future superstar, most baseball scouts seek players that excel in five facets of the game. Those five are hitting for average, hitting for power, base running, throwing, and fielding.

Power Hour Lesson
Summary for
December 3, 2017

"Faith in Jesus"

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Such “five-tool players” are rare, however. In the history of the game, only a handful merit that designation. Willie Mays was one. A lifetime .302 hitter, he had 660 career home runs and collected 3,283 hits along the way. Mays was also a great base runner, stealing 338 bases. “Hammerin’ Hank” Aaron slugged 755 home runs, drove in 2,297 runs, and stole 240 bases while posting a career .305 batting average during his career. Ken Griffey Jr. was named to his league’s all-star team 13 times and won seven Silver Sluggers awards. Other players fall into the five-tool category, but the list is short.

As scouts look for five-tool players, employers look to hire someone who is the “complete package,” and we admire a person who seems to “have it all together.” But the Bible tells us that there is only one way to be perfectly whole.

Lesson Background

Time: A.D. 50

Place: Jerusalem

The book of Acts narrates the history of Jesus’ followers in the first generation following His death and resurrection. Written as a companion volume to the Gospel of Luke, Acts portrays the church as the continuation of God’s work, in Jesus, to reclaim a people for himself from all nations (Acts 1:1, 8). God accomplishes this purpose as Christians testify to what they have seen and heard: that in fulfillment of God’s promises, Jesus willingly surrendered to death and was raised to life again by God. The resurrected and ascended Jesus remained active through the words and deeds of His followers as the Holy Spirit empowered them.

The conflict between the Jewish council (also known as the Sanhedrin) and Jesus continued as persecution of Jesus’ followers. The council consisted of the high priest and 70 leaders appointed by him. Under the watchful eye of the Roman overlords, the council supervised operations of the temple of Jerusalem and served as something of a combination legislature and judiciary. Members of the council had seen in Jesus a rival to council authority and vested interests (John 11:48). Thus council members had fomented the movement to put Him to death, although the decision was not unanimous (Luke 20:19; 22:66-23:1, 50, 51). The people feared the council (John 7:13; etc.), but the council also feared the people (Mark 11:18, 32; Luke 20:19; 22:2; etc.).

The center of the council’s power was the temple. The temple was not merely a building; it was a 35-acre complex that included courtyards and semi-enclosed areas where people could gather. Jesus had taught in these environs (John 7:14, 28; etc.), and there His followers continued to teach and pray after His ascension (Acts 2:44-3:1).

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Immediately before today's text begins, the apostles Peter and John had come to the temple. As they did, they crossed paths with a man who was disabled and begging. Rather than give him money, Peter declared "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). The man's instantaneous healing was reminiscent of Jesus' own healing miracles (compare Luke 5:17-26; 6:6-11). The man then entered the temple courts on restored legs and praised God, by whose power he had been made whole (Acts 3:8). Today's text picks up as people reacted.

What Do You Think?

- How can we ensure that people can see that it is God's power that undergirds our accomplishments?
- What steps can we take to stay mindful of the ways God has shown His power in our lives?
- What should others see in us as evidence of genuine repentance?

Points to Ponder

- Jesus is the fulfillment of all the prophecies about the Messiah. Faith in His person and work on the cross affords us eternal life with God.
- Christ will return and will reign on earth. This should be a source of comfort and joy for us.

Conclusion

- The challenge of trust confronts every generation. Will we continue to put our trust in ourselves, with our miserable record of failure and our evident brokenness? Or will we find genuine wholeness as we faithfully commit to the risen King Jesus?

Prayer

- Heavenly Father, we submit to Your Son Jesus as King, our Sovereign Lord. We trust in His merciful forgiveness. Strengthen us to live out Your gracious gift of wholeness in lives that reflect Your renewal of creation, already begun. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Thought to Remember

- Only Jesus fills the God-shaped hole to make us whole.

Anticipating the Next Lesson

- Next week's lesson "**Faith to Discern**" will explore how to identify the work of the Holy Spirit as empowering Christ's followers to accomplish His mission in a way that reflects Christ's saving work. Study Acts 13:1-12.

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