

TAKEAWAY:

The risen Christ shows mercy to sinners and calls them to repentance.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- When people come to you with problems, what kind of help do they usually want? What kind of help do they actually need?
- Give an example of a time when you realized your biggest need was spiritual, not just physical or emotional.
- Why should Christians take care of people in need?

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a few group members read Acts 3:1-26

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- The lame man asked for money but received something far greater. What does this teach us about human need?
- How do we sometimes settle for temporary solutions instead of pointing people to Christ?
- Peter immediately redirected attention from himself to Jesus. Why is this so important?
- Peter's sermon called people to repent and turn to God. What is repentance and why is it essential to the gospel message?

APPLICATION:

- Is there anyone in your life whom you are trying to lead to salvation in Christ? If so, how does this text inspire and instruct you?
- In what areas of your life are you tempted to take credit for what God has done?
- Is there an area of your life where God is calling you to repent right now?

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

The “Author of Life”: Among other things, Acts 3 challenges the contemporary church to look beyond silver and gold interventions, as the primary fix of a person, and to emphasize of foundational importance the transformative authority of the “Author of Life” (Acts 3:15) to change a human being

from the inside out. Relatedly, Jesus is declared elsewhere to be "the bread of life (John 6:48), "the way the truth and the life" (John 14:6), "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), "Christ who is our life" (Col 3:4), "the last Adam, a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45).

- Consider reading and discussing the above names/descriptions of Jesus Christ our Lord: What do they mean? How should our view of Jesus as described in these passages affect how we live?
- The early church father Athanasius argued that sin is also an inherent sickness of the soul and not merely a legal infraction of a moral code. How does viewing sin both in terms of one's act of sin and in terms of one's sinful state of being, identity, first causes, etc. affect our approach to repentance and our daily need for Christ? Our need to be filled with the Spirit of God rather than our fleshly appetites (Eph 5:18)?
- Since Jesus is not merely a guide to a better life, but the actual "author/pioneer" and source of existence for our new creation self, how does that alter our prayers for ourselves and others? How does it inform our view of what begins to happen at the moment of regeneration? Answer this latter question in terms of the new covenant promises in Christ (see e.g., Hebrews 8).
- Peter's audience murdered the "Author of Life." On the one hand, Peter doesn't soften the blow of the crowd's guilt; on the other, he immediately offers them complete forgiveness and the blotting out of their sins for the repentant. What does this reveal about the depths of God's grace? The need for repentance? How can this event help someone who believes their past sins are unforgivable? When we share the gospel with others today, how can we effectively balance Peter's method of addressing human sin alongside the beautiful invitation of God's mercy?
- LORD, as we seek to transform daily more and more to the image of your Son (Rom 8:29), help us to daily reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to you. Today, may the same power that resurrected Jesus, the "Author of Life," from the dead operate in our hearts (Rom 8:11), enabling our new creation self to rise and walk in "newness of life" (Rom 6:4). Help us to turn from what is sinful and ungodly (in heart and deed); may we experience your blessings and times of refreshing found only in your presence and through what you did for us in Christ.

Eschatological Hope and Present Endurance: Read Acts 3:19-20. Peter promises that repentance brings times of refreshing and anticipates the ultimate restoration of all things. Given that we currently exist in a paradigm of tension between the inaugurated and consummated kingdom, in a real world of brokenness and pain and the coming kingdom of our Lord, read Isaiah 25:6-8 and Revelation 21:1-6 and consider the following questions:

- How does the absolute certainty of cosmic, physical restoration shift the way we process chronic illness, grief, or systemic injustice in the present day? How does the Gospel transform how we view our present sufferings?
- The term for refreshing, *anapsyxis*, implies a breathing space or relief, while *apokatastasis* refers to universal restoration.
- Read Acts 3:1-10. How does this account shed light on Peter's words, particularly the promise of hope found in the coming kingdom?
- In a sermon on Acts 3:1-10 Tim Keller states, "'Our passage today is on the first miracle the apostles perform after the resurrection of Jesus... But this passage is actually a lot about suffering. This miracle, in many ways, is typical of so many of the other miracles... it points 1) upward, 2) forward, 3) inward, and 4) downward.'" What do you think Keller is referring to in points 1-4?

Quotes:

- "You must not rob Christ of his characteristic, that in his kingdom abounding grace and mercy alone prevail, so that he helps those who realize their misery and wretchedness, and desire to be helped..." Martin Luther
- "When God does mighty things through his servants, the natural man is strongly tempted to glorify the servant rather than the Lord. So it was here... but Peter quickly moved to correct their error." F. F. Bruce
- "Our old self was crucified. That's past tense. Therefore, you are not the same person now. Your body is now under the reign of your new spiritual master. Because of this new identity, you can break the reign of your old spiritual masters." Tim Keller
- "Our old man has died. We have risen spiritually to walk in newness of life, and one day we 'will be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection' [Rom 6:5]. The old has passed away. The new has come. And our vocation in all of life - not just a part of it - is to walk in newness of life. To reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. To become in experience what we are in Christ." John Piper

PRAYER:

Have a person open in prayer, leaving time in-between for others to pray. Guide them through personal requests and the overall prayer that the Lord give us opportunities to share our faith with others along with providing opportunities to serve those in need. Have a designated person close in prayer.