

10—Acts 3.11-26—The Blessing of Forgiveness

I. Introduction

a. What will the world do with their guilt?

- i. Some play the victim card and by saying that I do not intend to diminish those who are victims of grievous cruelties. However, many will make use of this in our culture as a way to justify their sin.
 1. Indeed, some news media will find the person who has suffered the most because of the injustices of this world as a way to say that everyone is guilty of whatever caused this person's pain. Everyone is guilty—past, present and future people. And yes, there are injustices in the world. Many have suffered greatly. No matter how many are involved in these wicked things, the question is—what do we do with our guilt?
- ii. Some in our culture will continually add more and more guilt by way of difficult things to determine. Whether that be environmental issues or foreign policies—they have upped the ante on what we should do.
 1. It's a sort of self-righteousness. They want everyone "to beat their Styrofoam in plowshares" (Deyoung). Drive an electric car. Or any number of things they promote and do. I'm not saying go litter the roadsides with your Chickfila cups or driving an electric is wrong.
 2. The problem is that people find themselves feeling even more guilty for not living up to the world's standards. Right or wrong—the question is, what will you do with your guilt?
- iii. I could go on about how the culture does this but you get the picture. What I want to remind you or call you to the answer for guilt. We Christians have an answer. We take our sin and our guilt to Jesus. Every morning I see my failures and sins but his mercies are new every morning. I say, "My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought—My sin, not in part, but the whole, Is nailed to His Cross, and I bear it no more; Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"
- iv. That's the only way guilty sinners can deal with guilt. And that's what these guilty sinners need in our text today. And that's what we need!

II. Main Point

- a. The leaping lame man draws the attention of many. The main point of this section is in two parts: Peter explains that this man was made well by faith in the name of Jesus and everyone—all guilty sinners, who calls upon the name of Jesus will be saved.

III. Outline

- a. Peter Explains how this lame man was healed by faith in the name of Jesus
- b. Peter Explains how the rest of the lame can be healed of their sins by faith in the name of Jesus

IV. Exposition

- a. The first paragraph (11-16) explains how this lame man was made well.
 - i. As the scene begins, we know that Peter and John had healed this man who had been lame from birth and he was at this time over 40 years old. For years, he had been carried to the gate of the temple to receive alms. This scene begins with this man clinging to Peter and John.
 - ii. As you might understand, this drew a great deal of attention. This scene is very much like the man Jesus spoke of in John 9. (Jn. 9:1-3) As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.
 1. As the scene unfolds, Jesus heals the man then he returns looking for Jesus because he can now see. The Pharisees are angry because Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath.

2. The man finds Jesus. He believes in him and worships. But the Pharisees do not.
 3. Interestingly, Jesus says this to them. (Jn. 10:1-3) "Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn't enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
 4. In other words, this man born blind from birth and this man born lame from birth were Jesus' sheep. He called their names and opened the gate that they might come in.
 5. Why? To save them, of course. Jesus wept over the brokenness of this world. He has come to save the world and make it the way it should be...and someday it will be.
- iii. In this scene, however, God's glory is potentially being robbed because these people think that Peter and John did it.
1. Peter and John have a choice to make. Do they let them think this or do they tell them the truth about how this happened?
 - a. What would you have done? You need to make sure you know the potential dangers here. The expansion of the gospel is at stake.
 - b. I believe this is a theme woven throughout the book of Acts. The devil is constantly looking for ways to stop Jesus and his disciples. If he can make them crave fame then he can stop this. And it happens all the time in our day.
 2. Not only did Jesus heal this lame man but he also protected his disciples from being caught in the trap of celebrity culture. There are a lot of celebrity pastors out there these days. They are good at somehow using Jesus' name to fill their bank accounts and buy airplanes so that they do not have to ride on a "tube of demons" called commercial airlines.
- iv. This crowd is utterly astounded. They RUN up to them. When they get to them, they stare. You can imagine the oohing and awing going on.
1. Peter recognizes what they are doing and questions them.
 2. (Acts 3:12) "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?"
 - a. How does Peter know this? One clear way is that no one is praising God. Where there is no praising and thanking God for such things something is misunderstood.
 - i. Jesus taught in (Matt. 5:16) let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory (not to you but) to your Father who is in heaven.
 - b. The crowd thinks that either it was by their own power or that God did it through them because of their godliness. Neither are true.
 - c. Let me cut to chase for Peter and John. They have much to say before giving them the reason. Look down at verse 16. By who's power?
 - a. ^{CSB17} **Acts 3:16** By faith in his name, his name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that comes through Jesus has given him this perfect health in front of all of you.
- v. We will return to this but let's hear what Peter and John have to say.
1. He first makes sure to tie this event to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In other words, this is not some new religion but it is exactly what their fathers had longed for.
 2. (Acts 3:13-15) ¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the

presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

- a. Hear the indictments: You delivered him over. You denied him (stated twice). You asked for a murderer instead of the Holy and Righteous One. You murdered the Author of life! There's more, but let's stop there.
 - b. The boldness of Peter is incredible. Or should I say the boldness of the Holy Spirit?
 - c. Is he not afraid for his life? He's in Jerusalem, the place where they killed Jesus. Obviously, not.
 - d. It's strange. You never hear them deny the charges.
 - e. It's also strange that they do not bring the resurrection into question. Their silence on these things is very strange if it wasn't true.
 - f. They are guilty. They killed the Messiah. Can you believe forgiveness would even be offered to them? If you are surprised, you don't know just how amazing Jesus is.
 - i. (Rom. 5:8) ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- vi. Their indictments are clear and they do not deny them. But how does Peter explain all of this? They were certainly looking for the messiah but a messiah that would suffer? How does this kind of messiah save them? They want a warrior-messiah to squash all their enemies and protect them. They don't seem to know they are God's enemy too because they are sinners. They need their sins forgiven.
1. Well to answer the question about the messiah who suffers, Peter clearly connects this to the suffering servant of Isaiah 52-53 when he says that God glorified his servant Jesus. This word servant is the same one used in Isaiah.
 - a. Let's take a look at this. (Isa. 52:13) ¹³ Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.
 - b. We understand this to be Jesus. The one who came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.
 - i. But he is God's Son. He shouldn't be serving. He deserves to be served. And he not only serves but suffers. There's a definite connection between serving and suffering. There's also a definite connection of serving and blessing. It is strange that it is better to give than to receive.
 - ii. But why must he suffer? (Isa. 53:5) ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.
 - iii. That was the ONLY WAY. He had to be the suffering servant to save us. Otherwise, we would have to pay for our own sin. But we cannot afford them.
 - c. The gospel is clearly seen again in what Peter accuses them of doing. They denied the Holy and Righteous One for a guilty murderer. The great exchange! That me!
 - d. They killed the Author of Life. That seems impossible. That's why Christianity is so convincing to me. No one but God would have thought of such a salvation. No one but God would love like this.

- e. But how can the suffering servant who is dead help us? Well, he's not dead. (Acts 3:15) you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.
 - f. Again, no one is yelling out that this was not true. They are silent. They do not deny these eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus.
 - vii. Now what? Peter wants them to know for certain that this lame man was made strong by faith in this Jesus whom they had killed and God raised from the dead.
 - 1. In other words, the risen, Lord Jesus is the reigning, Messiah. By faith in his Name this man has been given perfect health right before their eyes.
 - 2. What stinging words from Peter. This is how you preach the gospel. You don't tell people everything is okay. You don't sugarcoat their wickedness. They are guilty. You know they are guilty because you are guilty. But you know forgiveness. And you can't explain why Jesus would love you. It's just grace! Amazing grace!
 - 3. But how on earth do you get it?
- b. That's the second point of Peter's message. Everyone...indeed, anyone who calls upon the Name of the Lord will be saved. Any nation. Any sin. Come to Jesus.
 - i. But how do we come? First, Peter addresses their ignorance. Another indictment. You might be wondering if the ignorant are responsible and guilty for their sin of not recognizing the Messiah.
 - ii. The answer is, yes. God had taught them over and over what to be looking for. The evidence is overwhelming.
 - iii. The suffering of the Messiah was foretold by the prophets, namely Isaiah 53. This was fulfilled, Peter claims, at their hands. In other words, you were ignorant but you are guilty.
 - iv. Here is our plight! (Isa. 53:6) ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-- every one-- to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
 - v. We have turned the wrong way and followed our own path but it also says that the LORD has laid on him, Jesus, the iniquity of us all, what do we do?
 - 1. The answer is in verse 19. (Acts 3:19) ¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out
 - 2. Blotted out! Wiped away! Gone! Just like that! You think, "that's too easy." But it is just that simple. It wasn't simple for Jesus but it is simple for us. Turn to Jesus and he will make you whiter than snow.
 - vi. Indeed, listen to his promises if you turn to him.
 - 1. That your sins may be blotted out
 - 2. That times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord (one day every lame will leap like the deer)
 - 3. That he may send the Christ to come get you and restore all things
 - a. Right now, heaven must receive him until the appointed time.
 - b. But the day is coming when he will make everything right.
 - c. The day is coming though when everyone will have to give an account for how they responded to Jesus.
 - vii. Take note of what Moses promised concerning Jesus.
 - 1. (Acts 3:22-23) ²² Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. [He's telling you to repent] ²³ And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.'

2. This is love. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. His Son was like Moses but far better. He was a Jew but far greater. He came to his own but they did not receive him. They should have recognized him.
3. But, even though they did not recognize him they are responsible and guilty. Guilty of denying him. Killing him. And yet, here's Jesus offering to blot out their sin if they will only listen to him.
4. They are the sons of the prophets. They were given the covenant made with Abraham. That through his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
 - a. Who is that child? Yes...Jesus! He is the Son of Abraham. It is through him that any tribe, tongue, people, or nation can come to God and be blessed.
 - b. He is the Beautiful Gate that all the lame may be brought in.
 - c. But what is the blessing? Why was this suffering servant, namely Jesus, raised up and sent to them?
 - d. Here it is...here's the purpose...to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.
5. All you must do is repent and turn to Jesus. Listen to him. Call on him and he will save you. And when you do, he becomes your King and you continue to listen to him. And why wouldn't you? He will never lead you astray.

V. Response

- a. For most of us, we have repented—turned—from our sins and we are following Jesus. He has paid for our sins. Our sins were credited to him and by faith his righteousness was credited to us. If you have never trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus.
- b. For some of us, we need a fresh look at our sin and failure and nail them to the cross.
- c. On May 31, 2009, on Lydia's birthday, we watch Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park erupt. It was amazing. I recently heard of story of someone who watched this for the first time from the Inn nearby. He noticed the staff kept on with their work never stopping to look at Old Faithful. It had become all too familiar and "normal" to them.
- d. Brothers and sisters, has the forgiveness of your sins become familiar and normal to you? May it hit you afresh today.