

The Power of the Resurrection

Acts 3:11-26

Tampa Covenant Church

12 April 2026

Proposition: Because God raised Jesus from the dead; his resurrection power confronts our sin, calls us to repentance, and offers the promised restoration we so desperately need in this world as we live for the world to come.

FCF: Being prone to overlook the power of the risen Christ at work in our lives and also in the world.

RHF: Jesus fulfilled the role of the Suffering Servant, becoming the means by which God accomplished his covenant promises to Israel; and as the Author of life, he now grants resurrection life to all who repent and turn to him in faith.

(#1) Introduction:

Last week, we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord. And today our celebration continues into this season called Eastertide. So, this season, we'll turn our attention to the book of Acts. Jesus is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he's enthroned as the King of Glory, and his disciples are now bearing witness to the good news of the gospel. In fact, when the apostles sought to replace Judas, they made it clear what mattered most: the one chosen had to be *"a witness to the resurrection of Christ."* This tells us how vitally important the resurrection is to the gospel story; because without the resurrection, there's no victory, no power and no hope of cosmic renewal.

So, over the next five weeks, we'll look at two sermons from Peter and three from Paul. We'll note the audience and how the resurrection offers real hope to those who are far from God and how it shapes our witness in the world. In today's passage, Peter seizes a God-ordained moment to proclaim the gospel to a Jewish audience; those who were far away as anyone could be. But we'll see how the power of the resurrection doesn't just amaze; it offers them and us wholeness, forgiveness and the promise of full restoration; no matter our past failures or regrets.

The Miracle (vv.1-10):

We open our text; it's 3pm, Peter and John are going up to the temple for prayer. There they encounter a man who was lame from birth, begging from everyone. He sees Peter and John and he begs. And Peter does what we're not accustomed to in these situations. He locks eyes with the man and says, *"Look at us."* This guy's thinking he's about to get hooked up (#2) but Peter replies, *"I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you..."* here we go.. *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"* Then Peter takes him by the hand and immediately, his feet and ankles are made strong. And just like that, he's up; walking and leaping and praising God. Then he accompanies Peter and John into the temple where the people recognize him as the one who used to beg at the gate. And Luke tells us they were filled with awe and wonder at what had happened to him. Brothers and sisters... the stage is now set.

The Power of the Resurrection: Brings wholeness (vv.11-16)

(#3) In v.11, the man is now clinging to Peter and John with a heart full of gratitude for the miracle wrought in his life. The people come running to meet them in what was called Solomon's porch.¹ And when Peter sees what's taking place, he instantly connects the dots. **(#4) He addresses** the stunned crowd as "Men of Israel" (fellow Jews) and then asks, "Why do you wonder at this? Why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made this guy walk?" Peter does something we often struggle to do when the spotlight hits. He doesn't give in to the temptation to promote self nor does he lean into that desire for recognition. There's no humble brag here! He simply shines the spotlight in the proper direction. See, our problem isn't just that we crave credit when things go well; but we oftentimes miss the hand of God in it all. One of my Bible reading partners said it well last week, **(#5) in reflecting on** Elijah's victory over the prophets of Baal: "It's easy to get excited when something goes our way, but it's all God. I pray in those moments, "I can give Him the glory, which is another way others can see our faith and see Jesus." That's what Peter's doing here. He sees the power of God at work and he wants them to see Jesus.

(#6) Knowing he's speaking to fellow Jews, he begins with the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their Fathers. And then let's them know this is the very God who has glorified his servant² Jesus. That servant language would've sounded very familiar as Peter reached back to the prophet Isaiah in showing Jesus as the servant spoken of long ago, chosen by God, anointed by his Spirit, as a light to the nations and yet was rejected by his own people.³ Peter is clear, God has now glorified him. And from there he goes straight to the heart; this is the one you handed over, the one you denied⁴ in the presence of Pilate, who wanted to **(#7) release Him.** You denied the Holy and Righteous One... you chose a murderer instead... and you killed the Author of life. What a horrible exchange; we'll give you the source of life and we'll take a destroyer of life.

(#8 Blank) Have you ever been called out? Not for something you did but maybe something you may have indirectly contributed to? When our children were small, we would come back to Tampa every year and I always bought front row seats to the circus. This particular year, as we were walking in, there was a woman standing outside with a bullhorn and a placard. And at some point, she locked eyes with me and called me out for contributing to the abuse of animals; namely elephants. Just for buying a ticket and attending the show. The thought stayed me with and I couldn't shake it; I was convicted. And that was the end of my children's circus days! It may not be the circus for you but recall the moments in life where something was exposed; something was said and you realized; *I may not have been directly involved but I'm not as disconnected as I thought.* Peter is saying to this audience you may not have hammered in the nails but you denied the Holy One of God; thus, you're way more culpable than you think.

But here's where the gospel breaks in! **(#9) The very** One they rejected... is the very One whom God raised from the dead; Jesus Christ the Lord. Peter says, "to this we are witnesses." And now he answers the question everyone is asking: how **(#10) was this lame beggar** made whole? Not by the power or piety of the Apostles but through faith in the powerful name of the risen Christ. Do you see what Peter is doing? He's showing them that the resurrection is the bridge between Christ's past suffering and death and his present power now on display in this man's life.⁵ Peter's not speaking as some perfect know it all. He denied Jesus not once, but three times. So he's speaking as one whose personally experienced this same resurrection power. And now he's seizing this moment to make it known. And in many ways, this is our story too. We were once part of this crowd going our own way, rejecting the very one who gives

life. But because of the Father's great love for us, something changed. Through Christ's resurrection from the dead, we were made whole. As we already sang together, *"I will not boast in anything, no gift, no power, no wisdom but I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection."* And that's the beauty of the gospel; it never leaves us wallowing in guilt; it always points us to the grace of God in Christ.

The Call of the Resurrection: *Guilt leading to grace (vv.17-26)*

(#11) He says, in v.17, *"And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In saying, 'I know that you acted in ignorance,' Peter's not excusing their sin. The word for ignorance⁶ has a legal sense attached to it, implying moral guilt before God. True, these Israelites didn't fully understand who Jesus was, but they still rejected him. So this isn't innocent ignorance; it's guilty ignorance. And yet, here's where the tension comes in because in the very next breath, Peter says **(#12) that what happened** to Jesus was exactly what *"God foretold through the prophets, that his Christ would suffer; he thus fulfilled."* So they're fully responsible for what they did, and at the same time, God was fully sovereign over all of it. Just like Joseph's words to his brothers: *"You mean't evil against me but God meant it for good; to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today."* **(#13 Blank) It tells us,** that nothing can thwart God's sovereign purposes; not even human sin. Peter is looking at the very people who ignorantly rejected Jesus and calls them brothers. As if to say, guys the grace of forgiveness still remains. This is what makes grace so amazing. It doesn't matter how blind or resistant a person has been to the truth of Christ; no one is beyond the reach of his grace. And so how does one receive this sovereign grace of God?*

(#14) Peter answers plainly, *"repent therefore, and turn back.* In other words, now that the truth has been proclaimed, ignorance is no longer an option.⁷ Because those who hear the gospel are called to respond by turning from sin and turning to Christ, trusting in his person and his finished work. But even this turning is not something we manufacture on our own. It's the fruit of God's grace already at work in us. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, God regenerates our hearts; opening our eyes to our guilt before him and enabling us, by faith, to turn from sin and embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.⁸ With that, Peter lays **(#15) out the benefits of said** repentance: Our sins are blotted out; wiped clean. If you take a dirty eraser to a chalkboard, you'll make a bigger mess. But a clean eraser leaves nothing behind. When the Lord blots out our sins; he doesn't leave residue. He cleanses us completely from all sin; past, present and future.

(#16) Next, comes what Peter calls *"times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."* This isn't some picture of a disembodied spirit, with a harp, floating on a cloud. It's a real tangible refreshing we experience now (body, soul and spirit) in God's presence and with each other. And it comes to us in such ordinary ways. A few weeks ago we gathered for prayer in the youth room and Aliesky led us; couldn't understand much but it was a time of refreshing in the presence of the Lord. Last week, we gathered in the chapel for prayer and hearing the voices echo in song; and the prayers going up to the Lord, refreshed the totality of our beings. Driving home; I looked at Aida and said; *"I felt that."* What did I feel? Real renewal, restoration and peace in the presence of God with brothers and sisters in Christ. But it doesn't stop here. Peter points this crowd beyond the present to what's being **(#17) kept in heaven for us,** *"that He may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all things spoken by the prophets long ago."* In other words, the restoration God has promised isn't a wish; it's already begun in the **(#18) resurrection of Jesus.** As N. T. Wright puts it, *"What God is going to do for the whole of creation, He has already done for Jesus in raising Him from the dead."*⁹ The resurrection isn't

just proof that Jesus is alive; it's a preview of the world made new. And when Jesus finally reappears, heaven and earth will come together as one. Restoration will be complete and everything broken will be made whole. This has always been the story.

In these final verses, Peter shows how everything he's been saying is rooted in the story of Scripture.

(#19) Beginning with Moses, "*who said that God would raise up a prophet like him and that whoever does not listen to him will be destroyed from the people.*" That's the warning. Because to reject Christ is to remain in a spiritual condition like that of the lame beggar; totally unable to make **(#20) oneself whole.** Then Peter moves to Samuel and all the prophets who pointed forward to the moment; Christ's suffering, his resurrection, and the salvation now being offered. And he concludes with this sobering **(#21) reality,** that these Israelites are sons of the prophets and heirs of the covenant promises God made with Abraham: That through his offspring all the families of the earth would be blessed. And through Christ, that promise has come to them first. Not to condemn them but to bless them by turning them from their wickedness; in bringing them to God. In other word, this blessing of salvation doesn't come through bloodline; it comes through Christ alone.

(#22 Blank) And as Peter and John are still speaking; the priests, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees show up pretty agitated, because they were proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. So they arrested them and brought them into custody. But it's really a little too late; the truth of gospel was proclaimed to those who needed to hear. Luke tells us many who heard the word believed and the number came to about five thousand.

Conclusion:

And that's the story. It begins with a lame beggar whose healing set the stage for gospel proclamation; showing that it was faith in the name of our risen Savior that made him whole. Last week we celebrated Easter: *He is risen; he is risen indeed!* And here's the question: "Is he risen indeed this Sunday?" "Is he risen indeed, tomorrow?" "Is he risen indeed, when life is chaotic or when tragedy strikes?" The answer must be yes because the resurrection isn't based on our feelings or circumstances but on gospel truth. See, it doesn't matter if we're optimists or pessimists; Christ is risen indeed and that changes everything. Because here's the danger; we can treat the resurrection as an event we celebrate annually then put our Savior back into the tomb then roll away the stone just in time for the incarnation. That's not how the early church lived. Peter saw the miracle and immediately directed their wonder and amazement to the grace of God in our risen Savior. So what about us?

At the beginning of the New Year, we all probably set some goals: read more Scripture, pray more, live healthier, etc... Some of us are still going strong; while some may have faded. Here's the good news though, resurrection life isn't about goal setting; it's about living out the new life that Christ has already secured for us through his glorious resurrection. So what should that look like in our lives? (1) Trusting in our risen Savior. (2) Refusing to replay the folly of sin, guilt and shame he's already blotted out from our record by his precious blood. (3) Stepping into the times of refreshing that flow from his ongoing presence in our lives. (4) Living with expectancy for the day he returns to make all things new. By God's grace, that's our call. And may we walk in the power of Christ's resurrection; assured of who we are in him now; until the day we stand in his presence, fully restored and made whole. Amen.

¹ *Solomon's Portico* was a covered portico that ran the entire length of the eastern portion of the outer court of the temple known as the Court of the Gentiles. Jesus had taught there (Jn. 10:23), and it soon became a favoured place for all the Jerusalem Christians to meet together (Acts 5:12). John D. Barry et al., eds., "*Solomon's Portico*," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

² This word can refer to both male (e.g., John 4:51) and female (e.g., Luke 8:54) children. However, it can also refer to a servant, and this usage is more common in the nt (e.g., Matt 14:2; Luke 7:7; 15:24). This is in accordance with its usage in the Septuagint, where it primarily translates Hebrew עֶבֶד (*'ebed*, "servant"). The early church's evangelistic proclamation in the book of Acts uses *pais* to describe Jesus' relationship to the Father (Acts 3:13; 4:27). This usage draws heavily on the Septuagint use of the term, which also highlights the obedience given to God by his servants, seen most clearly in both David (Psa 17:1; Isa 37:35; Luke 1:69; Acts 4:25) and the Servant in the book of Isaiah (Isa 41:9; 42:1). Isaac Blois, "*Children*," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

³ The servant songs of Isaiah are found in 42:1–9; 49:1–12; 50:4–11 and 52:13–53:12.

⁴ Denied: ἀρνέομαι (*arneomai*) to disclaim association with a pers. or event, *deny*, *repudiate*, *disown* (verbally or nonverbally).

⁵ Allison A. Trites, William J. Larkin, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 12: The Gospel of Luke and Acts* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2006), 403–404.

⁶ ἄγνοια (*agnoia*), ignorance, not have information (Ac 3:17; 17:30; Eph 4:18; 1Pe 1:14+; 1Pe 2:15 v.r. NA26; 2Pe 2:13 v.r.) More common is the meaning "not to know, not to be informed of."⁶ In Acts 3:17, κατὰ ἄγνοιαν has the juridical sense found in the LXX (Lev 22:14): the guilt of the Jews is, from the viewpoint of the subject, a sin arising from ignorance (cf. also Acts 13:27).

⁷ David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 179.

⁸ See Westminster Confession of Faith; Repentance Leading to Life, Chap 15.

⁹ N. T. Wright, *Acts for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1–12* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 58.