



The Name ... the Power of His Name
Acts 3-4

The Church at Canyon Creek, Austin, Texas
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[Video] Those are the responses of people on the street when asked, “Who is Jesus?” Some said He was just a man. Some said He was a teacher of love. One woman said He was a marketing genius who got a lot of people to believe in Him and the bird man said Jesus was a magician like David Cooperfield. Some believe Jesus was spiritual leader like Ghandi and Mohammed. But the last woman did not believe He existed at all.

So, who was Jesus? Certainly not a magician. Certainly more than a teacher of love. For us, He IS our Savior, the one who sacrificed His life on the cross to pay the price for our sin. And amazingly, He is the risen Lord and is alive today.

It was the resurrection that inspired the first Christians and that sparked a movement. They saw Him alive again, and they believed He was the Son of God and that everything He said was true. *They were convinced it was true, they were compelled to talk about it, and they were courageous to a take stand at great risk.* These first Christians are our mentors. We are studying the book of Acts this fall because we need their 1st century passion for our 21st century world. Our prayer is that their passion would revive our passion, that their courage would revive our courage. The story continues, and it’s still about Jesus. The mission continues, and today, in our generation, it’s up to us to take the gospel across the street and around the world.

This morning, we are going to look at Acts 3-4, at the story of a miracle on the front steps of the temple. *The miracle proves the power of His name to heal, and the miracle points to the power of His name to save. That’s the message. That’s the gospel. The power of His name to heal points to the power of His name to save.*

THE MIRACLE

The story begins in Acts 3. “One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – (the ninth hour) at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, ‘Look at us!’ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them” (Acts 3:1-5, NIV). A 40-year-old man, lame from birth, was placed in front of the temple every day to beg. That was his life. He was helpless and hopeless, disabled and dependent.

Seeing Peter and John, the lame man hoped they would give him something. But Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth – walk” (Acts 3:6, NIV). “In the name of Jesus Christ.” “Taking him by the right hand, Peter helped him up, and instantly, the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. And went into the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God” (Acts 3:7-8, NIV). He was 40 years old, lame from birth, and had never walked in his life. Imagine his surprise. Imagine his joy, his tears, his laughter. He was “walking and leaping and praising God.” His praise was real!

“When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him” (Acts 3:9-10, NIV).

When Peter saw a crowd gathering, he addressed the people, “Men of Israel, 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? 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. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.¹ ***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 given this complete healing to him, as you can all see” (Acts 3:12-16, NIV).

The miracle proves the power of His name to heal.

The name of Jesus is powerful. It is wonderful. It is beautiful. His name is special and sacred to us. The Bible uses over 100 titles for Jesus, and that does not include the countless phrases used to describe Him.

- He is called the Son of Man and the Son of God.
- He is the Word of God. He is the voice of God and the very truth of God.
- He is called the Alpha and the Omega, referring to the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, meaning He is eternal over all time.
- The prophet Isaiah called Him Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
- With respect to His sacrifice on the cross, He is the Man of Sorrows and the Lamb of God.
- He called Himself the “I AM,” a title used only for God, thus equating Himself with God.
- He is the Bread of Life and the Light of the World.
- He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- He is the Rock, the Living Water, the Author of life, the Anchor of hope. And He is the Amen, or the final word.
- He is the Holy One, our High Priest, the Almighty God, and the Cornerstone of the Church.
- He is our Redeemer and our Savior.
- He is Immanuel, God with us.
- He is Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ.

To a cripple, Peter said, “***In the name*** of Jesus Christ of Nazareth – walk!” (Acts 3:6). The disciples said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us ***in your name***” (Luke 10:17, NIV). With respect to prayer, Jesus promised, “You can ask for anything ***in my name***, and I will do it” (John

14:13). And the Bible says, “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything *in the name* of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17, ESV).

And the book of Revelation says, “On His head are many crowns ... and on His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:12, 16, NIV). Jesus is superior, supreme, and sovereign. His name is the highest name, the greatest name, the most powerful name, the most righteous name, and the most loving name. God “bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow ... and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians 2:9-11).

THE MESSAGE

The miracle proves the power of His name to heal, and the miracle points to the power of His name to save. That’s the message. That’s the gospel. The miracle proves the message is true. The power of His name to heal points to the power of His name to save.

Understand the scene. Peter is on the front steps of the temple. He just performed a miracle, which none of the priests could do. And he is declaring that Jesus rose the dead proving to be the Son of God.

Here’s what happened next. “The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They arrested Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day” (Acts 4:1-3, NIV).

Two things happened that day that the religious leaders could not deny and could not reverse. A man was healed and everyone saw it.² And 5,000 people believed that Jesus was the Son of God.³

“The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest’s family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them, ‘By what power or what name did you do this?’ ” (Acts 4:5-7, NIV).

When the religious council interrogated Peter, they did not ask him questions about the resurrection; they asked him about the healing of a lame man in front of the temple. The religious leaders were outraged because it drew attention away from what they were doing inside the temple. It would be like a food truck parking in front of a restaurant; the restaurant owner is going to get mad. So they demanded, “By what power or what name did you do this?” (Acts 4:7, NIV). On the one hand they were asking, “Who gave you permission to set up shop here?” and on the other hand they were asking, “How did you do that?”

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said ...” (Acts 4:8). This is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. For years, I have mentally recited that phrase to myself before walking on stage to preach. That’s the prayer going through my mind just before I open the Bible to preach God’s word. “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said ...”

“Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that **by the name of Jesus Christ** of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead – by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for **there is no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:8-12).

“There is salvation in no one else, for **there is no other name** ... by which we can be saved” (Acts 4:12). His name means “God saves.”⁴ His name means salvation. An angel appeared and announced to Joseph and Mary that “she will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21, NIV). Paul said, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”⁵ John said, “To those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12, NIV). And Peter said, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name ... by which we can be saved.”

The password into heaven is the name of Jesus! Jesus said was, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6, NIV). There is only one way to God and that is through His Son Jesus. The way is exclusive, there is no other way, but the offer is inclusive. The offer of grace and forgiveness, of peace and heaven, is for everyone. And if you’re not a Christian at this point in your life, God is making that offer to you.

Let me explain why you need Jesus. Because all of us have regret. All of us have messed up. All of us have felt shame and guilt and regret over something. The biggest problem in our lives, the great cancer in our lives, is our own sin. And it separates us from God. But no matter what you’ve done or who you’ve become, God’s love is bigger. And He is willing to forgive you of everything you’ve ever done wrong, and to give you a new life. The Bible says, “If anyone is in Christ (if a person believes in Christ), he is a new creation, the old is gone and the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus has the power to fix what’s broken. No one else can do that. Everyone needs a Savior. I need a Savior. You need a Savior.

Jesus wants to be that Savior for you. Why Jesus? Because Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin. And He supernaturally rose from the dead proving to be the Son of God and proving that everything He said was true. And the moment you believe in Him, you will be forgiven of everything you’ve ever done wrong. You will experience peace within and peace with God. And you will have the hope of spending eternity with Him in a place He called “Paradise.” And all you have to do is “confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you shall be saved” (Romans 10:9, NLT). Forgiveness, peace, heaven. All that is yours if you believe in Jesus.

CONCLUSION

To those of us who do believe, to The Church at Canyon Creek, what does Jesus want us to get out of this story? What is the Acts 3-4 challenge for us?

They were convinced it was true, they were compelled to talk about it, and they were courageous to take a stand at great risk.

Peter was *convinced* it was true. He stood on the front steps of the temple and declared that Jesus rose from the dead, proving to be the Son of God and proving that everything He said is true.

And he was *compelled* to talk about it. “For there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name ... by which we can be saved” (Acts 4:12).

And he was *courageous* to take a stand. When the religious leaders warned them not to speak of the name of Jesus anymore, Peter and John said, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you be the judge, for we cannot speaking what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20).

May we be like Peter. Convinced, compelled, courageous. Our mission is the same as his mission. We have the same power he had. And our message is the same as his message. So, the question is, do we really embrace the mission? Do we really believe in the power of His name? Do we have a sense of urgency to share the message with as many people as we can.

I’ve asked this before. Does the volume of our witness match the volume of our worship? When we sing about Jesus in here, our voices are loud. But, what about out there? I love Hillsong music and Passion music, and I love their worship gatherings. But I often wonder, what happens when the concert is over? What happens when all those thousands leave? Is the volume of their witness as loud as the volume of their worship? And what about us? Do you embrace the mission? I don’t mean do you believe. I know you believe it. I’m asking if you truly, fully, passionately, intentionally embrace the mission to be a witness, to tell people who Jesus is, what He has done for you, and why He means so much to you.

The mission continues, and today, in our generation, it’s up to us to take the gospel across the street and around the world. And the story is still about Jesus.

As Christians, we bear His name. And there is no greater privilege or greater responsibility than bearing the name of Jesus.

- We bear the name of the one who bore our sins on the cross. And the moment the hammer was raised to drive the first nail into His hand, Jesus could have stopped everything. But He didn’t.⁶ He cared more about saving us than saving Himself.
- We bear the name of the one who has forgiven us of everything we’ve ever done wrong, the one who did not give us what we deserved, and instead showed us grace.
- We bear the name of the one who is preparing a place for us in heaven right now, the one who promises to return and take us home to live with Him forever in Paradise.⁷
- We bear the name of the one before whom, one day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.⁸
- We bear the name of the one whom all of heaven is praising at this very moment. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain ... To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever” (Revelation 5:12-13, NAS).

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NOTES

¹ On “witnesses,” see Luke 24:48, Acts 1:8, 1:22, 2:24, 2:32, 3:15, 4:33, 5:32, 10:39, 10:41, 13:31.

² See Acts 4:14, 16.

³ See Acts 4:4.

⁴ The Hebrew name is Joshua, also pronounced Yeshua, also means “God saves.”

⁵ After explaining the gospel in one of his letters, the Apostle John said, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13, NIV).

⁶ Max Lucado beautifully writes, “Since He couldn’t bear the thought of eternity without you, He choose the nails.” [Max Lucado, *He Choose the Nails*, (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000), page 34.]

⁷ See John 14:2-3.

⁸ See Philippians 2:9-11.