

**"Acts of the Apostles: Lesson 8" by
Faber McMullen, Union Grove Baptist
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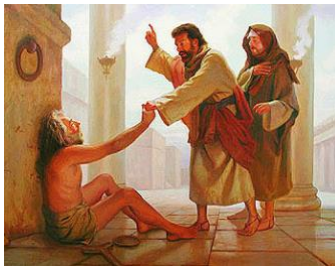


Peter's Second Sermon:
"Repentance that Brings Refreshment from the Lord"
The Church Now Numbers 5,000!



Have you ever worked out in the Texas heat all day and not had enough water. You become dizzy, disoriented, and bone dry. Sometimes when I get that way I'll come in and have a coke poured over ice followed by 2-3 huge glasses of ice water. That brings pretty good relief. Or, maybe you've gone to bed bone tired and you've slept like a log. You get up and feel so refreshed. (Unfortunately, that doesn't happen often with my 62 year old body.) It's

like you've almost been born anew. That's the kind of refreshment our souls find when we seek the Lord and find Him. When we run out of ourselves and run to God there is a relief that is beyond comparison or measure. Let's review for a minute what has led up to this sermon of Peter's that brought the promise of that kind of refreshment.



Last week we listened as Kelton Goudeau shared his thoughts on Acts 3:1-10. In his teaching on the "Healing of the Paralytic," Kelton emphasized that we often ask God for what WE think we need, when in fact God gives us something completely different than what we expected. The lame man asked Peter and John for money. He thought that was what he needed, but God knew the man needed a healing

and met him at the point of his greatest need.

Kelton went on to show us that the man had done all that he could do in his situation, and God took up where the man could do no more. We were reminded in our own lives to work as though it all depends on us but to pray knowing that it all depends on God. It is He who blesses the work of our hands. The healed man also responded by giving glory and honor to God who had healed him. That was his *first* response. Kelton challenged us to: (1) remember to pray for others when they ask us to do so, and (2) remember to give thanks to God and glory to His name when prayers are answered.

This week we see Peter give his second sermon since the coming of the Holy Spirit on this little band now called the Ekklesia, or "The Church." After this sermon today, we will see the Church grow to 5,000 people! Peter takes the opportunity of the lame man's healing to once again share the gospel to those who would listen. Listen to his words after the crowd had seen the lame man healed.

¹¹ Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. ¹² So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? (Acts 3:11-12, NKJV).



Peter is quick to point to God, giving glory to Him for what has happened. He is quick to explain that this healing has happened not through any special power that he or John possesses, but through the power of the Holy Spirit that is now on the Church. The power Peter and John manifest is not because they are godly or holy enough. It is not done through some magical power, rather it has been done through the almighty power of God. It should be a comfort to us that we don't have to be powerful enough or holy enough to approach God and ask for that which we need. Scripture tells us, "⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us," (Titus 3:5a, NKJV). Often, when I am praying for the healing of someone, I will start off by agreeing with God that I do not come to ask for this through any righteousness of my own, but rather because I am washed in the blood of Jesus and I stand clean and holy before the Father. Peter begins to tell them again exactly who Jesus was and what His mission was all about.

¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. (Acts 3:13-16, NKJV).

Peter goes on to say that it was Jesus at work to do this healing, and he reminds them again of exactly who this Jesus was. It was Jesus who was sent to earth by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was the Jesus whom this crowd had delivered over to Pilate to be killed. He explains that Jesus was indeed the long awaited Messiah of Israel: "The Holy One," "The Just," and the "Prince of Life." Peter then tells them that faith in this Jesus is what has given "perfect soundness" to the lame man. As I type this I think of how much I need "perfect soundness" in my life. I get so easily distracted with this property or that property, this client or that client, and the other details of life. Over and over I work myself out of God's simple directive for my life and I complicate my life with the superfluous. Superfluous means the "unnecessary, especially through being more than enough."

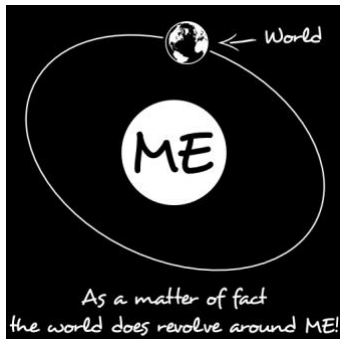
REPENT, THEN, AND
TURN TO GOD, SO THAT
YOUR SINS MAY BE
WIPED OUT, THAT TIMES
OF REFRESHING MAY
COME FROM THE LORD,

Acts 3:19 (NIV)

Having condemned them for what they had done to Jesus, Peter gives the group a chance to receive grace, forgiveness, and salvation.

He tells them he realizes that they didn't even know what they were doing, and that God is there and ready to let them experience the refreshment that comes from the presence of the Lord. Let's rest a while on this thought of being refreshed in the Lord. Let's focus on the latter part of Peter's sermon.

¹⁷ "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before," (Acts 3:17-20, NKJV).



God still offers each of us refreshment that comes from the presence of the Lord. This refreshment comes when we get our eyes off of our stuff, our circumstances, our mistakes, and we just put our eyes on Him. Guys that is a tangible definition of repentance. It's moving from where you're focused to where God wants you focused. You know, you can be beat up, have doubts, and feel overwhelmed, but if you can just stop for a moment and move into the presence of the Lord there is a relief and refreshment that can come over you and upon you. Depression, discouragement, doubts, and fears come when we get focused and hung up on the "I," the "me," and the "mine." We need to ask God to change our hearts, our intellects, and our awareness that we might realize we stand in His very presence. When you do that, refreshment will come even if you're up to your neck in alligators and even if you feel you just can't go on. It's all going to be okay. God has this one. That refreshment in the Lord is voiced so well by King David in Psalm 63:1-5 (NKJV).

O God, You *are* my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.

² So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.

³ Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life,
My lips shall praise You.

⁴ Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.

⁵ My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,
And my mouth shall praise *You* with joyful lips.



In verses 21-26 of Acts 3, Peter then reminds the group that Jesus is this means of refreshment and restoration in Israel. Peter reminds them that this Jesus was spoken of by Moses and the other prophets. He was the promised Holy One of Israel. He was the gift by which the seed of the Jews would

"bless all the families of the earth." Most of us in this room or those who are reading this sermon may not be the physical sons of Abraham, but we are the inheritors of the promise. As we say in estate law, we are the "beneficiaries." We are the blessed ones! We receive the benefits meant for the heirs because we are joint heirs.

So just what does it mean to be the beneficiaries or to be the "blessed?" When we understand that we are rebellious sinners deserving of eternal separation from God, and when we realize that Jesus provides that forgiveness and cleansing that our soul craves; we are promised showers of blessing. Remember that the word "blessing" comes from the Hebrew word *baruch* which has the word "knee" as its root. It is the picture of a loving Father bent down on His knee giving His little child exactly what is needed.

We get so focused on our wants that we don't even realize God is giving us and providing for us what we need. Repentance can bring us showers of blessing. He so much wants us to experience sufficiency in Him. There was a man who wrote about this refreshment brought about by repentance. Daniel Whittle was born in 1840 in Massachusetts. He moved to Chicago right before the Civil War broke out. While there, a couple of guys met him and invited him to a Bible study. (These were the men who later started the YMCA.) He was impressed with their knowledge of the Bible, but he remained unconverted. In 1862 he married a girl named Abbie, he joined the Union Army, and he was sent to Virginia to fight. His mother gave him a small New Testament to put in his knapsack.

Down in Virginia he was injured in battle and he had his arm amputated to save his life. He was recuperating in the hospital away from home, and away from his wife Abbie when he pulled out the little Bible his mother had given him and read it cover to cover. He writes:

I read right through the book – Matthew, Mark, Luke, to Revelation. Every part was interesting to me; and I found to my surprise that I could understand it in a way that I never had before. When I had finished Revelation, I began at Matthew, and read it through again. And so for days I continued reading, and with continued interest; and still with no thought of becoming a Christian, I saw clearly from what I read the way of salvation through Christ.

The story gets real interesting because there was another guy in the hospital who was dying and begged a nurse to pray for him. The nurse refused to pray for him because she thought she was too wicked. She had seen Daniel reading his Bible so she went to try to get him to come pray for the dying man.

Daniel said, "I can't pray. I've never prayed in my life. I am just as wicked as you are." The nurse begged him to go pray for the man because she had never heard him cussing like everyone else in the hospital. Finally, Daniel said he would go see the guy. When the man saw Daniel he cried, "Oh, pray for me! Pray for me! I am dying!" He then proceeded to tell Daniel how he had been a good church-going kid, but he had fallen into a life of evil, doing evil things. Daniel relates that He felt God speaking to him saying, "You know the way of salvation. Get on your knees and accept Christ, and pray for this boy."

Daniel fell to his knees and repented, confessing his own sins. He said, "I believed right then and there that He did forgive me and that I was Christ's child." He then fell over the boy praying with all of his heart for the young man. We he got up, the young man was dead, but he had a marvelous look of peace on his face.

In 1875, about 10 years later, Daniel began writing hymns and he recalled his own repentance and the refreshment that came with that repentance. He wrote under a pseudonym "El Nathan." He wrote hundreds of hymns, and probably the two best known are: *There Shall Be Showers of Blessing* and *I Know Whom I Have Believed*.

As we dwell on this refreshment in the Lord this morning, let us listen to some of the words of Daniel Whittle who had experienced first-hand God's love, mercy, and refreshment.

1. There shall be showers of blessing:
This is the promise of love;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Savior above.
 - o Refrain:
Showers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need:
Mercy-drops round us are
falling,
But for the showers we plead.
2. There shall be showers of blessing,
Precious reviving again;
Over the hills and the valleys,
Sound of abundance of rain.
3. There shall be showers of blessing;
Send them upon us, O Lord;
Grant to us now a refreshing,
Come, and now honor Thy Word.
4. There shall be showers of blessing:
Oh, that today they might fall,
Now as to God we're confessing,
Now as on Jesus we call!
5. There shall be showers of blessing,
If we but trust and obey;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
If we let God have His way.

We end this morning, looking at the final verse of the text for the day. The Bible tells us that many believed after Peter preached this sermon. Chapter 4 verse 4 of Acts tells us, "⁴ *However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*" (NKJV).

Are you ready to stop doing it your way and to allow God to do it His way? Refreshment will come with such repentance. Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Fryday - Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.