

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Peter Preaches Christ

Scripture: Acts 3:11-18

Code: 1711

We are going to talk about the name this morning, the name of Jesus. Peter preaches about it in Acts Chapter 3, and if you'll take your Bible and turn with me please we'll look together at a portion of Peter's sermon. You know by now that it always takes me longer to preach Peter's sermons than it took him. And so we'll be a while with Peter's sermon. But as we come to Chapter 3, we come to this most marvelous sermon of Peter. Peter preaches in Acts 2 on the first day of the church's birth; he preaches again a few days later in Acts 3; and in Chapter 4, he preaches again. And so it's just Peter preaching Jesus all the way through the beginning of the book of Acts.

Peter commissioned by God to be the apostle to the Jews to the circumcision, to Israel, his declaring the Messiah Jesus Christ of Nazareth. And the results are exciting as the church is born and at the conclusion of his first sermon there are 3,000 who come to Christ at the conclusion this. His second sermon there are 5,000 men numbered among believers in addition, there are women and young people. And so under the ministry of Peter as he preaches simple gospel messages regarding Christ, the church is born and begins to grow. And they are indeed simple. There is nothing complicated at all. There is nothing deeply theological in the sense of difficulty about his sermons. They are about Jesus Christ in simplicity and they are about sin in simplicity.

But as he comes to his sermon in Acts 3, he kind of keys on this idea of the name of Jesus Christ. In Acts 3:6, he had said to the lame man, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." And then over in verse 16, he tells the Jews who are now listening to his sermon "And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong." And so he is declaring again the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This is the theme. This is the subject of his preaching. That name. That name of which the apostle Paul says God has designated no greater name. The name that is above every name.

Dr. Clifton Howard of the World Peace Commission attended the opening sessions of a conference on limitation of armaments held recently in Washington D.C. and he said in writing this little note that he met there the commissioner from India who represented some 350 million people. Around the commissioner's neck was a string of beads and he told Howard that it was a golden cord that bound his soul to Allah. And that every one of those beads, 99 of them in all, was one of the different names for Allah. And that he had memorized every one of them and in a rosary fashion ran his fingers over them daily reciting the 99 names of Allah. And he questioned Mr. Howard as to whether or not he was so well informed on the names of his God. Howard took the challenge and discovered there are 208

names for the Lord Jesus Christ in the Bible. And perhaps the sweetest of all of those names repeated 700 times in the New Testament is the name Jesus.

But by whatever name He is called, like the rose, it is always just as sweet. He is the theme of every sermon preached by the apostles. He is the theme and the heartbeat of the book of Acts. He is the theme of every gospel message and of every messenger of God throughout the history of the church. Jesus, that is the name by whatever name. And in fact, Peter said so boldly and so specifically in Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." That is the name and there is no other name.

Thirty-three times in the book of Acts reference is made to the term that name. That name. And Jesus by all those names is the single most important figure in the history of the universe. All blessings are found in His name. There are limitations to human names. You may think that the human names are important and they might be if you're sent to go ask a favor of somebody and you're given a little bit of accreditation by a certain person saying look if you tell them that Joe sent you you'll probably get what you want. Then maybe there's something in a name. But it doesn't work like that with God. You don't go to God and say God, Joe sent me. God responds only to one name. We only go to God in the name of Jesus Christ who said, "No man cometh unto the Father but," what, "by Me." That is the only name that gives you access to God.

We are encouraged to ask what we will in that name. We have been assured of the presence when we meet two or three gathered in that name. We are told to depart from sin when we name that name. And thus it is the name, the name that is preached by Peter by whatever of the 208 titles he chooses. It is always that name. And so Peter, as we meet him, is the first preacher of the name, and I and others of you who preach Jesus Christ stand in the great tradition of those who name the name.

Preaching is not preaching unless it does. As we have seen the Holy Spirit attended the preaching of Peter by miracles and signs to confirm that the message was indeed divine. In Acts 2 you remember that first of all the Spirit of God designed a wonderful miracle of languages and they all began to speak the wonderful works of God in their native tongues of those who heard. And because of that the crowd was gathered astounded and shocked at the divine nature of such a miracle and it was in that against that backdrop that Peter preached the name of Jesus Christ. The Spirit confirming his word as divine by attendant languages of a miraculous kind.

Then as you come to Acts 3, the Spirit has the same pattern again. Before Peter ever gets up to preach and announce the name of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit allows them to operate on the basis of the gift of healing. They heal a lame man in the name of Jesus Christ. Obviously an act of God, gathers the crowd in their wonder and their amazement, Peter then preaches his message being confirmed in their minds as divine by the attendants of that astounding miracle.

And you see, this is exactly what the writer of Hebrews said that God would do--confirm the Word by signs, wonders, and miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and we've been studying that for some months. So as we come to the message of Chapter 3, verses 12-26, which is the message itself, we must be aware that Chapter 3 together is a unit and we have to include the first 11 verses, because that is the dramatic confirmation of the message provided by the Holy Spirit. In fact, the whole thing is written by the Holy Spirit. He's in charge of the whole production. He makes the miracle go and He gives Peter every word that Peter speaks. It's a production presented by the Holy Spirit. Peter and John are simply around to be used.

Now last Lord's day we began to consider the chapter and let me quickly review. We looked at the miracle last time and first of all, we saw the scene. In verses 1 to 3, Peter and John and how they meet this man who is lame sitting at the gate called Beautiful. It's the crossing of two habits. The habit of Peter and John to go daily to the temple at the time of prayer and the habit of the man to be laid at the Beautiful Gate. They crossed each other. That was the scene. Then we saw the sign. The sign of course was the miracle and we said that it was divine and there were four reasons we knew it was divine.

One it was unexpected or sovereign. God performs miracles at His own discretion. Number 2, it was in the name of Jesus Christ. Number three, it was instant. God's miracles are instant. Number 4, it was complete. God's miracles are total. And so we said it was God performing a miracle, the scene and the sign. Then we saw the sequel. What happened as a result? Three things, joy to the man who was jumping and leaping and hollering all over the temple and then praise to God and when he was hollering, he was hollering praise to God. And thirdly, testimony to the people that God was doing something in their midst.

Now with that as the basic backdrop we then begin to see the sermon forming. Look at verse 10 and we'll bring you up to date. "And they knew that it was he who sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate at the temple." Forty years he'd been a beggar blind or lame I should say. Not blind, but lame. "And they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him and as the lame man who was healed held Peter and John all the people ran together unto them in the porch," the greater outer courtyard, "that is called Solomon's greatly wondering." They were on the porch, the portico known as Solomon's porch. The people were gathered all over the courtyard to hear them. They were astounded and hanging on to Peter and John in the middle was this erect man who had, for 40 years, been a cripple. And they all knew who he was. They saw him every time they passed in and out of the Beautiful Gate to pay their respects to the worship at the temple.

And so the stage is set for the sermon. Now, as we come to the sermon in verse 12, we'll see three parts, all good sermons have three parts. The beginning, the middle, and the end. The introduction, the theme, and the conclusion, and Peter has those. He starts out with a classic introduction provided

already by the Holy Spirit. He just bounces off of it. And then he goes into his theme, which is Jesus, that name. And then he wraps it up in verses 19-26. And we won't get to the wrap up until next time. But we'll at least get to the introduction and the theme this morning.

First of all, let's look at the introduction. Now how does Peter introduce this thing? Well, the Holy Spirit's already built in the initial illustration. In seminary, they always used to tell us that whenever you begin to preach men, do something at the very beginning that gets their attention. And so, you know, when we were in preaching class, guys would do ridiculous things, unreal things. Make horrible statements, just terrifically shocking statements at the first thing they would say. And everybody would just go like that and then they would come down. But they managed to get the attention of everybody.

Frequently, they lost everybody a few minutes into the message, but nevertheless, they had the point at least at the introduction. And so the Holy Spirit knows that it's important to grab these people and focus them on Peter at the very beginning and so he does the illustrating in the introduction. The Holy Spirit provides a living illustration and make sure that when Peter and John are standing in Solomon's porch that hanging on to both of them is this living illustration so that the whole time Peter's preaching, they're staring at this living illustration. They can't get him out of their minds.

So the Spirit has already set the stage. The Spirit has provided the living illustration. Peter merely needs to jump off of that illustration already provided for him. The Spirit has gotten their attention. They are jammed into the great court. Peter is there Solomon's porch. Attention is already wrapped on Peter. All he needs to do is take off from there and he does in verse 12, notice it.

"And when Peter saw, he answered the people." They were wondering and crowded in there. And he said then two questions really. "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?" What's the big deal, in effect. What are you so astounded about? Miracles are old stuff to you. I mean, let's face it, you're the people of God. All throughout your history. Miracles have come and gone all along. God has always been a God of miracles. You're used to this. As recently as Jesus Christ Himself, you've seen astounding things. Some of you may have eaten some of that which He provided in feeding the five thousand plus. Others of you may have relatives who were healed, etc., etc. by Jesus Himself. What is all the fuss about a miracle?

What is the particular difficulty that you're having in believing this or buying this or explaining this. This is just part of your history. God's always been involved with you. What are you marveling at? Then he asked them a second question. "Why look ye so earnestly on us as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man walk?" They were evidently also aware that the crowd was staring at them like those two are from Galilee, they're a couple of fishermen. I mean, I've seen those guys around town a lot. What are they...how did they do it? See.

So there were two problems. Number one, they shouldn't have really been too concerned about miracles. They had seen them throughout their history and number two, they should have had the sense to know that Peter and John weren't in the business of doing miracles. So, you see, what he's doing is pulling their attention and he's about to focus it on Christ because when he did the miracle he said "silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee in the name of," what, "Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Rise up and walk." He told them who did it then.

So what he does then is take their wonder and their confusion and focus it on Christ. He puts a disclaimer on himself and John. We didn't do it. And he puts the attention on some other source. And it must be divine. What are you marveling at? God's always been working among you. This is God's doing in effect. Which is hard for them to understand since they didn't believe that Jesus was of God. Yet it was obviously done in Jesus' name wasn't it? They knew miracles were done by...notice the two words in verse 12, miracles were done by power and holiness. That had always been their knowledge. It took a holy power to do miracles.

Nicodemus said "No man can do the things you do except," what, "God be with him." It took a holy power to do miracles. They knew that. Historically they knew that. So this is the problem they have. It takes a holy power to do miracles, but Jesus was blasphemous, but he did it in the name of Jesus. So Peter wants to rivet them on Jesus Christ as the one through whom God is doing this miracle, you see. He preached them rather courteously to begin with. Although he really lashes into them in a minute. He calls them "Ye men of Israel," which is the most courteous address by which you can address the Jewish people, because it ties them most closely into their covenant relationship with Israel, which was you remember God's special name for the special line through which Messiah came and through which the covenant came. And so he ties them into the covenant. And in fact, he even tells them in verse 25, you are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant.

And the amillennialist who comes along and says that because the Jews crucified Jesus Christ, they forfeited the covenant doesn't understand the Scriptures at all. He says to them right here, this is obvious. This is what you have done, but he says in verse 25, "You are still the sons of the covenant." And he still treats them as the men of Israel, covenant people. God is not yet through with Israel. They have not been totally set aside. Only temporarily blinded as Paul clearly brings in Romans Chapter 9, 10, and 11.

But here he says to them "Ye men of Israel, what's the confusion?" You know the source of these kinds of things. You know who always does these things and you know we don't do these things. And then he proceeds to move into his main theme and says in effect this. God did it through Jesus. You know Him, Jesus of Nazareth. And then he indicts them at the same time for their attitude toward Jesus. Let's look at the main theme, verses 13 to 18.

Now in this the theme is Jesus. And He's presenting Jesus by six names, six different titles of the 208 that He has. And at the same time in a majestic explosion of the beauties of Jesus through all these names and we could spend a sermon on each name easily or more than one on each name, but as he presents these six names, at the same time he presents six statements about each name. So that it's not just a name, but it's a name and a statement. For example, you see he calls Him servant rather than Son and we'll talk about that in a moment. Servant, Jesus, Holy One, Just, Prince of Life, and then down in verse 18, Christ. Those are six names.

An explosion as I said of the glorious features of all that that name means. And then a corresponding statement with each and I've given you a little outline there that you can follow with the corresponding statement. The first statement and the last statement are by God and the middle four are how men treated him. First the Servant dignified and then lastly Christ declared. God dignified Him and declared Him to be Christ. But in the middle look what men did. Jesus delivered. Holy One denied. Just desired not. Prince of Life destroyed.

So what he does is interesting. He takes Jesus and while he presents Jesus through these names as the Messiah clearly, because every one of those names has a messianic character, while he's presenting Jesus as Messiah, he at the same time is indicting Israel. He's indicting Israel for being at the opposite end of the world from God and for denying and rejecting their own Messiah. So it just kind of weaves itself together. A presentation of Christ and a presentation of their terrible sin of rejection.

Now, let's look at these names. First of all, he starts in verse 13 with the term Servant, and says that He is a servant dignified or gloried or exalted by God. Let's begin in verse 13. "The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers," you see. He's tying it all into Israel. This is no new thing people. This is no brand new God that's popped up on the scene. This is our God. "Hath glorified His Servant piada, is the Greek word and it is best translated rather than Son.

You see, he is directing his message to Israel. And so he uses all his real terms. God is also the God of all men, but God is especially the God of covenant promise with Israel. And since he's talking about Messiah and since he wants to convince these Jews that Jesus is their Messiah and that they are in rebellion against God and have executed their own Messiah then he chooses messianic terms. So he begins by identifying God as the God of Israel. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and our Fathers. Oh this is important. You know this is a tremendous truth that I think we need especially to be mindful of in sharing Christ with Jewish people.

There is a new rabbi down the street at the temple who when he first arrived last week wanted to come and get acquainted with me. And so he called and said could he come up for coffee. And so I don't drink coffee, but he did and we talked. And I said to him...we talked a little bit about the weather

and how you like California and in my heart I was saying boy I'd like to get around to the Lord if it's possible and see what would happen, you know, in love obviously. Because he was a very dear man and we had a kindred spirit about a lot of things, you know, political and whatever. And we were talking and agreeing on certain things.

And so finally I said you know, you might be interested in this. I said, you know that most of the people, well, in fact, all of the people that I love most dearly in the world are Jewish. And he said, "is that right?" And I said, "it is, it is." I said, "you know, the ones that I spend most of my time with, most of my energies on, and who have the deepest place in my heart are Jewish people." He said, "how is that so?" And I said, "well, there's Moses, and there's David, and there's Elijah, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah I just love Jeremiah. He's so dear to me." And he said, "you know, isn't that something," he said. And we had a common ground. And then I said "And above all, there's Jesus." And that's where we stopped. But I said, "you know, He was a Jew." I said, "the dearest people in my world are Jewish people." They are the most precious people that I know because they are the ones with whom I spend my life. See.

That was so hard for him to recognize that we had common ground all the way through the entire thing until he got to Jesus. You see? And then I said "and of course, I feel that that's not the end. That's only the beginning." And then I said, "there's Jesus and Paul and John and they're all Jewish too, you know." You see, the sad tragedy is Christianity is the fulfillment of all that Judaism ever was. And this is why it's so hard for them to see. I hope he'll come back and I hope that we'll be able to talk again, because at least we established a basis of common love for the Old Testament folks. And we can pray that God will somehow reach him. You can pray that. You do pray that, through the truths of Jesus Christ.

But you know, here Peter wants to establish how important it is. You see, he wants them to know that Peter is in the great continuity with all the Old Testament prophets. He's declaring the same God they preached. And I told the Rabbi, I said, "you know, I preach the God you do." That's right. He said...he was kind of shocked about that, you know. I said well, it's the same God. It's the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and I preach it. And he said...he begin to say, "well, how do you preach?" And he asked me and he asked me how long do you preach? And I said, "oh about an hour." He went like this. He said, "an hour. "Do they stay?" I said some leave. He said, "I only preach ten minutes." "I only preach ten minutes," he said. That's all. "I don't know...what would I say for an hour?" I said, "well, my problem is how do I cut it down to an hour." But you know we preach the same God. But the sad thing is he doesn't know the God he declares, because that God is known only in Jesus Christ.

And that's Peter's saying. People, this is your God that you don't know because it's your God who has glorified His servant, Jesus. And this is the thing that they needed to know. The same God that was their God had healed through His Messiah this cripple. Now look at the term servant for just a moment and see what does it say about Jesus. The term servant is a fantastic word. The correct

rendering as I said piada would be servant rather than Son and it has reference to an ambassador. Now you recognize that in a sense Jesus is a servant not like a bond slave. He doesn't serve God out of bondage. He serves God as an ambassador and the term piada is used in the Old Testament with reference to an ambassador. One commissioned from one country sent to another to represent him. That's exactly what Messiah is. God's piada, God's ambassador servant who came in service to God. We would say...we always say that ambassador is in the service of his king or his government or his president and Jesus came as God's ambassador, God's piada, God's servant representing God in the world.

And when He came into the world, He repeatedly, repeatedly, repeatedly declared that He was indeed a servant of God, did He not? Now this is not a term foreign to the Jewish mind, because in the Old Testament, Messiah was said to be a servant. Speaking to Jews and speaking about a servant, a Jew would have immediately thought of the great sweeping passage of Scripture from Isaiah 40 clear through Chapter 53 in which Isaiah speaks of the servant. But let me just pull two passages. Isaiah 42:1 and listen to this. Here is a messianic passage and here Messiah's called a servant. "Behold My servant whom I uphold. Mine elect in whom I so delighteth. I have put My Spirit Him, He shall bring forth justice to the nations." Here's a prophecy regarding Messiah. He is called what? Servant. Servant.

And you go over to Isaiah Chapter 52 and you run right into the same thing again in that most classic and wonderful passage which we love. "Behold," verse 13, Isaiah 52, "Behold My servant shall deal prudently." Then He goes on to talk about His servant. Then in Chapter 53, He describes the servant, doesn't He? "Despised, rejected of men, the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. He is born our griefs, carried our sorrows, wounded for our transgressions. All we like sheep have gone astray." That great passage on the suffering servant, right? And then He kind of ends it up by saying, "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great and divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death." There it says Messiah will be a servant who will die.

You know that even today the Jewish people in reading Isaiah 53 have an extremely difficult time figuring out who that refers to. Most of them make it refer to the nation. But it is a reference to Messiah and the Old Testament said Messiah is a servant. And so here Peter says "the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the God of our Fathers has glorified His servant." You've been looking for His servant. There He is.

That's the servant right there. "That one in who's name I healed this man, Jesus Christ of Nazareth." They didn't believe Jesus was their Messiah, did they? No, Peter says He indeed He is. And you know that Jesus claimed to be the servant of Isaiah's prophecy? Explicitly in Matthew 12 He made the claim. In Matthew 12, Jesus withdrew from there and the multitudes followed Him and He healed them all and charged them that they should not make Him known that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet. "Behold My servant whom I have chosen." You see? The Word of God

says Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

He was the suffering servant and when His suffering was over, He was what? Glorified by God. And so he says the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified or dignified His servant. Now when you think about Him as a servant, it's such a beautiful thing. Jesus Himself said this, "The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto," but what, "but to minister." To serve and to give His life, a ransom for many. The lowest level of servitude is to die for the one you serve.

You say well, who was He serving? Well, first of all, He was serving God. He came to die because that was God's plan, right? Listen to what He said. John 6:38, "For I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." That's a servant. Listen to John 7:16, "Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine but His that sent Me." John 8:28, in the middle of the verse, "I do nothing of Myself, but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things."

You see, Jesus always claimed to be in service to God. In service to God, but you know there's a sense also in which He was in service to us. In John Chapter 13, oh what a beautiful passage. In John 13, it was the time of the Passover before His death and He was in the upper room and the disciples were sitting around haggling over who was going to be greatest in the kingdom, which was a kind of a common little discussion that they were always having. And you know, they were sitting there saying, well, I'm going to sit at the right hand. Well, I'm sitting at the left hand. Well, we're going to be running this show over here and so forth and so on. And Peter and John said oh you guys are all...I mean, James and John said you're all out because my mother already went and got permission for us to be there and whatever. Anyway, they were haggling over who's the greatest. Well, it was a common procedure that somebody was to wash the feet of the people who came into a place. There was no servant there to do it. One of them should have done it. But in an argument about who's the greatest, nobody's going to get down and wash anybody's feet and disqualify himself, right. So they're hassling over who's the greatest.

Finally, Jesus stands up and does it Himself. And He teaches them a lesson of servitude. He was ever the servant, ever the servant. "And He rises from supper," in verse 4, "laid aside His garment, took a towel and girded Himself, poured water in a basin, began to wash the disciples feet and wiped them with the towel with which He was girded." What a humbling experience. He got to Peter, and Peter says not my feet. Always...He always had his feet in his mouth, Peter did. Peter says unto Him, verse 8, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." He didn't understand the servitude of Jesus, did he? He didn't understand that He came to serve. And Jesus says to him, you don't know what I'm doing in verse 7, but you'll know after. And then Jesus said, if I don't wash you, you don't have any part in Me. Peter, if you don't let Me be a servant, then it can't be what it has to be. Peter says, okay, I'll take a bath. You know, he was always willing to go the whole way, right? Wash my feet, my head, my hands, the whole thing.

So then Jesus comes down and He says in verse 13, "You call Me Master and Lord. Ye say well, for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another's feet for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done unto you. The servant is not greater than his Lord." He gave us the perfect classic illustration of a servant, didn't He? He served not only God, but He serves us.

Do you know that He said when He went away, "I'm going to go away, but you ask anything in My name and," what, "I'll do it." That's service. That is service. Jesus Christ right now lives at the right hand of the Father to serve the believer. He's a servant. And He was glorified to the right hand of God to be a servant and He was glorified because His service was so adequate. And so God exalted Him as a servant. And that's a paradox isn't it, because servants don't usually get exalted. But you see God glorified Him as a servant.

All right, let's look at the second name. And we're going to see all kinds of paradoxes. Peter is so clever at this. Just fantastic. Of course, it's the Holy Spirit, but we must trust that the Holy Spirit uses Peter's own processes. But then He gives Him this name. "Jesus who ye delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let Him go." He chooses a second name, for that name, and the name is Jesus. And he says you delivered Him. The first one servant, dignified then Jesus delivered. And now we get into the statement of what they did to Jesus. God dignified the servant. They delivered Jesus.

Now just as Ron was singing, we were thinking about that name. There's something about the name of Jesus that is sweet isn't it? Bernard said the name of Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, and joy in the heart. That's right. There's something lovely about the name of Jesus. And there's something that makes us cringe when somebody uses it to curse or when you see it on a light bulb or you see Jesus Superstar or you see Jesus Christ underwear or something like. All of these things that I've seen or even you see the term Jesus freaks and things like that. We cringe a little bit, but no matter what we see of this, because we love Him so much, it's very hard to taint the sweetness of the name, Jesus.

Now the person to whom the name was first revealed was Joseph. He's the first one that ever heard that name. And you remember that was in Matthew 1:21 when the angel said "And thou shalt call His name Jesus." Why? For He shall save His people from their sins. And I'm so glad He gave the name to Joseph, because Joseph was run of the mill, plain old middle class, carpenter type, humble, you know. No big thing. And the name Jesus then is not a title to be monopolized by the lips and ears of kings and princes and priests and holy men. It's the people's name, Jesus. "For He shall save," what, "the people," the people, "from their sins." His people.

Spurgeon said this, I like it, "The angel spoke to Joseph the name in a dream. That name so soft and sweet that it breaks no man's rest, but rather yields a peace unrivaled, the peace of God. With such a dream, Joseph's sleep was more blessed than his waking." That's emotional, right? Let's get to the doctrinal. The name of Jesus conjures emotions and our hearts are stirred and our love is kind of warmed and when we think of the name and when we hear the name song and praised and exalted, but more than the emotion of the name of Jesus is the doctrine of the name. What does it mean? What is it saying to us?

Jesus comes from the Old Testament name Joshua. It's the very same word. And Joshua is really an important word. It means salvation of the Lord. Or the Lord is salvation. Or it means Jehovah Savior. That's what it means. It has a deity connotation. The full meaning is Savior God. That's what Jesus means. And that's why it says "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save." That's the point. That's what Jesus means. That's what the name means. Joshua in the Old Testament overcame the enemies of God's people. And though there were very many and though they were very strong and though they had cities walled to heaven and chariots of iron, yet in the name of Jehovah as captain of the Lord's hosts, Joshua defeated them.

And even so does our glorious Joshua, our Jesus, smite sin and all the powers of darkness to save His people to utterly destroy their spiritual enemies. And Joshua, the son of Nun the Old Testament Joshua, caused the people, it says, to serve the Lord all his days, but he couldn't save them. And when he died, they went astray, but our Jesus, the New Testament Savior preserves His people in holiness forever and is able to keep them from falling and present them faultless.

And so the word Jesus means Savior God from Joshua. And right in the word is the name of God, according to the old Hebrew as well as the concept of saving. Now what does salvation mean? It means deliverance. Did you get it? Look back now at verse 13. Jesus means deliverer God. And what happened? They delivered their own deliverer. There's another one of Peter's paradoxes. God sent you the deliverer and you delivered Him up in denial and handed Him to Pilate when Pilate didn't even want Him and was determined to let Him go.

The Jews were looking for a deliverer. Yes, a physical one like Moses or Gideon or Joshua or David, but not a divine one like Jehovah Savior Jesus who came not to break so superficially the yoke of Rome, but to shatter the deadly yoke of sin. He is Jesus. He is Savior. He is God. And nothing else fulfills His name. And that's why I resent so much the use of the name Jesus to refer to a very human reactionary with political ambitions. His name means Jehovah Savior. You know, people use the name of Jesus and they haven't got the faintest idea what they're talking about.

I went to a church...I always...whenever I go to another church for some purpose or other, I always look for the little rack where they keep all the propaganda so I can find out about it, you know. And I weighed through the ladies aids society and whatever else is up there and find the doctrinal

statement. And if they don't have a doctrinal statement somewhere or something that says what they believe, then I worry a little bit. But I found this one in this one church that I was in a last couple of weeks or so. And it had a doctrinal statement. I thought well, now I'll find out what they believe. That's what I want to know. Well, they had about five or six vagaries there of their doctrinal statement that I couldn't quite figure out what they were saying. And I'm sure they were trying to say it in a way that nobody could be held to anything. But one of their statements was, of course, they finally got around to Christ Jesus. And the statement was this, "We believe in the life of Christ."

And I thought to myself, well bully. So does the Encyclopedia Britannica. What does that mean? "We believe in the life of Christ." Unless you're purposely trying to say we don't believe in His death, I don't know what they're saying. "We believe in the life of Christ." That's very vague. That doesn't say a word. How can people talk about Jesus and preach about Jesus and not accept His work as Savior, you see. It doesn't make sense. You could as well talk to Milton, but not about poetry or Shakespeare, but not about literature or talk to Da Vinci, but not about science. Or talk to Rembrandt, but not about painting. Don't talk about Jesus and not about saving. That's who He is.

And to throw His name around apart from His saving work is to not understand who He is. All this liberal palaver that we hear today about Jesus, Jesus, Jesus when they deny His atoning work on the cross is a mockery of His name. It's a denial of what His name is. His name is not Jesus because He's our example. His name is not Jesus because He's our teacher. His name is not Jesus because He's our guide and leader. His name is not Jesus because He's our friend. He is all that. His name is Jesus because He will save His people from their sins. That's why His name is Jesus.

He is the Savior God. He is the deliverer and men delivered Him, that's how twisted they were. The one God dignified as their deliverer, they denied and delivered to be killed as an imposter. And notice how hard Peter hits. Now just get a picture of where he is. He's crammed into Solomon's porch and he's got a mass of Jewish people in front of who could take his life in a flash. I mean, this guy is a fearless character. This is not the same sniveling coward who was crawling around the fire there denying Jesus to everybody who asks Him. This is somebody standing up and fearlessly indicting the whole nation of Israel for the execution of their own Messiah. And there's no way he can get out of there. I mean, he's not doing it from a helicopter. And he's not throwing tracts and then running away.

He's announcing it and he says, "whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let Him go." You pushed the issue folks. You did it. Pilate didn't want a thing to do with it. The Roman governor Pilate, we studied about him some weeks ago in our series on John, and we found that he was well aware that the crucifixion was rank injustice. Pilate had a sense of justice. He was a Roman. He knew what was right. And he knew full well that this thing was a trumped up issue. That Jesus was innocent completely. Five times Pilate declared "I find no fault in Him." But they wouldn't let Pilate off the hook. The poor guy was being blackmailed. He was jammed into a corner and they persisted to crucifying Jesus Christ when Pilate didn't want a thing to do with it.

In John Chapter 18, they led Jesus in verse 28 into the Hall of Judgment. It was early and so forth and so on. Pilate went out unto them and said, "what accusation bring you against this man?" All right, you've got Him to court. What's the charge? They couldn't come up with one. So they simply said, "why do you think we would bring someone to you who wasn't guilty of something?" That's all they said. Guilty of what? They never did say. So Pilate said, you take care of Him. You seem to know what you're doing. And he tried to pass Him off, because he knew there was no charge, but they wouldn't have anything of it. And then they went on to say it's not legal for us to kill anybody and they pushed the issue. And they kept pushing it.

And you can go to Luke Chapter 23, and you find that they pushed even more. Verse 14, he says, "You brought this man unto me as one that perverts the people and behold I found...I've examined Him before you and found not fault in the man." Nor Herod, Herod didn't find anything. "I will therefore chastise Him and release Him." And they screamed away with the man. They pushed, they pushed, they pushed. And poor Pilate was trapped. Finally he decided maybe if I just beat Jesus up real good, they'll take that as enough. That'll kind of quench their thirst for blood and they'll let Him go. So he had Him scourged, took Him out raw before the people and said, "behold your King." And they said that's not enough. Kill Him and His blood be on us.

You see Peter is indicting them with a stinging kind of indictment. You say Peter's not exactly looking for roses is he? No, he's not. He's not going to get any bouquets and he knows that. If you're preaching Jesus Christ with the effect of pacifying everybody and being well-liked by all the sinners in the world, you're not really going to make it. You've got to call it what it is. And there are people today who want to exonerate the Jewish people from crucifying Jesus Christ. They cannot do so. They are no more guilty than anyone who rejects Christ, but they are guilty. They are guilty and this is Peter's point. But you see the only thing that qualifies a man or entitles him to the blood of Jesus and God's saving grace is his sinfulness, so you've got to let him know he's a sinner. That's the point.

And even Pilate's wife had a dream and said stay away from that man. He's a just man. He's a righteous man. Dikaios, there's no charge to be laid against Him. So Peter uses this fact to convince those Israelites of the enormity of their sin of the execution of their own Messiah. Now you might say, boy, you know ease up Peter. Gentle, you know. You can't get converts that way. Oh yes you can. I mean, there were thousands who came in response to this message and they came running I'm sure when they realized what they had done against the God of their fathers.

All biblical preaching renders the audience vile sinners. Did you hear? All real biblical preaching renders men sinners who have rebelled against God. That's so important and not superficial sinners, but sinners who have made a rebellion against God. So the servant is dignified and Jesus is delivered. Let's look quickly at the Holy One and we'll see these rapidly. The Holy One denied. And here's another paradox. Holy One, what did they do? They denied the Holy One and wanted a

murderer, an unholy one. What twisted minds.

The term Holy One describes Jesus and we're going to look more at His holiness when we see a different word used in Hebrews that gives us a whole new introduction into the holiness of Jesus. But this morning this is the word hagios and it means separated unto God. Jesus was the Holy One. Do you know that Israel didn't know that He was the Holy One? But do you know that's an amazing thing, because I...there's somebody in the Bible who did know who you might not think should have known it. And I read it to you in Luke 4:33. "And in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon and cried out." Listen to what the demon says, "I know Thee who Thou art the Holy One." Oh the demon knew that. The demon knew what Israel didn't even know. It's a shocking kind of thing, isn't it?

The Old Testament declared Messiah by that name. That's another messianic title for Him, just as is Savior, Joshua, and servant. In Psalm 16:10, listen, it's a messianic passage talking about the Messiah's resurrection. "For Thou will not leave My soul in hell, neither will Thou permit Thine," what, "Holy One to see corruption." Messiah was called the Holy One and Peter said, but you denied the Holy One. And you didn't know what demons know. Oh that's how twisted they were. They took the Holy One sinless without blemish harmless, undefiled and they denied Him. The One consecrated to God is their Messiah, they denied.

You see Peter here is hitting the straight issue. You can't...you've got to get passed the superficial. I mean, if you're going to talk to somebody about Jesus Christ, you'll say now you're a sinner and I'll prove it to you. Have you ever had a bad thought? I've had a bad thought. See, you're a sinner. Well, that's all right. I mean, a bad...that's very superficial though. What you need to get down to is that you are living in open rebellion against the God of the universe and against His Christ. See that's the point.

When the Spirit comes in John 16, He will convict the world of sin because "they believe not on Me." You see? That is the sin of which a man is guilty and which damns him to hell, rebellion against God and refusal to respond to Jesus Christ by faith. There's nothing superficial about Peter's approach. He doesn't play around in the shallows. He plunges. Your sin is you denied the Holy One. He could have talked about the hypocrisy. He could have talked about their hanky panky with the neighbor's wife. He could have talked about their lying, their cheating. He could have talked about a lot of gossip. He could have talked about a lot of things, but it would have all been on the surface. What he talked about was them living in open rebellion against God because they rejected Christ. "For there is no other name under heaven whereby men must be saved."

And any man today who lives apart from Jesus Christ lives in open rebellion against God and as Paul says he will become eternally an object of wrath. You cannot live in rebellion against God. And even when Pilate wanted Him released, he says, "ye denied." And he puts the emphatic ye in there which

doesn't need to be there, but he puts it there to emphasize it. Pilate wanted to let Him go, but you pushed the issue to get the Holy One executed. You persisted in your treason. And he repeats the word denied twice in verse 13 and 14 so it'll be indelible. You knew it. It was there. It was true, but you denied it.

And so their denial had remained in persistent relentlessness. He was Holy, but they desired Him killed as if He were unholy. He was the deliverer, but they delivered Him. He was the servant whom God glorified, but they debased Him. You see all the way through they're in contrast to God and to Christ. And every man without Jesus Christ is living in just that contrast, open, vile, relentless, rebellion against God. And to those judgment comes. All right, so the servant is dignified, Jesus delivered, Holy One denied, for the Just desired not.

He says you denied the Holy One and the Just and desired the murderer to be granted unto you. What happened? They didn't desire the Just. They desired the unjust. Now there's another twist. Because the word Just has to do with the law. It is *dikaiois*, as I mentioned a moment ago. It has to do with legal issues. And when it came down to brass tax, they had a choice. They had a choice between Jesus and Barabbas. Jesus was *dikaiois*. That means He was righteous. The word carries the idea of being innocent from any crime. It is connected to the man who stands before a court and is rendered in view of the law to be nonchargeable. He cannot be held for any crime. He is innocent. And what is Peter saying? You killed the innocent and turned loose the guilty one. You wanted Barabbas. What a twist. Barabbas was unjust, a convicted criminal. Jesus was just, no crime, and you wanted Barabbas. That shows you where you are.

So Peter heaps this on their heads as the great aggravation of their crime. They demanded His death even though it was clear there was no crime. What an indictment. The righteous, just, innocent Messiah you didn't want and you desired an unjust guilty murderer. Twisted minds. You know people are still like that? It's amazing. Do you know that today in our society, we still exalt the corrupt? Do you know that? Look at...look who gets all the publicity in our society. Look at the heroes of our young people.

Look at all the people that get all the print and the press. We exalt perverts, rebels, criminals, sex maniacs, dope addicts. They may go under different titles, but this is what they are. Traitors, law breakers--and all the while we make a game and a laughing stock out of Jesus. We write funny little songs about Jesus and we mock Him and laugh at Him and put Him on t-shirts and do strange things with Him and stick a marijuana cigarette in His mouth. And we do funny little things with Jesus and then we exalt sick perverted people.

As one guy said, we pay the Beatles \$100,000.00 a word for I Love You Yeah, Yeah, Yeah and treat them like they were heroes. It's a twisted world we live in you see. And it always has been and it isn't any different now. Men are still rejecting the blessed Christ and lifting up evil people and it's exactly

what the people in Malachi's day did. Read the whole book of Malachi. They were doing the thing from beginning to end. They were no different then. They exalted the evil ones and debased the Holy One and the Just.

So servant dignified, Jesus delivered, Holy One denied, and the Just desired not. Then the Prince of Life destroyed. And here is the most paradoxical paradox of all. They took the Prince of Life, killed Him and let live one who killed. Strange. You want a killer released and a life giver killed. Strange. How twisted you are. Do you see the dynamic of this message? This is powerful, indictment. I will say this for them, at least they weren't hypocritical. I mean, if they were about to murder Jesus, they shouldn't have been too hard on Barabbas who was a murderer. At least they're consistent. If murder's okay, they at least let Barabbas off the hook for it.

Now He's called the Prince of Life. And the word Prince is archigos, a very important word. Archigos is a word that is used in Hebrews 2:10, translated captain of our salvation. It is used in Hebrews 12:1 and translated the author and finisher of our faith. It means the originator or the author or the pioneer or the beginner of something. Oh this is powerful statement. Listen to what he says. "You killed the author of life." Now that is a shocking indictment. To every Jew, only God was the author of life. Right? Of course, in Psalm 36, the statement of the Psalmist reflects the feeling of every Jew. "For with Thee is the fountain of life." You know what he's claiming here for Jesus? He's claiming that Jesus is God and the Jews have in effect executed their God, executed their God.

Even in the prophecy of Zechariah it's interesting to note that it talks about the fact that of piercing...piercing the One who is to come and it is God talking. It is as if God is to be pierced. And the translators of the Septuagint, we were talking about this this morning, the translators of the Septuagint, which was translated from the Hebrew before Christ died, they couldn't figure out how God could get pierced. And so they turned it into an allegory. But what it's saying is, you killed the Prince of Life, the One who is the originator of life, you killed and you wanted released one who took life. What a strange mess. What a strange confusion.

Jesus the originator of life. Do you know that He made that claim. Listen to the word of God. John 1, "All things are made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made in Him was," what, "life." And in John 11:25, don't you love that, where He says this. He says to Mary and Martha at the home of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and," what, "and the life." John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, the life." And John in 1 John 5:11, "This is the record that God hath given unto us, eternal life and this life is in His Son." He was the life giver. He's the only one who can provide life and that's the point of Ephesians 2. "You were dead in sin, but He made you alive together with Christ." You see? Quickened us.

And so Barabbas destroyed life and Jesus created life, but they destroyed Jesus. A twist, what a shocking indictment. And Peter's not going to win any door prizes, we know that. But that's not his

point. So they were cut to the heart with his boldness and his power. And then he adds the ringing note of the resurrection at the end of verse 15, just to show that this didn't end God's plan. "Whom God hath raised from the dead of which we were all witnesses." There's the note that just rings throughout all apostolic preaching. The clear note of the resurrection.

So Peter in classic fashion then emphasizes the contrast between God's acts toward that name. God's act was to glorify, to dignify. Theirs was not. To deny, to deliver, to desire not, to destroy. And then Peter begins to come down from his indictment and it's so beautiful. Look at verse 16. "And His name," and he's still kind of applying it to the cripple here. "It's His name, the names I've just given you by whatever name through faith in His name hath made this man strong whom you see now." You see? "Yeah, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." It's by faith in Jesus by whatever name. It's by faith in Him that the man stands here.

And I want you to take note of this friends, it is not the man's faith, it is Peter and John's faith. You see the gift of healing never operated on the basis of the faith of the one who got healed, it operated on the basis of the faith of the healer. It is Peter saying in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk. It is a command based on Peter's faith. The man didn't even know what was going on and when healers go around and say if you have enough faith you activate the gift of healing, that is not so. The gift of healing was operated on the faith of Peter and John. His name through faith and His name has made the man strong. Peter and John's faith. And so you see he presents Christ as the Messiah and ties Him into this marvelous miracle and he says you've seen this happen right in front of your eyes and it's by faith in the One that God has glorified, and you have denied and delivered, desired not and destroyed.

Boy what an indictment. And may I had this? Some of you may be saying boy that's a terrible thing for them to do. I'd never do that. If you live today, one day longer than this day, you're guilty...without Christ you're guilty as they are of crucifying Him. Hebrews Chapter 6 says "Those who rejected Christ are those who have crucified Him afresh and put Him to an open shame." You stand with the crucifiers, you agree with their judgment of Him, you agree He's a blasphemer, His claims were fake, His claims were fraud, and you live in that open rebellion against God every waking moment of your life when you live outside of God's presence. If you reject Christ you're as guilty as they.

So Peter drops the bricks of condemnation all over their heads and they hurt. And then gently, he hits verse 17 and I love it. After they're probably shaking to the bottom of their feet at this point--to strike, to touch him, or to do anything in anger. He says "And now brethren," almost as if a transition takes place. "And now brethren, I know that through ignorance you did it as did also your rulers." Isn't that good? He says, now I know you did it through ignorance. You just didn't know what you're doing.

Jesus on the cross said, "Father, forgive for they," what, "they don't know what they're doing." See? Now listen to this, beautiful thought. When Peter did that, he cracked the door open to the city of

refuge. Do you remember in the Old Testament, Numbers 35 talks about it, that for Israel's sake they were provided certain cities called cities of refuge. And if an individual killed somebody by accident or in ignorance or in a fit of fury, it would be classified as manslaughter, not as first degree murder in our terms. And the person who committed the manslaughter could run to the city of refuge and could be safe there and his term of safety was as long as the high priest lived. So you hoped for a young high priest, right?

But you could stay in the city of refuge as long as the high priest lived. And that would be time to pacify the situation. Now this is beautiful. This is exactly what God is doing. Peter is saying in effect this, people I know that you did this horrible crime, but God in His grace is accounting it as manslaughter not first degree murder. He knows you did it through ignorance and thus he cracks the door to the city of refuge.

God looks on man as guilty of putting His Son to death in terms of manslaughter. In 1 Corinthians, don't look it up, just listen to this. Verse 2...is it 2:8, I think it is. Comes to mind. Oh yes, "Which none of the princes of this age knew for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. He there indicates that even the Gentiles also didn't know what they were doing.

And so God is willing to treat you not as a murder, but as one guilty of manslaughter and as long as the high priest lives you can be safe. And how long does our high priest live? Forever, forever. So he cracks the door and says come on into the city of refuge, we've got an eternal high priest and you're okay. You say, well, I'd like to get in that thing. How do I get there? Look at verse 19. "Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." Turn around, change your evaluation of Jesus Christ. God knows you did it in ignorance and God's willing to treat you in case...in the case of manslaughter and not first degree murder. Come on, just turn around. The door's open, come on. And your sins will be blotted out and the Greek word is erased, erased. Not covered over, erased.

Forgiveness is yours and so Peter says there's grace, there's refuge. The last name that he chooses is in verse 18, Christ. "But those things which God before has shown by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." Christ simply means Messiah. It's just a Greek word for Messiah. And Peter wraps up by saying, "He's your Messiah." And He's been declared to be your Messiah by fulfilled prophecies regarding His suffering.

Remember when we studied the end of the gospel of John and we saw how that in Jesus' execution and death He fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old Testament. That was God declaring Him Messiah. So God declared that name to be Messiah. What have we seen then? We've seen God dignifying Him as servant, and God declaring Him as Messiah. Men, however, as Savior delivered Him, as Holy One denied Him, as Just desired Him, as Prince of Life, destroyed Him. But there's refuge and that's the beauty of it. To repent and be converted. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for providing the door of refuge. We thank You that You open the door for every man who by faith in Christ desires to enter in. And that You even said, come unto Me. And Father, we thank You for such an invitation. Let all of us though we were at one time all in rebellion against God, though we were at one time all antagonistic toward the Spirit. Though we were at one time all in darkness of rejecting Christ. You called to us and You said the door of refuge is open. I consider it manslaughter, not murder. You're free as long as the high priest lives if you'll come unto Him.

God we pray that that might be true of everyone here. That no one would leave this place who has not repented, turned around in his attitude toward Jesus Christ and entered into His refuge. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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