

WHO DID IT?  
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 3:11-21  
APR 19, 2015

<sup>11</sup> While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's, astounded. <sup>12</sup> And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?" <sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. <sup>14</sup> But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, <sup>15</sup> and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup> And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

<sup>17</sup> "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. <sup>18</sup> But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, <sup>20</sup> that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

This weekend Boston Marathon is run again

even as jury decides fate of Dzhokhar (Zohar) Tsarnaev,  
who set off bomb at this event two years ago.

He and his lawyers admit he did it but lawyers still argue  
it was brother Tamerlan, not he, who made it happen.

Who did it? is question asked not only by police

when they are trying to find suspect who pulled trigger  
but also by court trying to decide who ultimately responsible.

Text is referring to an event that was not a crime -

miraculous healing of crippled man by Peter & John  
in first verses of Acts 3 -

although it was treated as crime by Jewish leaders  
as we will hear in next Sunday's reading.

Peter uses it to point farther back to Jesus death & resurrection,  
which, he points out, was a result of a crime.

But, Peter points out, in both cases, was not those most visible  
who are most responsible.

GOD RESTORES A MAN BY JESUS' POWER

## GOD RAISED JESUS AS HE PLANNED GOD RENEWS US AS HE PROMISES

### GOD RESTORES A MAN BY JESUS' POWER

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Luke tells us after Jesus resurrection and Pentecost  
believers went to temple to pray every day.

Just like people today come to churches for money & help,  
beggars came to temple hoping godly people there  
would help them out.

One day Peter & John walk past man born crippled  
and have no money to give him but instead say,  
“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk”  
and take him by the hand and lift him up.

Now, suddenly, he not only can walk but is jumping for joy.  
As he clings to Peter & John, others come running because  
they recognize him and realize what just happened.

These people apparently think what healed man also thinks:  
that Peter & John are responsible for this miracle.

Peter immediately points out it was not them who did it.

It was not their power or piety, nor this man's piety either,  
but the power and holiness of Jesus Christ.

At same time, he emphasizes, it is done through faith in Jesus.

Peter did what he did for this man out of faith in Jesus  
and this man responded as he did out of faith in Jesus.

We will come back to how faith itself is not our doing  
but is something caused by God.

But Peter's point is that this miracle is done both by Jesus  
and through faith in him, that is,

not rejecting but receiving what Jesus is doing.

It was not done BY their own piety or faith  
but it would not have happened except through faith.

Peter uses this opportunity to immediately point to  
an even greater “lifting up,” the resurrection of Jesus.

## GOD RAISED JESUS AS HE PLANNED

<sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. <sup>14</sup> But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, <sup>15</sup> and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

<sup>17</sup> “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. <sup>18</sup> But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

In v. 13 Peter is indirectly quoting a prophecy of Isaiah about God’s servant who will suffer to save people..

Word “servant” can also be translated “son,” God’s “boy”.

Jesus is same God worshiped at this temple,  
the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob.

This claim is what got him killed.

Jesus is the holy and righteous one, glorified by God  
but denied and rejected by the people of God  
even after Pilate, the gentile, decided to release him.

Jesus, author and giver of life, ironically, was killed  
in favor of a murderer, a taker of life.

Those listening could object, “We didn’t know about that.”

Peter puts it bluntly, “You acted in ignorance.”  
but God knew exactly what he was doing.

He planned and foretold it all ahead of time.

So, in the death of Jesus, who did it?

It was sinful people, all sinful people, who did it.

Ignorance is no excuse for responsibility.

but at the same time, it couldn’t have happened  
unless God allowed it, because he is in control.

God, author of life, is never author or cause of death or evil

but he allows it when he can use it for his purposes  
such as man born crippled to be miraculously healed,  
such as Jesus taking all punishment for sin in our place  
and being glorified by rising again from the dead.

Is interesting that when Bible speaks of Jesus’ resurrection,  
it is almost always in the passive: He was raised.

His resurrection is something that was done to him  
who was dead by the living God.

Even though, in mystery of Trinity, Jesus himself is God.

Point Peter leads to is just as man born crippled  
is raised up by power of Jesus through faith  
and Jesus himself is raised up by God's plan  
even though God allowed his death,

#### GOD RENEWS US AS HE PROMISES

<sup>19</sup> Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, <sup>20</sup>  
that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and  
that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven  
must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God  
spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

God's plan is not just resurrection of Jesus & return to heaven  
and not just healing of on man born unable to walk  
to show God's power and glory  
but restoration of all things, including us,  
who are born spiritually dead and unable to  
walk in God's ways or even to reach out to him.

Sin causes us too to be ignorant, maybe sincere but wrong.  
and unable to help or change ourselves.

If there are going to be times of refreshing as Peter puts it,  
if our sins are to be blotted out, taken away,  
it is entirely God's doing.

But just as bad doesn't happen unless God allows it,  
this good doesn't happen unless we allow it.

This is why Peter calls us to repent, to let go of sins which  
we cling to because they are our favorites or out of fear,  
recognizing that they are dragging us to our death,  
and to turn instead to Jesus, trusting him in faith, that is,  
not rejecting the mercy he is constantly offering us.

When we see how God works, we see that  
repentance and faith are not something we do  
by our own power or piety  
but something God himself does in us by his word,  
by the name of Jesus which made this man walk.

Picture some empty rowboats out on the lake.

One is moving along all by itself, how can that be?  
It must be that the wind is blowing.

If it is moving, something else is doing it.  
But another boat is not moving, even though wind is blowing.  
it is because it is anchored, stopping itself from moving.

This is the way we are. If we are being moved to faith  
it is only because God's spirit is doing it, using his word.  
If we are not being moved to faith,  
it is because we are holding ourselves back.  
We have no power to move ourselves  
but do have power to resist being moved.  
It is God's word that shines in darkness of our ignorance  
unless we shut our eyes to the light.  
It is God's word that takes hold of us & turns us from sin  
unless we grab hold of it and refuse to let go.  
It is God's word that draws us to Jesus side  
unless we put on the brakes and reject him.  
So, when we find ourselves weak in faith, anxious, fearful,  
what we need is not just self-pep talks  
but more of the promises in God's word.  
When we find ourselves not knowing what to do  
or constantly sinning even when we know better  
what we need is not just trying harder  
but more of God's truth and his forgiveness.  
Instead of being like a man born lame trying to walk  
what we need is the word spoken to us in Jesus' name  
and the hand reached out to lift us up.  
When we, despite the way we were born,  
walk in God's ways and jump for joy  
and cling to Jesus and praise him, who did it?  
It wasn't us, Peter says, but the power of Jesus.

**GOD RESTORES A MAN BY JESUS' POWER**

through faith in his name

**GOD RAISED JESUS AS HE PLANNED**

though God allowed him to be killed by ignorant men

**GOD RENEWS US AS HE PROMISES**

by giving us repentance and faith

so we can receive forgiveness and refreshing

now and until the restoring of all things in heaven.