



# MONDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

## Read: Acts 3:1-10 & Isaiah 35

### Plug In...

Here a specific 'sign' is done at the temple site, but not through the priests or any of the temple leadership. This kick starts a tension in the narrative between the temple authorities and the Apostles. Throughout chapters 3-5 we'll move between two locations: houses where the believers are (2:46 and 5:42) and the public temple (3:1 – 4:22).

With each scene, observe the precise location where the Holy Spirit does work and through whom? It is definitely surprising to the Jewish audience watching on (v. 10).

### Chew It Over...

In this first scene, a man normally barred from the temple is transformed. Notice what he's able to do next (v.8). Think, location, location, location.

With this miraculous sign, what is shown about the location of God's forgiveness and blessing?

### Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to place you next to those that have no hope, and who endure great suffering and ostracism. May you not walk by, but ask to see them and give them the good news of Jesus so they will rejoice and leap into the kingdom.



## TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

### Read: Acts 3:11-26 & Isaiah 32:9-20

#### Plug In...

Peter rhetorically asks those who saw the amazing healing: “Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this?” They shouldn’t be. The God of Israel has always been watching over His people and always promised to act for their salvation (*cf.* [Exodus 3:15-17](#)).

Peter gives Jesus the title ‘Servant’. Designating Jesus ‘Servant’ could not float past without recalling God’s promise of a Servant to the Israelite mind. After the disobedience of Israel and their expulsion from the land, God still promised a future time where He would act to save His people. The Book of Isaiah records God’s promise: A servant, Israel, will be a servant to Israel ([Isaiah 49:1-5](#)). God will use this servant to restore Israel ([Isaiah 49:8-12](#)). Peter is getting the ‘men of Israel’ back in touch with what they know their Bible says! So, when Peter recounts the trial, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the continued explanation of the work of the servant in Isaiah should make sense: the servant will be raised up and glorified because He suffered for the sins of Israel ([Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12](#)).

#### Chew It Over...

The servant in Isaiah is an object of abuse and endures great suffering, but God raises and glorifies him. As Peter states, the resurrection and glorification of the Servant Jesus has taken place. That is why this healed man received the benefits refreshing that the glorified Servant offers (*cf.* [Isaiah 55-57](#) – NB: this time of refreshing is particularly identified with the work of the Holy Spirit in [Isaiah 32](#)).

The lame man received a lot of refreshment to his life, and there is clearly a full, irreversible restoration of all things to come (v. 21). It is all available to the person who

turns back to Jesus to get their sins wiped away and for them the Holy Spirit starts the process of refreshing restoration that will go on until the return of Jesus.

Our culture craves restoration and refreshment, the fact that we are over-drugged and over-sexed speaks for itself. What is Peter's sermon about the Servant saying to your soul today? From what tap do you get your source of life?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Come Lord Jesus, Come! Help us taste that the Lord is good and refreshes our soul.



## WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

### Read: Acts 4:1-12 & Psalm 118

#### Plug In...

We see time and time again, when faced with opposition and threat of punishment or death, the fear that would naturally come upon a person is overcome as they are filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter is filled with the Spirit and explains the power that enabled the amazing healing of a lame man.

Peter builds on his previous sermon about the suffering Servant who is raised and glorified by quoting [Psalm 118](#). The Psalm talks about a king going to God's temple after victory. The king is reflecting on how it was a hard won battle, not only where the opposition was tough, but it appears his own people doubted his success - to make this point he speaks of himself as a stone rejected by the builders. The Psalm says God takes this rejected stone and in God's project it becomes the most important stone. Jesus uses this image from the Psalm about Himself ([Luke 20](#)).

Peter makes the point that Jesus' resurrection is proof that God has made Him the Messiah – the King!

#### Chew It Over...

Peter states that God raising Jesus from the dead as King means Jesus is the saviour. The only saviour that exists.

We know people don't like the word 'only' in the above statement. Why do they stumble over that? Why not tease that out with someone you know who struggles with the exclusive claims of Christianity? Get to know what and why they think what they do. Engage with it, hear their concerns, challenge them, answer what you can.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Pray for this conversation.



# THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

## Read: Acts 4:13-22

### Plug In...

Peter and John – and the rest of the believers – were so impacted by the realisation that Jesus is the Messiah and that the kingdom had started to emerge that they could not stop speaking about it. Their active speaking about it was before the leaders threatened them. Their activity is what caused the leaders to notice and try to clamp them shut.

### Chew It Over...

In professional, corporate, government contexts it is becoming almost illegal to speak about Christ – as the differing authorities make us aware. Social settings increasingly have more of these unwritten rules. This passage prompts us with some decisions to make in the midst of our fear of repercussions:

Proclaiming that *only* through Jesus can people be saved.

Deciding whose directions and prohibitions we listen to and are governed by.

Beginning – or continuing – to not stop speaking about the gospel.

### Prayer Suggestion

Recognising that this boldness of the Apostles only comes via the Holy Spirit, pray to be filled. If you have not been speaking publicly and explicitly about your faith, hope, and the reality that others can only be saved through Jesus, ask God to sort out within to whom you listen to.



## FRIDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

### Read: Acts 4:23-31

#### **Plug In...**

Peter and John respond to persecution and opposition by meeting with the believers, sharing the story so that collectively they could join in solidarity with the situation and with God's plan. They reflect on Scripture; they pray; they ask specifically for boldness.

#### **Chew It Over...**

Church and small groups are places to preach the Gospel to one another, hear the stories of opposition, and in solidarity pray for collective boldness.

Make sure you ask questions to your group and fellow Christians of how they are sharing the gospel. What pressures are they under to be silent, change views? Let's learn what is really happening at ground level. Then, let's join *together* and pray for courage, that the Holy Spirit will make us gallant, daring, and brave.

#### **Prayer Suggestion**

Lord Jesus, fill us with your Holy Spirit. May we be unflinching in testifying to you. Bring others to your church.



## WEEKEND 18-19 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

### Read: Psalm 2 & 146 (referred to in Acts 4)

#### Plug In...

We saw the believers respond to opposition by praying. They pray using the theology of (and even phrases from) [Psalm 146](#) and [Psalm 2](#).

God is creator of everything. God is Sovereign Lord – all powerful; dominating every other power. They see their persecution occurs because the Messiah is persecuted. And, what looks bad, evil, problematic from one angle, is at the appointment of God for the deliverance of His plan of salvation for His people. [NB: Twice Peter has referred to the death of Jesus, and by association the suffering of Jesus' people from persecution, as part of the 'decree' of God (cf. [Acts 3:17-18](#) and [4:27-28](#)). Psalm 2 centres on the 'decree' of the Sovereign God (v. 7).]

#### Chew It Over...

The importance of absorbing what God says in Scripture is shown here in [Acts 4](#). The threats and opposition for the early Christians is very real, very intimidating. You would run for the hills and abandon ship if your life depended upon it, unless...you can actually see that such rulers are 'puny', that any opposition to Jesus is doomed to failure and seal the opponents' fate.

Continue to pray prayers shaped and controlled by the words of God and what He says about life and its reality.

#### Prayer Suggestion

Pray through [Psalm 146](#) this weekend.