

Session 3



Purpose Restored

THE POINT

Through Jesus, we can be forgiven and restored to the purpose for which He created us.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Paint doesn't last. It fades. It cracks. It peels. Live in a house long enough, and you will find yourself needing to repaint any exterior wood. I've had to do that twice over the years.

When I paint, though, I'm only dealing with one color. Wash the wall, scrape away anything that's peeling, and slap on a new coat. Manageable. But dealing with hundreds of colors that have faded and been covered with years of grime is something altogether different. Art restoration is a monumental task best not left to people like me. Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," the fresco painted on a wall at the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, began to deteriorate shortly after da Vinci put his brushes away. Since its completion in 1498, the painting has undergone seven attempts at restoration, and the last one took twenty years.¹

We need restoration too. We've lost our way, wandered from God, and painted over the abundant life and purpose God created us for with the dull color of self and the grime of sin. No DIY effort will do. We need the Master Restorer.

QUESTION 1:

What are some of your favorite pieces of art or music?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

ACTS 3:14-18

¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; ¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. ¹⁷ And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

Few people like interruptions. I don't, but I'm trying more and more to see interruptions as opportunities. That's what the apostles Peter and John did. In Acts 3, these two followers of Jesus were headed to the temple to pray. Prayer is certainly an important and needed practice for all of us, but Peter and John were interrupted. They encountered a lame beggar, but instead of giving him a few coins, they gave him something better. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (v. 6).

The man was immediately healed, and he was able to do something he had never done before: "he . . . walked, and entered with them" (v. 8). His lameness had barred him from coming in. But the man didn't just enter; he was "walking, and leaping, and praising God" (v. 8). I think even today someone leaping around would draw a crowd, and a crowd was definitely what formed in the temple that day. Peter seized this interruption and turned it into an opportunity to talk about Jesus.

Peter began with a question that had an obvious answer: "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?" (v. 12). *Why?* A disabled man who has never walked is leaping around! Yet to Peter's point, this man was healed, not by the two apostles, but by Jesus. Giving health and healing to people was routine work for Jesus, all in a day's work. Peter was clear in giving the honor and glory to Jesus.

Peter then turned the attention away from the healed man and on to the crowd themselves. He had brought Jesus into the conversation, but then said, "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just . . . And killed the Prince of life" (vv. 14-15). That was a serious and sobering accusation; the Greek meaning behind "denied" doesn't necessarily mean they didn't believe, but that they refused to accept. Even though the people were aware of Jesus's teaching and incredible miracles, they didn't want Him. In addition, Peter wanted them to understand that they didn't just reject some itinerant rabbi; Jesus is "the Holy One and the Just" (v. 14). This wasn't lost on the Jewish crowd. Peter was referring to Jesus as

God's Messiah. Here was God's Messiah—the very source of life—in their midst, but they rejected Him and killed Him.

Thankfully, that wasn't the end of the story. God raised Jesus from the dead. This wasn't hearsay or wishful thinking. Peter and John stood there as witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus.

Because Jesus is alive, He is still at work. He works on our behalf as we place our "faith in his name" (v. 16). The name of Jesus isn't some magical word; even for us, our names represent the whole of who we are. So to put faith in the name of Jesus is to believe in and trust in Jesus's authority. Because Jesus is alive, putting our faith in Him is still as life transforming as it was for this once crippled man.

But how much faith does it take? We don't know how much faith or understanding this crippled man had, but when Peter said, "In the name of

Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (v. 6), it was enough for the man to take hold of Peter's hand. Mustard seeds are incredibly small—1/8th of an inch in diameter—but Jesus said, "For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20). And nothing is impossible! A man stood with Peter and John who could attest to that. Beyond the physical healing, Jesus healed him spiritually. And He can do the same for you.

QUESTION 2:

Where do you see evidence in our culture that people need restoration?

Acts 3:19-21

¹⁹ Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. ²⁰ And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: ²¹ Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

"I've got good news and bad news. What do you want to hear first?" One study found that those delivering the news prefer to give the good news first. They see it as a way to ease into the bad news. But the same study found that those hearing the news prefer to hear the bad news first.² We like ending on a positive note.

Peter had led with the bad news first. The bad news was wrapped up in the healing of the

crippled man, but there it was: You killed the One who is the source of life! You may have acted in ignorance (v. 17), not fully realizing the implications of denying and rejecting Jesus (vv. 13-14), but it's still bad news. You had a hand in crucifying the Son of God.

Peter now followed with good news. Their past actions weren't the end of the story if they acted upon the next words Peter spoke: "Repent ye

therefore, and be converted” (v. 19). Change your mind about Jesus and the life you have been living apart from Him. This is more than altering and tweaking your opinion of Jesus; it’s a complete change in direction. Picture the soldiers on parade who are given the command, “About face.” They turn around in the opposite direction. That was the call issued to the crowd that day, and it’s the invitation we’re given.

Peter points to three things God does when we repent and turn back.

1. Your sins are blotted out. “Blotted out” (v. 19) carries the meaning of “erased.” Ink didn’t soak into first-century parchments as ink does on our modern-day paper. A wet sponge could erase whatever was on a parchment in the same way we might erase a whiteboard today. It doesn’t matter how stained we are from our past failures, rebellion, and sin; Christ’s death on the cross fully erases and makes us clean.

2. Seasons of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord. Jesus doesn’t just remove the bad; He replaces it with something good! For most of us, Fall is quickly approaching. Depending on where you are, you may have already begun experiencing the hints of Fall. After the sweltering days of August, that first day you step outside and feel a significant change in the temperature is so refreshing. After a life of sweltering sin, the cool breeze of forgiveness is so refreshing.

3. He will send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah. We can experience the forgiveness and refreshment of His presence in our lives, but that is only an inkling of what’s to come when Jesus returns to set up His eternal kingdom.

QUESTION 3:

When have you seen repentance lead to restoration?

Acts 3:22-26

²² For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. ²³ And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. ²⁴ Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. ²⁵ Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. ²⁶ Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Engage

REPENTANCE, REFRESHMENT, AND STRENGTH

In the space below, write down one thing you've had to repent from recently, one place where you've felt refreshed recently, and one area of your faith that has felt strong. Afterwards, take a moment to thank Jesus for His work in your life.

Repentance:

Refreshment:

Strength:

My Prayer:

One of the most offensive statements a Christian can make is that Jesus is the only way to God. We are viewed as arrogant and narrow-minded because we take Jesus at His word when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). But that isn’t just the sentiment of people on the outside looking at the church; up to 70 percent of people who claim to be Christians say there are more ways to God.³

Peter would certainly disagree with that erroneous viewpoint. He heard Jesus speak that claim of exclusivity with his own ears. If there’s more than one way to God, why did Jesus have to die on the cross? Even Jesus Himself prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matt. 26:39). There was no other way, and Jesus went to the cross.

QUESTION 4:

What other paths do people attempt apart from Christ to find salvation?

If anyone thought they had an inside track into coming to God, it would be the Jews. They were descendants of Abraham. God Himself gave the Law to Moses. They had God’s spokespersons, the prophets. They had the covenants, the special relationships God established with His people. But that wasn’t enough. Even Moses, the highly esteemed leader of the Jewish people, spoke of Another. “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” (Acts 3:22). The prophets also pointed to Him.

I love reading the Old Testament. On average, I read through the Bible three-to-four times every year, and I do it because I love reading God’s Word. And every time I go through the Old Testament—every time—I see Jesus the Messiah. After His resurrection, Jesus taught two confused disciples on the road to Emmaus: “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).

The Hebrew Scriptures—the Old Testament—make a big deal about the Messiah. As Moses said, “Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” (Acts 3:22). When Moses said to listen, he used the Hebrew word *shama*, which means more than hearing the words. It includes action. We hear something, and we act upon what we hear. Parents understand this. If you’ve ever had to say firmly to a child (or a thirty-year-old living in the basement), “This room needs to be clean”—and then added with a dramatic pause—“Do you hear what I’m saying?” you understand the Hebrew! You’re not just passing on information; you expect something to be done with that information.

Listen to the Messiah and do what He says. Repent and turn to God. He’s the only one worth listening to. There’s great news because He wants us to come to Him. He wants to save us. He wants to bless us. But it’s through Him—and only through Him.

QUESTION 5:

How has your life been blessed because of Jesus?

LIVE IT OUT

Jesus wants to restore you to the purpose for which you were created. What will you do with that truth? Choose one of the following applications:

- **Repent.** Restoration begins by coming to Christ in repentance and faith. If you've never made a commitment of your life to Christ, you can do so now. Talk to someone in your Bible study group about your desire to follow Christ. The inside front cover of this book can tell you more.
- **Refresh.** Even as a Christian, life can be challenging. Thankfully, you're not alone. Spend some focused and unhurried time with Jesus by praying and reading His Word. Let His Spirit wash over you to keep you strong.
- **Restore.** Let others see Jesus in you as you live out a renewed and restored purpose. You can't restore others to their purpose in Christ, but you can be a testimony to them of how Christ restores. Be ready to tell your story to all who are willing to hear.



1. <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/27/arts/after-a-20-year-cleanup-a-brighter-clearer-last-supper-emerges.html>.
2. <https://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/good-news-first-or-bad-news-right-answer-according-to-science-and-emotional-intelligence.html>.
3. <https://probe.org/probe-survey-report-4-witnessing-to-your-faith-and-the-response/>.