13b ACTS

Let's resume our study in Acts chapter 3. We find ourselves in verse 17. I want to say one more thing about what we have covered. When Peter in verse 14 says you denied the Holy One and the just and you asked for a murderer to be granted to you.

Now, these are people who were there when Jesus was crucified. These are people who were in Jerusalem who evidently if they weren't actually looking on and yelling in the crowd, talking around the water cooler the next day, thought well that must have been a good idea. That rabble-rouser, that pretender, that blasphemer, he probably got what he deserved.

If he really was the Son of God, he wouldn't have been crucified. Because Peter says you all delivered him up. You all denied him.

You all turned him over to the Romans. You did that. Now, let's think about some sins.

Let's think about some crimes against God that we could commit. You have your obvious area of sexual sins. You have theft and robbery.

You have murder. You have your mental attitude sins of hatred and bitterness and vindictiveness and jealousy and backbiting and fear and worry. You've got your sins of the tongue, of gossiping and maligning and judging, deciding you're going to talk about someone and tear them down.

Hate can be a sin. God hates certain things. God hates evil.

God hates sinful actions. He doesn't hate the sinners. It says God loves the world, but he doesn't have to love what the world does.

You can have compassion for a person even when they are all fouled up. Thank goodness that he does. If he gave us the attitude we deserve, he'd hate us all and we'd all be on the big conveyor belt to the hot place.

But we think about these sins and we think, boy, there's some that are really bad. You think about child abuse. You think about starving people to death.

You think about gassing the prisoners in the death camps in World War II and that. We think these are really terrible, but we figure probably the worst thing you could possibly do is be saying, crucify him, crucify him, stick him on the cross, pound in the nails, kill that guy, boo on him. We don't like him anyway.

You would think this is probably the worst sin you could possibly commit, right? I mean, it would be at least right up there with the worst sins we can think of. But look at what Peter says. Look at this.

He says, you all denied the Holy One. God in the flesh was right here walking among you, and you spit at him. Some of these people were slapping him and throwing stuff at him and saying you blasphemer, and they put him on the cross.

But look at this. He says, you denied him. You asked for a murderer to be granted in his place.

You killed the archaegos of life. Remember that word archaegos? It can be translated leader or ruler or prince. It can be the originator or the founder or the author of something.

Here is the one that is bringing life. He's the author of life. He's the prince of life.

If you want life, this is the one you go to. And you killed him. You killed the prince of life.

This word, as I mentioned, is used other places, like in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 10, where the author of Hebrews says, it was fitting for him, for Jesus, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. He's actually talking about God the Father perfected the author of our salvation through his sufferings. He made him complete and perfect.

Well, that word author of their salvation is archaegos. Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 2, that was Hebrews 2.10. Hebrews 12.2 says we should be fixing our eyes on Jesus. Now, I don't know about you, but when I go through my day, I fix my eyes on lots of things.

I fix my eyes on my 15 inch computer screen or my 17 inch computer screen or my 21 inch computer screen or my laptop. I fix my eyes on the road in front of me when I'm driving. I fix my eyes on lots of things to guide me and accomplish my goals and get me through my day.

What does this mean? Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the archaegos and the perfecter of our faith. As we do whatever it is we do, we keep in mind the Lord Jesus. Is this the kind of attitude that Jesus died for me to walk around and have? Are these the kind of goals, the kinds of objectives, the kinds of expectations that Jesus died on the cross for me to walk around this day and half? And that's a pretty good way to judge where we are.

It is not enough to go to seminary like I did and learn Hebrew and Greek and say, well, I'm just by nature of the fact that I've got a Master of Theology degree, I'm just closer to God just because I've done a lot of studying. It's not the case. The measure of how close I am to God is, are my eyes fixed on Jesus, who is the originator of faith? It's His name that has the power.

And if I fix my eyes on Him, if I judge my conduct and my attitudes and my actions by Him, that tells me where I stand with God. Author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross? Now, when you're enduring, some of you may be

enduring right now. I'm enduring right now.

A lot of us are enduring right now. When you're in an endurance mode and you're suffering some form of affliction or pain or hardship, your first instinct, your first thought is not to have joy, right? If you're in school and you're in the middle of a difficult test, if you've got an illness, you got the stomach flu, you don't immediately think, well, I'm feeling pretty joyful right now. We just don't think in terms of joy when we're oppressed, right? But look at Jesus.

He says we're supposed to look at Jesus. What are we looking at when we look at Jesus? We look at the fact that when He was enduring the cross, He was looking at joy. He was enduring the cross.

He was looking at joy. Now, this is not something that comes naturally to us, and it isn't something that we can even do in our own steam. The power to do this comes through Jesus' name.

God can give us the ability to endure. God can give us the ability to see the joy in spite of our tribulations at the moment. My perception is that these past several weeks, for nearly everybody I know in our church has been a time of pressure and a time of tribulation in some sense or another.

Some of us have had it going on longer than that, but I know of a lot of specific pressure tests that have happened just in the last few weeks to all of us. And I think that it is that same thing that we have talked about before. You get the information, and then you get the test.

It's just like school. And you think, well, maybe we ought to go to a happier subject. Let's get off of this.

Let's get out of these passages and go to something so we don't have to take these tests. But of course, that kind of defeats the purpose. We want to learn these things.

We want to pass. We want to achieve. We want to have God accomplish His goal in us.

And this is where we are. But I know in our case and in your case, everybody in some case has got a place of pressure and a place of testing. Maybe multiple places of pressure and testing.

And this is what Peter is putting on his audience. He's saying, I don't know if you know it or not, but God's not just smiling down on you in a benevolent fashion here. You're in a pressure cooker here.

All is not well. And you took the archaegos of life and crucified Him. And you may think that the sun is shining and it's a wonderful day and you're walking around in your robes,

but the God of the universe has an issue, has a bone to pick with you over killing His Son who's trying to come down here and be the Messiah and save you.

Right? He says, look, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified His servant, Jesus. You better look at Him. You better pay attention to Him.

What does the author of Hebrews say here in Hebrews 12.2? He says, fixing our eyes on Jesus. Same thing Peter's telling him to do. He is the archaegos, the same term that Peter uses.

He's the originator, the prince and the one who completes. He begins it and he ends it. He's the alpha and the omega.

He's the start and the finish of it. Generally, you say, well, that guy's the be all and end all of computer knowledge. Or he's the beginning and the end of Tiger Woods.

You've got golf from A to Z and that guy, he can do it all. He can drive, he can chip, he can get out of traps, he can recover. The guy is just everything there is about golf.

You go to Michael Jordan or somebody in basketball, A to Z sums up the whole thing. Well, this is what it's saying. He's the A to Z, the beginner and the ender, the one who starts it and the one who wraps it up.

So what did he do? What are we looking at when we look at Jesus? It's not just a picture on a wall with kind of a glowing spot behind his head. It says he endured the cross and he got past the shame of it. The Lord Jesus Christ endured shame.

In case you didn't know it, they weren't real concerned about propriety and the embarrassment factor of someone they were crucifying. They were crucified naked. And of course, it's a great grievous embarrassment for anybody, and especially in Israel, to be unclothed in public.

But they took a person naked and hung him on the cross and waited for him to die. And that's how Jesus was crucified. You would think, well, here's God the Father making the plan for salvation.

God the Son needs to come and die on the cross, but does it have to be on the cross? Can't we find something more noble, more dignified? Can't he jump on a grenade in a war? Can't he be at the head of a great troop hacking and slashing and go down like Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville in the process of moving his men around in some unfortunate accident? Or can't he valiantly go? Why does it have to be this ignominious, shameful, embarrassing, humiliating death? Well, the reason is, he was made to be sin for us. Our sins are embarrassing, humiliating. He endured that cross.

He despised the shame of it, and he got through it so that now he's sitting down at the

right hand of the Father. How did he do it? What does it say in this verse? For the joy that was set before him. He said, you know, whatever this path is that I have to travel that is a part of the plan of God, I'm going to do it because at the end of that path, there is the approval of God.

There is this joy. There is an unspeakable, amazing blessing and benefit at the end of this that surpasses understanding. It is too wonderful to even be imagined, but I know it's there because God tells me it's there.

So whatever I have to go through to get there, it's worth it. Our sufferings in this life are comparatively mild. You don't have to travel very far to get into air conditioning.

You don't have to travel very far to find some chilled water coming out of a fountain. You don't have to go very far to find many comforts that the kings of the ancient world would have slain a hundred servants to enjoy. They would send servants to the mountains to try to chip a giant two-ton block of ice that would slowly melt.

By the time they got it back to the king, it was about the size of a stick of butter. He would have one mint julep off of that and these slaves would kill themselves getting it back there. But to the king, hey, plenty more slaves where they came from.

We don't really suffer. We in this country are not persecuted. We are not enslaved.

We are not wakened in the middle of the night and spirited away never to be seen again. It's not like the Shining Path did to the Christians down in South America. There's a book called One Bright Shining Path.

If you haven't ever read it, the fellow who that book is about had a brother who came and spoke at our church in Tahlequah. It's a powerful book and it's a reminder that there is persecution and there is execution for Christians in this world today and it's not that far from us. But we enjoy wonderful prosperity here.

What does God ask of us? Well, live through the circumstances and don't just get through them. Any rank unbelieving pagan can get through circumstances and sit there and say, well, every cloud must have a silver lining. There's a reason why we endure.

There's a reason why we persevere. We have a goal. We're shooting for something.

We're going to live this life one way or another anyway. Why not live it so that it counts? For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross. Peter is laying a pretty heavy guilt trip, if you will, on the Jews in Jerusalem.

Now, they could react. They could get angry like they're going to later on when these kinds of sermons are preached at them. Or they can respond and say, where's the solution? Where's the fix? It's faith in his name that has made this man strong.

Yet now, brethren, verse 17 of Acts 3, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. Now, he's really cutting them some slack here. But that's what Jesus said on the cross, isn't it? Father, forgive them.

Why? What's the rest of that quote? Jesus looked down at the cross. He says, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Now, it is still a sin because they should have known.

If anybody on earth, the Jews, had the Old Testament scriptures, they should have been able to recognize the Lord of Glory. But Jesus says, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.

Peter says, brethren, I know you did this in ignorance. And even your rulers, you know, the big, bad Pharisees and the scribes that we pick on and look down on. And Jesus called them broods of vipers and all.

But he says they did it in ignorance. But these things that God foretold by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ would suffer, he has thus fulfilled. You go to the passages in Isaiah.

He was wounded for our iniquities. He was bruised for our transgressions. The Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all.

And by his stripes, by his lashes, we are healed. He is bruised so that our bruises are taken away. He is lashed so that our wounds are healed.

Now, verse 19 is the punchline. Having said all of this, what? What should you and I do? Change your mind. Verse 19.

Metanoeo. It actually says metanoesate. This is an aorist active imperative.

You say, well, what is an aorist? There are two kinds of tense that we're going to be concerned with talking about here in the next minute or so. There's the present tense and the aorist tense. When someone gives a command, it's either going to be in the present tense or it's going to be in the aorist tense.

You know what a present tense is. That's action in the present time, right? So if I say listening, which is hopefully what everyone's doing, that's an action that is ongoing in present time. It's a present tense.

You're listening. If I say there was thunder and everybody stopped and listened, that's kind of a momentary thing. There was thunder and everybody in that space of time stopped and listened.

That would be more like an aorist tense. However long the action lasted, you look at it as all one thing wrapped up in one package. This imperative is going to either be an aorist

or a present.

So now think about it. If I'm going to give you an imperative, a command for listening, I can either say, listen, listen to me. Generally, why would I say that? Because I would think you're not.

Hey, listen. You see? That would be an aorist. Start doing something you're not currently doing.

If I give you a present tense command, as it would be here in Greek, to do this in English, I would have to say it this way. Keep on listening. Don't stop listening.

Keep on listening. That would be a present imperative. Continue to do something that you are doing.

Keep on enduring. Keep on listening. Keep on praying.

Keep on having faith. We have many present imperatives in the scripture. This imperative is the one we're interested in.

And what is it? He says, repent and be converted. Well, repent is metanoeo, change your mind, metamorphose your mind. And it's an aorist.

You know what that means? They have not changed their mind yet and they need to do it. Their mind needs a change. They are the people of God.

They crucified the Lord of Glory, but it's not too late for them. This is what I find fascinating. Most people would say Judas Iscariot is a hell bound unbeliever because he betrayed Jesus, turned him over to the people that killed him.

So Judas is going to be bobbing around like a cork in a lake of fire for all eternity. You can tell he betrayed the Lord. What does Peter say to these people? You crucified the author of life.

You turned him over to the Romans. You misidentified, you rejected, you denied the holy one and just he's accusing them all the same things that Judas did. And he's saying, you know what? If you'll change your mind, you can be delivered.

If you'll change your mind, you can be saved. It is not the unpardonable sin. I just edited a sermon today of Dr. Christmas called The Unpardonable Sin.

And I was very happy to discover that Dr. Chris will understand the unpardonable sin exactly the same way I do. You know, the Bible teaches that there is a sin that is unforgivable. You know what that sin is? Rejecting the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was doing miracles. He was casting out demons. And some of these Israelites came

up and said, you know, people are saying you're from God because you're casting out these demons.

But you know what? The reason you can cast out demons is because you're in league with Satan, the prince of demons. You're in league with Beelzebub. And so you and Beelzebub get together and you put on this sham act where demon comes in.

And when you tell him to go, he jumps out because you're you're a chief demon guy. You're in league. And Jesus said, you know what? You can speak against me, the son of man, and God will still forgive you.

But if you speak against the Holy Spirit, you will not be forgiven. And what's he saying? By what power was he casting out the demons? It wasn't his own power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that why was that power there? It was a testimony to identify Jesus Christ as the son of God, as the Messiah. It was the testimony of the spirit. Dr. Chris will put it this way, and I think it's really good.

If you don't figure out God, the father, you still have a shot at coming to faith by listening to God, the son. If you can't figure out Jesus and you don't figure out God, the son, you still have a chance for salvation by latching on to the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit. But if God, the Holy Spirit comes and testifies and you reject that, there's nobody left to talk to you.

You're all done. It's an unpardonable sin. You've run through your three opportunities.

The father, who's the creator, who's manifest in creation, everyone sees him. You've rejected that. God, the son, is made manifest.

He's in the Bible. You've got the whole Christian world talking about him. You turn that off.

God, the Holy Spirit comes into your heart and says, look, there's a problem of sin. There's a standard of righteousness. There's a coming judgment.

You need to get ready or else it's coming, whether you like it or not. You can shut your eyes and plug your ears. It's coming anyway.

And if you turn that off, there's nothing left. You're done. You've used up all your three chances to respond.

And there is no forgiveness left for you. To reject the ministry of the Holy Spirit is the unpardonable sin. Well, these people have not yet committed the unpardonable sin.

Did they miss what the father had to say in the Old Testament? Yes. Did they miss what

Jesus, the son, said when he came and ministered? Yes. Here's their chance number three.

God, the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, has come down and is ministering through the apostles and disciples to these people. And if they respond on this day, they're getting their last chance. So he says, change your mind and be converted.

Now, I said in the first lesson tonight that we needed to keep in mind about Israel and how God dealt in a national way with Israel. You know why that's important? Because even here, this is not an individual appeal. Peter is not talking to individuals.

I mean, he is, but in principle here, he's talking still to the nation of Israel. Are these the specific men that specifically turned Jesus over to Pilate? Are these the specific men who denied the Holy One and the just and asked, are these the ones that were yelling Barabbas? Well, maybe some of them are, but a lot of them are not. He's speaking to them as a group, as a generation, as an entity of Israelites.

Now, Israel as a nation and as an entity represents the saved. And this is not a salvation appeal that is being made. These are believers who have missed God's provision, who have missed the forward progress of God's plan, right? These are the same Israelites that came out of Egypt under the blood of the Passover land.

They are saved. He doesn't say that they need salvation. He says, you need conversion so that your sins may be blotted out so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

What are the sins that need to be blotted out? It's not every sin they've ever committed. Their previous sins have been covered under their worship and their sacrifices and so on. It's the sins that have been mentioned in these paragraphs.

It is denying the Holy One and just and asking for a murderer and killing the Prince of Life and missing the boat when it comes to the message of the kingdom that Jesus brought. Now, hang with me on this. We're kind of reaching for something that's not just laying right there on the surface.

Most of the time when someone comes to the sermons of Peter here in the beginning part of Acts, they say he's evangelizing. He's taking lost, hellbound sinners and telling them you need to get saved or you're going to hell. That's not what he's saying here.

He doesn't say repent and change your mind and come to Christ or you're going to an eternal damnation in the lake of fire, does he? He says you need to get hold of this information. You need to lay hold of it. Why? Repent and be converted so that your sins can be blotted out.

These sins of grievously affronting the father by rejecting his son. So that now and the

reason I know this is true is in Greek and I don't have time to explain the whole thing, but you see here where it says so that times of refreshing may come. If you circle that so that that is the word hopas in Greek and it is a really strong word that indicates this is the purpose of the whole deal.

This other one where it says so that your sins may be blotted out. That's not hopas. It's not even hena.

This is ace, EIS, which means unto. We've talked about that before. Repent and be baptized with a view toward remission of sins.

Ace, same word here. Repent, therefore, and be converted with a view toward your sins being blotted out so that the big purpose of this whole repent and convert is that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. You know what the times of refreshing are? It's the kingdom.

It's the Old Testament promises to the believing nation of Israel that God would bless, that God would provide, that God would give them their own land with their own vine and their own fig tree and peace and the son of David sitting on the throne and a new heart and their heart of stone taken out of all of the things that are promised to Israel as a believing nation in the Old Testament. That's the times of refreshing. He doesn't say repent and be converted else you're going to slide down the slippery slope to hell.

He says repent and be converted, hopas, so that for the purpose that God can bring times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord and that he may send Jesus Christ who was preached to you before whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things. Time of the restoration of all things? The kingdom. So that Jesus can come back and fulfill all of God's promises.

Now what's the point here? God has made promises to us. We don't need salvation. We don't need to go down and hear the evangelist and get saved all over again.

We know that the Lord Jesus is the son of God. We know that he was made to be sin for us and he suffered the penalty for our sins on the cross. We know that to be delivered from eternal damnation all we have to do is tell God, in fact we don't even have to tell him, we just have to claim the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

And when God says, why should I redeem you and why should I resurrect you and not send you to the devil's hell? We say, because you promised that if I would claim your son as my Savior and acknowledge him as the only way that I can be freed from my debt of sin, that I would be saved. And I took you at your word. I claimed your promise.

The Lord Jesus is my Savior. And you said you would save me and you would cleanse me and you would raise me on the last day if I would make that decision. Well, I've made it and I'm sticking with it.

He's my Savior and you have to let me in. You have to raise me up. I'm in Christ.

I'm a new creation. Old things are passed away. My sins are covered.

My penalty is paid. And we have confidence. That's our salvation.

What is this? Now that we are saved, we're here in life. We're stuck in some set of circumstances. We're moving forward, making progress on some fronts and falling woefully, dismally short in others.

And we want those times of refreshing, don't we? Is there anybody that's ready for a desert and ready for barrenness and unfruitfulness and dismal pain and agony all the rest of their life? Is that really what we're after? We all want the times of refreshing. We want those blessings. We want that joy to be set before us, right? Well, the $64,000 question is, how does that come? How do you get the handle of that and grab it and lay hold of it and reel it in? Well, this is how.

What does Peter say? You believing Israelites? This is what you've got to do. You have to have a change of mind. You have to turn around.

That's what convert means. Turn around, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, so that he may send Jesus Christ. This is on a national basis.

What is the big blessing for Israel? It's the kingdom. It's the return of the Messiah. Moses and all the other prophets have spoken these prophecies since the world began.

Moses said to the fathers, the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever he says to you. It shall be every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be utterly cut off from among the people.

If your Bible says destroyed, you can mark it out. It doesn't mean destroyed. It literally means rooted out.

People say that's destroyed. That's going to hell. And it's not.

It's rooted out. It means they don't get the times of refreshing. They're going to be outside the land in the kingdom.

They're going to be off in Timbuktu somewhere. All the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many have spoken, have all foretold these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers.

They're already saved. Does this make sense? Who is a son of the covenant? Are the Hittites sons of the covenant? Are the Egyptian sons of the covenant? No. Israelites, saved, circumcised, believers in God, are sons of the covenant.

To you first, God having raised up his servant, Jesus. We'll talk more about this next time. Now, here's the thing.

In the same way that this is a picture and it represents something in our spiritual life, in the same way, when we transfer this to ourselves and we say, okay, Sam, so what? I see what you're saying. I see what Peter's saying. He's talking to the Jews.

They need to have a change of mind. Is this just in the realm of physical circumstances? It's not. Physical circumstances are the picture.

We live a spiritual life and the times of refreshing, some people on TV would tell you, well, the time of refreshing, you'll know that when your bank account swells and you start having all kinds of prosperity. The times of refreshing for us, what is the analogy to the blessings of the kingdom for the nation of Israel to us? What's the equivalence? It is experiencing the joy of our salvation. Those blessings represent joy and fulfillment and peace and happiness.

Contentment even in the face of adversity. Paul says, I have learned in whatever state I find myself, I'm content. If God has me in prison today, I'm content.

If God has me shot, I'm content. If God has me in prison today, I'm content. If God has me shot, I'm content.

If God has me shot, I'm content. If God has me shot, I'm content. If God has me shot, I'm content.

If God has me shot, I'm content. If God has me shot, I'm content. If God has me shot, I'm content.

If God has me shot, I'm content. If God has me shot, I'm content. If God has me shot, I'm content.

If God has me shipwrecked with a snake hanging off my arm today, I'm content. If God has me getting the 40 stripes minus one for the third time today, I may not be singing, but I'm content. I am not frustrated.

I am not defeated. I am not out of ideas. I am not at a loss.

This is the time of refreshing. And we experience that only one way. It is through the power of the name.

There is no reason for a child of God to miss the blessing of God. We do it to ourselves. It is a biblical truth.

It is a biblical principle. And if we find ourselves missing it, what is required? Change of mind. There is a need for a change somewhere, right? And the old adage, does God

seem far away? Who moved? God is not leaving us.

God does not abandon us. God says, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. But He does say, your iniquities are separated between you and your God.

And your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear. That's the Bible. So, what is our encouragement here from Peter? Let's get with the program.

We only have a very few days left in this life. We want to receive those times of refreshing. It is a spiritual truth now.

It will be a physical truth when the Lord Jesus comes back and we move into the kingdom age. But it is a powerful reminder. It is a powerful illustration for us.

And each one of us has areas in our life where we need this change of mind. It is the power of God coming to our life through the Word of God and the Spirit that will make this happen. Well, we need to close.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank you for illustrating the truth of your Word in so graphic terms and so clear a fashion through the nation of Israel. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts.

Help each of us to see where we have areas of life where we need to change our mind, be turned around, and accomplish the purpose of the presence of the Lord in our soul, the refreshing times that not only benefit us and give us the occasion for joy, but also reflect your glory and accomplish your purpose. We pray that you will be with each one of us as we move into the days ahead. May our lives reflect your glory.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.