

His Pain, Your Gain

Acts 3

February 29, 2004 • Sunday 9:15 AM • Dr. David McKinley
(The morning the lights went out!)

[Dr. McKinley, message, His Pain, Your Gain]

Well, that was incredible and I enjoyed hearing that fabulous song, *This Is How It Feels To Be Free*, and the freedom that we have in Christ. You know I had the incredible privilege at 6:30 on Wednesday morning of being a host in one of the theaters, being able to start and to visit with people before the movie and then to come back in at the close of the a..., presentation and to have the opportunity to share the message of Jesus Christ and one of the things that I said when I did that, is that it would be very easy, because of the dramatic and graphic nature in which the sufferings of Christ are presented, for the lasting impression of the movie to only be an impression of death and ultimately of defeat. But I tried to share with those who were there that day, that the whole nature of this message is this that Jesus tasted death for every one of us. That through His death we might know what it is to be free. He was fastened to a cross in order that we might be able to have the freedom to walk and to live in the joy and the victory that Jesus gives and that's why we've got something to celebrate when we gather in this place today and when we lift up praise to the name of Jesus Christ.

You know, Christianity requires one thing for you to become a follower of Jesus Christ and that is that you have to admit your need for a Savior. You have to acknowledge the fact that you are a sinner and that you need someone to do for you that which you can't do for yourself.

I heard about a king who a number of years ago had a series of accusations and rumors that were swirling that his guards were somehow unjustly imprisoning and incarcerating the subjects of his kingdom. And so he made the decision that he would go down to the prison area and that he would simply go from cell to cell and hear something of the story of each of the prisoners who were there. And without question as he went into each of those cells the men would begin to speak to the king and they would say, "*Sir, I have been falsely accused, I am innocent, I was framed by your guards.*" And he went through that experience time and time again until he got to the last cell. And there was a man who knelt before the king and said, "*Sir, I am guilty as charged. Sir, I have committed a terrible crime in your kingdom and I have been fairly sentenced and sir, I am greatly sorry for all of my actions.*" And when the king heard it he said, "*Guards, guards release this man. I wouldn't want him to corrupt all these innocent people who are down here.*" Heh! [congregation laughter]

Well, you see ladies and gentlemen, what it takes to know the freedom that we have in Christ is to be set free by the willing confession of what Christ has done and has accomplished for each and every one of us and today we are here to celebrate the victory. Now, I have to say I'm a little bit disappointed that the lights came on. [congregation laughter] You know, neither rain, sleet, snow or hail will stop the mail and I'm the mailman and I'd come to deliver and I was looking forward to delivering in the rain and the dark. [pause for applause] And in the fact that our pastor is away today and we had all these candles I thought people would go out of here and say, "I don't know who that guy was that preached, but they had some flaming evangelist who preached at Prestonwood today." You know? [congregation laughter] I was all set, but hey, we've got lights, we've got everything moving and working and today I want you to take your Bible and open it with me to Acts the 3rd chapter because today we are going to see and to understand something of what Jesus Christ has accomplished and has provided for each and every one of us.

I'm gonna take you to a live set, a... on location, if you will, to something that was happening a..., a number of years ago on a day, just like today, when people had gathered to worship and I want you to see something of the power of God and the witness of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures this morning. And my prayer is that God will move and work in all of our hearts in a wonderful way.

Father, one more time we ask that the power of Your Holy Spirit would be made evident in this place through the authority and the testimony of the Scriptures, Lord would You do something in our lives today? Lord we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

I trust you're in Acts chapter 3 and if you are I want you to begin reading with me as we read these opening verses. The Bible says:

¹Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ²And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of those who entered the temple; ³who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. ⁴And fixing his eyes on him with John, Peter said, "Look at us." ⁵And so he gave them his attention expecting to receive something from them. ⁶Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking and leaping and praising God.

And all I can imagine is that he was singin, "This Is How It Feels To Be Free." And so the Bible says:

⁹And all the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰And they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they

were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Well, what we see here in the first scene, in the first sequence of the portion of Scripture that we've read today is simply:

A DRAMATIC EVENT AT THE GATE CALLED BEAU...BEAUTIFUL. A dramatic event at the Gate called Beautiful. And as that dramatic even began to unfold that day it was incredible what happened. Now the Gate called Beautiful is a very interesting and a very significant place in the area of the temple in the day and the time of the Jewish worship there in the city of Jerusalem. In fact the Gate called Beautiful, Josias the historian tells us, was about 75 feet high and it was an inner gate. That is it was on the inside of the walls of the city of Jerusalem and it was the gateway that you would walk through when you made your entry into the court and then on up into the temple. You know the Psalms that say: [100:4]

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.

And so people would pass through this Gate called Beautiful, 75 feet high, a gateway, a doorway, as though it were, covered on the outside with brass and with bronze, so that when the sun would come up over the Mount of Olives there in the morning, the sun would shine on the metal of that gate and it would create a beautiful glow and a beautiful scene and an atmosphere that was there. And people would be drawn and attracted to the Temple Mount area because of the glow of that gate and yet at that gate was so beautiful and the place where people would enter to go to worship every single day there was man who was right there outside the gate. The Bible says he was a man who had been lamed from birth. In fact over in chapter 4 in verse 20 or 22 we read that this man was 40 years of age. So this man had been doin this for a very long time. And the tragedy of this man's life was that he could not walk, he couldn't work, he was a man who was a beggar. He would ~~stand~~ stand out there day after day and...and go _____, alms, alms and he would beg as a beggar day after day. Somebody give me something so I can see tomorrow. And he couldn't worship. All sorts of people would come by and would make their way through the gates and up into the temple, but this man lived a life at the Gate Beautiful, but never went in with the people of God to the house of worship and into the courts of praise. And so here we see him. But on this day, Peter and John, the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, those who had seen the resurrected and living Christ were going there to that place to gather with others and worship. And as they came together in that moment in that day, they gathered there and they looked at this man and he said to them, "Alms for the poor?" Peter looked at him and said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as have I give I to you." You see the man wanted them to help him by improving his current condition. But God wanted to do something much more. God wanted to move in and to transform this man's life. God wanted to take this man and to make something wonderful and powerful happen in his life that would change him for the glory of God. And so a miracle occurred that day. Now I love the fact that Peter and John said silver and gold have I none. I started to call this message that, silver and gold have I none because ever since I preached a message

back in January when I threw some money around up here I still have kids approach me in the hallway and say, "You got any money?" Heh! [congregation laughter] And I just kinda wanted to go ahead and go public and say silver and gold have I none, you know I just...but such as have I give I to you. Peter said in the name:

"...In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

You see a name is more than just a label that we wear. A name is more than just some means of designation by which people call us. A name is ultimately associated with character ~~and with nat...~~and with a nature. When you hear the name Judas what immediately comes to your mind? The nature of Judas which is betrayal. Think about it in our current contemporary society. Think about a man whose name is equivalent with creativity. Walt Disney! When you hear the name Walt Disney you think of someone who was incredibly creative and creativity is the character quality associated with the name Disney. And yes even to this day when you hear the thrice retired Michael Jordan name, you immediately think of agility and ability, because Michael Jordan is synonymous with air and the ability to jump. When you hear the name George Washington and history, that's what you think of the antiquity and the history of America and there's a certain sense of heritage and national patriotism that we feel. But when you hear the name of Jesus you are hearing the name of authority and the name of power. And Peter and John said:

"...In the name of Jesus..., rise up and walk."

And upon hearing that name and responding to that name this man was suddenly given strength and he literally came to his feet and the Bible says and he went with them into the temple walking and leaping and praising God. Man it was some dramatic event that day. In fact you wanna know how dramatic it was. Let's look again in Acts chapter 4 and in verse 4. It says:

Now, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of men came to be about...

Listen to this!

...five thousand.

So great was the impact of the miracle and then the message that Peter preached thereafter, that the Bible says that 5,000 men received Christ that day. We don't know how many women and children were there who may have received Christ that day. We certainly know, heh, from our own experience that many times there're more women and children than there are men at church. And so what an incredible thing that the Bible says on this day 5,000 people came into the church. It was a major wave of...and a movement of revival and of power and of impact and it all surrounded the message that proclaimed the name of Christ. Peter and John were ultimately taken and were chastised and were told by the a..., a..., leaders of that day,

the religious leaders that they needed to silence their message. But they stood boldly before them and they said in Acts chapter 4 and then in verse 12:

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given whereby we must be saved."

You see ladies and gentlemen, the name of Jesus is the name of power and if you are ever gonna be saved, if you're ever gonna know the miracle working power of God in your life, you will only know it because you know and you understand and you confess the name of Jesus Christ. And this man became living evidence of the power of the name of Jesus.

A number of years ago there was a Salvation Army gathering, a meeting, an open-air meeting and there was a man who was preparing to preach that evening, but before he did there was a man from that community who had been know as a drunkard in that community. But that man had come to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and Jesus had changed his life and that man stood up that night on that platform with all the people gathered there and he started talking about what Jesus had done in his life and as he talked there was a heckler who was standing down there who started calling out to us. He said, "Hey, hey you're just dreamin, you're just dreamin. We all know who you are and you're just dreamin." And as he stood there continuing to testify and as that man stood there heckling, that man suddenly felt a tug on the tail of his coat and he looked around and there was about a 7 or 8-year-old little girl standing there and she looked and said, "Sir, sir that man that you're yelling at, that's my daddy." She said, "My daddy used to get drunk a lot." She said, "Sir, and my daddy would come home and he'd make my mommy cry. And my mommy would cry day in and day out and sir, my daddy, he a lot of times wouldn't go to work and we didn't have food to eat on our table and we didn't have cloths to wear but..." She said, "Sir, I want you to look..." she said, "sir, see these shoes? Sir my daddy bought me these shoes." She said, "That's my daddy and my daddy bought me these shoes and my daddy bought me this dress that I have on today." And she said, "Sir, you see that lady over there, that lady who's smiling over there?" She said, "Sir, that's my mommy over there in that crowd. My mommy's so happy. Sir, yes, that's my daddy." She said, "And sir, if my daddy's dreamin please don't wake him up."

Ladies and gentlemen when Jesus Christ changes a person's life it's not a dream, it's what it means to be free and Jesus changes people's lives from the inside out. [applause] It is a miracle and He will work that miracle in your life and in your heart and in your home if only you will call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, we've seen the dramatic event that occurred at the Gate called Beautiful. But I wanna move very quickly from that for us to see the second scene that is here today and that is:

A DYNAMIC SERMON AT SOLOMON'S PORCH. A Dynamic Sermon! Now we've just read about the miracle and all that happened. But let's begin to read again in verse 11 and please read carefully with me because I'm gonna read a important passage of Scripture here. It says:

Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

After you came through the temple area there was a large courtyard area and a colonnade of columns called Solomon's Porch and people would gather there and so they started running to Peter and John and this man who was there.

And so when Peter saw it,...

Verse 12:

...he responded to the people and said: "Men of Israel why do you marvel at this? Or why do you look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we have made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus...

Underscore that in your Bible.

...His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. ¹⁴But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶And in His name, through faith in His name, He has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him perfect soundness in the presence of you all. ¹⁷Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did your rulers. ¹⁸But, those things which God foretold by the mouth of His prophets, that Christ would suffer,...

Underscore that word suffer.

...Has now been fulfilled.

Peter preached a sermon. Here there was a miracle and a crowd gathered to see the miracle. But Peter was very quick to say, now hey, don't go to seed on this miracle. Yes, God has done something incredible and yes there is evidence of the power of God in this place but don't you start looking at us and don't you start exalting us because this isn't our power and this isn't our godliness. This isn't about us. This is about Jesus. You do remember Jesus, he said, Jesus the One who was crucified, Jesus the One who was despised and rejected, but this same Jesus is the One who is risen from the dead. And Peter very carefully put the attention and the focus of this miracle on the message of Jesus Christ. I think that's so very important because in this day and in this time so many people want to put their faith in experiences and yes there is an experience, yes, there is something subjective to experience in Christ, but we never put our faith in experience, we put our faith in the truth and the testimony of the Word of God. That's why the Bible says in Romans chapter 10 in verse 17:

...faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

...faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

And Peter took this moment, seized the moment and took them back to the Old Testament, to the prophets and to the promises of the coming of Jesus Christ and he just drew a line from the Old Testament all the way up to that man and that place, that day. Now, I know we live in a day and a time when a lot of people wanna do some talking about miracles and the question is does God perform miracles today? The answer is absolutely, yes! Jesus changes lives. But I also want to point out to you, as was the caution of Peter here, that the power of miracles is not given to draw attention to servants and is not given to be a distraction. In fact the Bible tells us in Acts chapter 5 and in verse 12 that miracles were performed by the apostles as signs. They were signs, signs that were used to signify the authority of the name of Jesus. Paul in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 in verse 12 made mention of the fact that he had been a part of signs and wonders because he was one of the apostles. And I absolutely believe that the Bible teaches that God gave to the apostles, to those who had seen the resurrected and Living Christ, the ability to see miracles and signs and wonders that were all accompanying their ministry so that people would hear the message. But now immediately people start saying, well what about faith healing today? Does God heal today? Yes! Absolutely God heals today. I believe in the healing power of God, but, I do not believe in faith healers. You say, what do you mean? I'm saying to you, I don't believe that there are people walking around today who have the ability to miraculously heal. If they did they should be in the hospitals and not in the stadiums. You see ladies and gentlemen, far too much of what goes on under the banner of healing today is guilt on the associated of those who they say don't have enough faith to be healed. The reality is God is the One who heals and He is sovereign in that. Sometimes He heals instantaneously, miraculously, it can't be de...explained, sometimes God heals through death and He takes people out of this life and out of this body and takes them home into heaven. But I say all that to say, I don't want us to miss the message of the miracle. Yes, there was a miracle. Yes, God does supernatural things but the greatest miracle is the miracle of new life in Jesus Christ. It's all about what Jesus does from the inside out and that's exactly where Peter put his emphasis that day. There were 2 words I asked you to underscore in the passage that we read. First I asked you to underscore, there in chapter 3 and verse 13 the word servant. And then I asked you to underscore in verse 18 the word suffer. Peter had a text for his message and Peter actually had some preaching points in his message. People ask me from time to time, how many points should you have in a sermon? And the answer's very easy, you should have at least one. Heh! Every sermon oughta have at least one point. [congregation laughter] I know all of you've heard ones where you didn't hear one. But there...every sermon oughta have at least one point and so Peter masterfully took the text of Scripture, the Old Testament prophets and he brought forth the truth of what Christ came to do. I want you to see what Peter was talking about. Keep your hand in Acts chapter 3 and turn with me back in the book

of Isaiah chapter 52. One of the big things that's come up as a result of the movie, *The Passion Of The Christ* is that many people have been investigating and searching to find out what do we know about Jesus and why did all of this happen and of course who killed Jesus and all the things that have been going on in the debate? I was watching an interview the other evening with Jim Caviezel, the man who played Jesus and he said, "You know it's amazing," he said, "it's suddenly like Hollywood just got the point. It's like Hollywood's suddenly wakin up and sayin Jesus got crucified." Heh! And he's right many people do not understand the nature, the significance and the consequence of the crucifixion. The crucifixion is a gory reality that ultimately depicts to us the consequence and the condemnation of sin in the face of a Holy God. But it wasn't some treacherous plot contrived by men, it was a part of the eternal expression of love shown by God. Some people and Jewish friends in particular, have said, well that just what you all believe as New Testament believers. But I want you to know that what I believe, I believe because of the covenant of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I believe what the Jew believes by testimony of the Scripture. And look at what it says in Isaiah 52 beginning in verse 13:

¹³*Behold, My..*

What's the next word?

...Servant...

Yeah, what word did I have you underscore in Acts 3? The Servant!

Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. ¹⁴Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man. And His form more than the sons of men; ¹⁵So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.

And then look down in verse 3:

³*He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep had gone astray and turned every one, to his own way; But the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

And then look in verse 10:

¹⁰*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; and to put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, and shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*

¹¹He shall see the labor of His soul and be satisfied. And by His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

What's he talking about here? He's talking about Jesus. He's talking about the Servant. He's talking about the suffering. He's talking about the plan of God and so Peter, wisely, in that moment, in the midst of the backdrop of that miracle said, here is the message, Jesus came so that you can be set free, so that you can be forgiven. And that is the ministry of Jesus. If I had to give you the points of the sermon that Peter preached I would say to you that Peter's message could be entitled, *His Pain, Your Gain*. And why is it? Several things Peter was saying there in Acts chapter 3 as we've read and looked at that text already.

Number 1: His pain is our gain because **JESUS REDEEMS US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW**. Here they were caught up in a system, a system of religion and of ritual where people were trying to live according to the law and all that the law did was to show them the corruption and the condemnation of their lives. We don't know that a line is crooked until we have a straight line to show us. We do not know that something's out of balance until we have a standard of measure and God provided the law through the Old Testament prophets and leaders in order that we might see and know that there is never any human ability to satisfy the righteousness of God by our own strength, by our own standard, or by our own effort. We can't rub out our sins. In fact look at what the Bible says again in Acts chapter 3 in verse 19. After Peter had preached this sermon he said:

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,..."

I love that phrase; that your sins may be blotted out. The Bible teaches that every one of us has a record. We have a record of sin in heaven and we are sinners by nature and we are sinners by choice and we are sinners by practice and the reality is you may have a clean record with the state of Texas, but every person in this building has a record in the sight of a Holy God. And we have to deal with the record of sin. But the reality is, we can't of our own accord and of our own effort. You see so many people... so many people are trapped in a religion where they think that if they can just live a good enough life that some day they'll get to go to heaven. They foresee that as though we live life and some day we stand at the...at the bench of judgment and God has the scales of justice and on the one hand He puts the good things that we've done and on the other hand He puts the bad things and we just hope that maybe the good will outweigh the bad and maybe God'll just touch the scale and tip the scale. No! God is righteous and holy, He demands an exact satisfaction of His righteousness and what I cannot do and what you cannot do God has done for us in the person of Jesus and the pain that Jesus suffered, He suffered in order that He would make the payment for sin for every one of us. Listen to Galatians chapter 4, verses 4 and 5:

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we

might receive the adoption of sons.

Listen to Colossians chapter 2 in verse 14:

Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. He has taken it away and has nailed it to the cross.

Ladies and gentlemen we have been redeemed from the curse of the law, because of what Jesus did on the cross for us. But not only this, Peter points out something else and that is that because of the price that He paid, what His pain has done is to provide gain for us and:

The gain that we receive is that **HE RELEASES US FROM THE BONDAGE OF SIN.** Don't you see the picture in the miracle? A man who is trapped in a body, a man who is crippled. The Bible says that we've been a part of the fall of Adam's race. [Romans 3:23]

for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,

Every one of us have the impact and the consequence of the fall upon us and we are bond in sin. But Jesus came and He was fastened, as I said earlier, to the cross in order that we might be set free. And that's why it's so beautiful to see this man walking and leaping and praising God and saying this is how it feels to be free, because Jesus releases us from the bondage of sin. But there's something else that Peter points to here and that is in his message he not only says that He redeems us from the curse of the law and releases us from the bondage of sin...

But **JESUS RECONCILES US TO GOD AND TO OTHERS.** You remember this man? He couldn't walk, he was never going to worship. But then back there in verse 10 we saw him as he got up and he held on to Peter with one arm and John with the other and now he's going into the temple to worship. He has a whole new sphere of fellowship in his life. He has a whole new dynamic that's unfolding and that's what Christ does to people when they put their faith and trust in Him, is they get reconciled to God and they wanna be in the presence of God and they wanna be right with God, but then they get reconciled to others. And you are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and Jesus will give you the power to have reconciling relationships; with your husband, with your wife, with you children, with your friends. We're not fit for relationship until we deal with sin. But when sin gets dealt with in our heart then the Spirit of God comes in and the Spirit of God produces love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and longsuffering and faithfulness and self-control. You see He reconciles us to God and to others. There's something else that His pain provides as our gain and that is that...

JESUS RESTORES YOUR PURPOSE FOR DAILY LIVING. He gives you a purpose in living. No, the man couldn't walk, he couldn't work, he couldn't worship, but listen; now he's walking and then instead of begging he's now gonna be able to work and to give, and he's gonna be able to worship, because all

of his life is now gonna be lived to give glory to God. You will never know what living is until you live for God's purpose in your life. Life is existence apart from living for the will of God. But when you begin to live for the God who made you and created you and you serve Him and serve others then life takes on a whole new purpose and there is a, *Purpose Driven Life*, it's the life that Jesus gives. And then the Bible tells us one other thing here that Peter emphasized verse 19:

¹⁹"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰and that they may send Jesus Christ, who was preached before to you, ²¹whom heaven must receive until the time of restoration..."

Peter immediately moved from that moment to the future. He immediately moved to that which was to come and here's the beauty of what Jesus has done. His pain is our gain because He has redeemed us from ~~the curse of sin, He has released us or...excuse me from~~ the curse of the law, He has released us from the bondage of sin, He has reconciled us to God and to others, He has restored a purpose of living. But listen to this:

HE HAS RESERVED A PLACE FOR YOU IN HEAVEN. Get this picture! You don't have a record anymore when you have Jesus. The record book of sin has been cancelled through what Christ did on the cross and now you have a place reserved in heaven. That is the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. That's what Jesus has come to do and to provide for every one of us. And so Peter stood there that day in the backdrop of that miracle and preached this sermon and He said it's His pain that's your gain in life. And that's the message of truth and of hope that I proclaim to you today.

We've seen scene # 1: A dramatic event at Gate Beautiful.
We've seen scene # 2: A dynamic sermon at Solomon's Porch.

But I wanna close with...

Scene # 3: And that is **A DEFINING MOMENT HERE AND NOW.** You see when we read the stories of the Bible they're not just stories of yesterday to provide inspiration for us today, they are stories of truth, to let us see and know and understand the power of our God to move and to work in our lives. And the miracle that provided a message and a message that I have now shared with you is a message that offers you a miracle and the miracle that is being offered to you today is the ability to be released, to be redeemed, to be restored, to know what's reserved for you in heaven. It is to know and to experience the power of God in your life. You say to me today, well what do I need to do. If I want to know this truth that you're talking about, if I want to experience this power in my life how can it be? Well, it's evident, the Scripture says it; repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out and that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. To repent is to change. It is to change your old way of life, your old habits, the direction you've been going, to quite going against God and to say, God I'm a sinner, I'm trapped in a world of sin, but I turn and put my faith and trust in Jesus. That's why we have to come

to the defining moment when we understand that what happened on a cross 2000 years ago was the consequence of my sin and of your sin and until we're convicted of that we will never be converted. But when we realize what Christ has done and how the love of God has been displayed for us on a cross and when that breaks our heart and breaks through into the innermost part of our being, then we turn from sin, we put our trust in Jesus Christ. And what happens? Times of refreshing. Boy, you talk about refreshing, that guy, that day, walking and leaping and praising God, that was something to celebrate. And I'm telling you when you put your faith and trust in Jesus you will know like never before what it means to experience the gain that comes through pain that Jesus bore. The Bible says: [Romans 10:9-10]

⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead that you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

For the Bible says: [Romans 10:13]

... "whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

And today I wanna ask you something. Are you a person who's content to continue living the life you live with an occasional visit to the Gate Beautiful, but you're always living outside the gate, never enjoying the power, the purpose, the peace that Jesus gives? Have you called upon the name of the Lord? Have you experienced a miracle in your life? Do you know what it is to live in the power of Christ and to live with the hope of heaven? It's said that in the filming of the movie, *The Passion Of The Christ*, that a significant amount of time was spent going to Italy and traveling and looking at so many of the different artifacts, the frescos and the ~~sculpturs~~...sculptures and the things that are there to try to capture a lot of the imagery that has been translated through churches through the years. But if today I could take you to Florence, Italy and could take you there to the museum at the dell' Accademia you could view there with me some of the works of Michelangelo Buonarroti. At the time of the death of Pope Julius, Michelangelo was commissioned to sculp...to carve and to shape some scal...a...some sculptures out of marble that were to depict and were to a..., display something biblical at the tomb of Julius. But he never finished the project. He just started roughing out the sculptures and so what he has and what you see today are a series of 4 statues that are called Michelangelo's Captives. There's an arm here and a leg there and some of them have a little more shape than the others, but they're all trapped, as though it were, in stone. And ladies and gentlemen there's some of you today here at the Gate Beautiful, the house of God and you have some form of that which you were made to be in the image of God. But you were trapped in sin and judgment and you need to be set free. And today I want you to know that just as it happened to a man at the Gate Beautiful that day it can happen to you, for it is by His name and by the power of His name that we can be changed and we can be set free and today I wanna give you an opportunity to express faith in the name of Jesus.