

Peter Preached in Jerusalem

(Acts 2)

The latter portions of Acts 2 relay the Holy Spirit's transformational work within not only the apostle Peter's life but also in the lives of thousands of new believers in Jerusalem. In what could have been a somber retelling of herd mentality gone wrong, we instead read of the power of the Holy Spirit at work within the life of Peter to bring life transformation to thousands who heard his message.

What evidence do we see of genuine life transformation in Peter's life? How is the Holy Spirit's power made evident by the legacy of the Acts 2 church? The apostle Peter's life was one of Scripture's greatest examples of discipleship. Though he had personally journeyed for three years alongside the Savior, Peter struggled with fear, hesitancy, and uncertainty. He was the man who sank from doubt while walking on water and denied Jesus' lordship not once—but three times. However, the Peter we find in Acts 2 seems to have overcome these stumbling blocks to his faith. But how? It was through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in his life, enabling and encouraging him to do the Lord's will.

The miracle of discipleship did not end with Peter simply learning from Jesus and being filled with His Spirit, only to then retreat and retire from his personal spiritual journey. Instead, he proclaimed the truth of the gospel's good news for mankind and brought many new believers into the fold as well.

We read of Peter's call to repentance for all those gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, but how can we know that these hearers truly experienced life transformation by the Spirit? The proof was in their legacy as a church, through the lifestyles they took on upon coming to the faith: devotion to the Scriptures, fellowship with one another, enjoying meals together, and prayer.

As you teach your kids this week, remember the role you play as a proclaimer of Christ's truths to the next generation, taking part in His mission so that your children may follow suit. As you lead a life of faithfulness and fruitfulness, they will see and experience the power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life.

Peter Healed a Man

(Acts 3)

Peter's healing and preaching in Acts 3 revealed the Holy Spirit's power at work. Through both word and deed, Peter and John committed themselves to the all-encompassing mission of the gospel—that all they said and did would point back to the truth of Christ as Messiah.

What deeper meaning can we glean from this healing in Acts 3? How did this miracle reveal Jesus's identity as the promised Messiah?

The man carried to the temple's gate desired to receive something generous from Peter and John that afternoon; however, he did not expect to be walking around and worshipping God by the day's end. It seemed that all those gathered around the temple likewise did not expect a miracle to occur in the life of this middle-aged man, as evidenced by their astonishment in this passage. Though these disciples did not have money to give to this man in need, they did possess something of even greater value—faith in the name and person of Jesus Christ. They refused to withhold this power from the man, convicted of the importance of living on mission for the gospel. More than just doing good deeds before others, they knew the priority of proclaiming Jesus' truth before them all, so that the man and the onlookers might find restoration in Christ's name, too.

The significance of the man's ability to not only walk but to leap cannot be understated. The prophet Isaiah declared such a miracle would stem from the Messiah's power. (Isaiah 35:6) What was true then is still true today: God is restoring all things, and this healing further represented His ability to remedy our greatest need for salvation. This man was raised to walk again by the same power that raised Christ from the dead.

As you prepare to talk with your kids about Acts 3, reflect on the Holy Spirit's power at work within Peter. This disciple who denied Christ went on to empower others to repent of their own denial of the Messiah. The same Spirit who restored and redeemed this apostle has empowered you to declare this same hope to the children in your home.

Peter Continued to Preach

(Acts 4)

In Acts 4, we encounter Peter's Spirit-led boldness and the religious leaders' inability to stop the gospel's power at work. Despite the danger they faced, the church remained steadfast in their prayers and proclamations, being filled with the courage and conviction that would become their legacy.

What truths did the early church cling to amidst such great persecution and peril? How were their prayer lives shaped by this encounter with the Holy Spirit?

Standing before these members of the religious elite, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and couldn't stop declaring Jesus as Lord. Though he had spent the night in jail, he was resolved in his mission to make no name for himself apart from Christ. As he addressed these powerful men, he testified to Scripture's truth, how Christ's rejection had been prophesied in Psalm 118. In doing so, he offered an opportunity for his persecutors to place their faith in Jesus, too. In response to Peter's boldness, they were at a loss for words. The disciples' time with Jesus offered more insight into God's truth than the Jewish leaders possessed from all their years in rabbi school, and the power of the Holy Spirit within them illuminated their minds to recall this truth.

When the church heard news of Peter and John's time spent before the Sanhedrin, they responded the only way they knew how: altogether, voices raised to heaven, in prayer before God. They reminded one another—and God Himself—of His truths declared so long ago in Psalm 2. Their course of action became one of boldness through the filling of the Holy Spirit as these men and women continued to show and tell the world about the Savior in whom they placed their hope. In answer to their faithful prayers, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, being sent out to keep doing His will.

As you lead your kids this week, remind them—and yourself—that even in our stickiest situations and circumstances, God's Word remains the rock where we find truth. We are invited to pray bold prayers and to ask for His Spirit to lead us in the places we don't have strength to go; our faith is revealed through our boldness in action.

Peter Confronted Sin

(Acts 4-5)

One of Scripture's most prominent warnings against false motives comes to us in Acts 5: the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Amid the church's unity and generosity in the previous chapter, the husband and wife's scheme stands in stark contrast. Though this couple sought to appear generous before others, the Holy Spirit unveiled their treachery so that the church could remain on mission for the Lord.

Why did the church members lay their money at the feet of the apostles? What was the Holy Spirit's role in the downfalls of Ananias and Sapphira?

The last section of Acts 4 recounted the oneness of the early church, as they lived in fellowship and in concern for one another. To lay something at another person's feet signified a trust in that person's responsibility over what had been given. We read that the early church members' desire was for the apostles to distribute their proceeds where they would be most beneficial for others. Their generosity was honoring to God and fulfilled the commands of Deuteronomy 15. Ultimately, it was the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the early church that transformed their hearts to give generously and joyfully to the Lord.

On the other hand, Ananias and Sapphira tried to appear like they had unselfish virtues, yet they held fast to greedy motives. While others obeyed the Holy Spirit's power at work, Ananias and Sapphira allowed the desires of their flesh to take precedence over the good works God prepared for them. They lied and therefore grieved the Holy Spirit by claiming to give all they had. Their actions did not match the motives they proclaimed, a danger that many in the church can fall prey to even today.

As you prepare to teach this passage to kids, be sure to emphasize the Christlike love at work in the life of the early church. Though greed and self-gain seemed too big a temptation for Ananias and Sapphira, we can lead lives of obedience to the Holy Spirit, recognizing the extravagance and sacrificial love of Christ that transforms our hearts to live on mission for Him.

We Are to Tell Others About Jesus

(Romans 10)

Paul's letter to believers in Rome serves as one of the Bible's clearest examples of evangelism. The words of Romans 10 bring us back to the essence of gospel truth: we must place our faith in Jesus to receive salvation from sin. However, in order to receive the gospel, we must first hear its words. From this essential truth, we find our mission as the church.

What does it mean to be "sent" as followers of Christ? How can we be sure that we live on mission like the Bible says?

One of the most beautiful aspects of the gospel is that it doesn't end its work in us when we come to faith in Jesus. When we come to saving faith in Jesus, we are compelled to share the good news so others may trust in Jesus, too. What begins with personal profession must then become a public declaration for others to take part in it as well. To live "sent" means to share the gospel's message to the ends of the earth, being empowered by the Holy Spirit to do just that.

Salvation is the gift of eternal life in Jesus and forgiveness of sin; to live on mission means to testify to the life and forgiveness we have found so that others may experience the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit for themselves. This means being intentional in our relationships, relying on the Lord to lead us in opportunities to show and tell others about who Jesus is and what He has done. We help others experience the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us when we use every part of our life to showcase His glory. We have been sent on this mission to share Jesus with family members, neighbors, and even those who live on the other side of the world!

As you prepare to teach this session to kids, emphasize the idea that our mission is to lead others to find salvation in Jesus. Paul's desire and prayer was for more people to come to saving faith in Christ alone—even the kids in your classroom! Explain that the Holy Spirit's life-changing power in your life is the same one offered to them today.