

Leap, Ye Lamé, for Joy

Acts 3:1-26

Halifax: 25 September 2011

Introduction:

It is very providential that we have come to Acts 3 in our sermon series.

- It is a very encouraging passage about the healing of a lame man.
 - Here is a man who is completely unable to walk—and through faith in Jesus' name He is completely healed!
 - That is very encouraging in itself,
 - but it is all the more encouraging because it proves that Jesus has come to into the world to bring refreshment and restoration to His people!
 - The miracle is a harbinger of the complete healing of the lameness of the entire church of God that Jesus began and will bring to absolute completion!
 - His restoring work has already begun for us and we can be sure that He will finish the job so that we are given perfect soundness.

But why did I say that it is providential that we have come to this passage?

- I say that because there are so many in our congregation who are struggling with various trials right now.
 - We are continually reminded by painful experience that we are in a fallen world that is under a curse and that needs to be restored.
 - Some of you are suffering from physical infirmities.
 - Some of you are suffering from financial challenges.
 - Some of you are battling with particular besetting sins.
 - Some of you are dealing with problems in relationships with people you dearly love.
 - Some of you are struggling with confusion in your minds about God's will.
 - Some of you are having trouble with work—in your callings.
 - It seems like there is a lot of discouragement right now.
 - We are able to see that we are, in certain ways, lame on account of the fall.
 - We would rather be walking, but we can't.
 - We are constantly reminded by painful experience.

- But Acts 3 reminds us about something else that we need to be reminded about!
 - That God sent Jesus to restore all things!
 - He sent Him to bless us in turning us away from our sins.
 - He sent Him to cause the whole church to have a future and a hope!
 - He sent Him so that we could get up and walk!
 - He will bring refreshment to us right now if we will turn to Him in our trials...
 - And He will bring complete restoration in the days to come—when He comes from heaven and raises up from the dead and abolishes the curse!
 - You may feel that you are lame, but today I want to call you to get up and start walking and leaping and praising God because Jesus heals!
 - Let us turn to our text and be encouraged, shall we?

I. Here is a lame man leaping!

- That is the work of Jesus!
 - Think about it!
 - This man could not even walk, but now He is leaping.
 - This is picture of what Jesus does for all of His sheep!

A. This man is like all of us in our fallen condition.

1. He is not able to do what human beings are meant to do.
 - We were created with legs and we are meant to walk with them...
 - But look at him!
 - Verse 2 describes his condition as that of a:
 - **“a certain man lame from his mother’s womb” who “was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called beautiful.”**
 - What a pitiful condition.
 - This was his daily routine for survival.
 - Up to the temple each day to beg, and the only way he could get there was to be carried.
 - This had been his condition since birth.
 - He was over forty years old and he had never walked a day in his life.
 - He was just set there each day in hopes of gaining some assistance.
2. We have much in common with this man in our fallen condition...

- a. We were created in the image of God in order that we might glorify Him by walking in His ways—
 - going about in His service, living in the beauty of His love and wisdom by loving each other and doing God.
 - That is what we were created for—to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
 - But we are ruined by the fall!
 - Even when we try to do good, we find that evil is always present.
 - We are lame because we cannot walk in God’s ways—we are dead in our trespasses and sins.

- b. And like this man, we are this way from our birth.
 - We are conceived in sin and we come from the womb speaking lies.
 - There is not a day that we have ever truly done the will of God.
 - Not a day that we have been free of selfishness and pride and wickedness.
 - Not a day that we have loved our God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves.
 - We are lame, lame, lame!

- c. And like this man, we must constantly struggle with others who do not care about us...
 - This man had these friends who carried him up to the temple, and that must have been a great encouragement to him, but he was an Israelite!
 - The people were called to take of a man like this without making him beg!
 - They were to help those who were their fellow Israelites.
 - We saw how the believers in the fledgling church lived in this way so that no one lacked.
 - But in this world of sin, we have to deal with the unfaithfulness of those in our lives... with unfulfilled duties that cause hardship to us.
 - We are lame, and while we are thankful for the help we receive from others, it comes short of what it ought to be...
 - just as our service to them comes short of what it ought to be.

- d. And like this lame man, we must live in a world of sometimes disturbing contrasts.
 - Here he was, laid up beside this glorious temple in rags and poverty.
 - He was beside this gate called beautiful—

- probably the Nicanor Gate which was indeed a very beautiful gate made of brass—about 75 feet high—very ornate!
- It went from the courtyard of the Gentiles to the courtyard of the women.
- Here was all of this wealth and opulence, and here was this poor man who was hoping to have a few crumbs.
- Here were all these people who could walk, who had no problem walking, and he could not walk.
- This is where we sometimes feel the fall the most—in the contrasts—
 - One person has one sin that they constantly struggle with—another person has another sin...
 - One person has physical sickness, another has relational issues, yet another has poverty,
 - and the sick person is surrounded by healthy people,
 - and the person with a broken home is surrounded by happy united families,
 - and the person with poverty has wealthy people all around,
 - or so it seems.
 - Such contrasts are a part of the pain of this fallen world.
 - But what we have in common is that we are all lame.
 - There are things that we have not been able to overcome.
 - We would walk if we could, but we can't.
 - We would change the church.
 - We would change our own lives.
 - We would change our condition.
 - We would change the world.
 - But we are without strength.

TRANS> But here is a remarkable reversal of things.

B. In Jesus there is a remarkable reversal of things so that the lame are able to leap!

1. This man had no idea what was to be done for him on this afternoon when Peter and John walked by.
 - a. His life was very routine...
 - It was the hour for the Jew's afternoon prayers during the afternoon sacrifices—at 3:00 pm in our way of measuring time...
 - There was a lot of traffic so this beggar was accustomed to take his place at the beautiful gate and beg.
 - This is what he always did—it was very ordinary.

- His request for alms to Peter was also routine...
 - Except that Peter told him to look at him.
 - He thought he was going to receive a gift—most people don't look at beggars unless they are prepared to help them—
 - How disappointed he must have been to hear Peter and John say that they had no silver and gold.
 - Ah, but then there was something...something added...
 - **“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”**

b. And then a most remarkable thing happened!

- This man who had never walked got up and started walking!
 - It had been forty years and he had never walked.
 - His muscles and his balance had never been developed.
 - His legs must have been quite wasted—
 - but they received full strength so that he not only walked, but leapt about the courtyard!
 - How strange it must have felt to be able to move himself along on his legs—it would be like suddenly being able to fly

2. This man made a great show in the temple court.

a. He made a spectacle of himself...

- He was walking and leaping and praising God—
 - and people who walked by this man everyday whenever he went to the temple saw him and recognised him!
 - Verse 10 says:
 - **Acts 3:10: Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.**
 - He was one of those beggars that everyone knew—he was very familiar to them—they had seen him hundreds of times...
 - but they had never seen him like this—walking and leaping!
 - It was a complete turn around and it caused the people to be totally amazed!

TRANS> And not only did he draw attention to himself,

b. He also drew attention to Peter and John!

- Verse 11 says:
 - **Acts 3:11: 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.**
- Solomon's porch!
 - This was so named because it was guessed that here was where a part of Solomon's temple stood.
 - The porch consisted of four rows of columns that were 27 feet high—162 of them in all—holding up a cedar roof.
 - The centre aisle that was formed by these was 40 feet wide and the aisles on either side were 30 feet.
 - There was plenty of room for a large gathering;
 - And as word spread through out the temple precincts,
 - there was a large gathering as people rushed together, eager for an explanation!
 - There was no denying it—this was the lame man!
 - Even the Jewish leaders later confess that this is a notable miracle which cannot be denied.

TRANS> But this was not staged—it was all unexpected as far as Peter or John or the lame man.

- It was like the nailing of Luther's 95 theses—he was just routinely posting his lecture and had no idea that it would be published through the world.
- c. The only person who had staged this was the Lord Himself!
 - He wanted to draw attention to the gospel.
 - Peter and John were just minding their own business, going up to the temple at the hour of prayer as they always did.
 - No doubt they had been busy teaching the 3000 converts that were converted at Pentecost and prayer was part of their daily work.
 - Peter had no more idea that a simple miracle of healing such as was common at this time would lead to such an eager gathering.
 - This was God's doing because it was time for another increase in the church.
 - It was not the result of a human marketing campaign—it was God taking a simple event and making it very conspicuous.
- 3. Truly it is a remarkable thing when the LORD causes the lame to walk!
 - a. That's what He does when He comes to us with salvation!
 - For the first time, we are able to get up and start living for God!

- We who have been desperate and helpless are able to walk!
 - We put off the old man and put on the new man!
 - We are a new creation in Jesus Christ, created for good works.
 - We who were dead are born again!
- b. What a marvellous thing it is!
- Just think how you have been changed.
 - You are by no means perfect, but you are reconciled to God!
 - Jesus has done what you could never have done!
 - He took away that stony, foolish, stubborn heart and He gave you a new heart that delights in God's law!
 - And He has pardoned all of your sins so that you can come to God with a clear conscience!
 - You are able to walk!
- c. But don't misunderstand...
- The change is radical and deep because now you are truly for God instead of against Him and He is reconciled to you...
 - But you are now between the already of what Jesus has done and the not yet of what He is going to do!
 - We are converted to Him, but we are not yet resurrected and perfected.
 - But you are alive—you who were dead in sin are now alive in Jesus Christ!
 - And the hope of the resurrection is real!

TRANS> So you have this lame man leaping and you have this amazed crowd and they are all looking at Peter and John...

- And how happy Peter is to explain what has happened!

II. Peter declares to the amazed crowd that this is all the doing of Jesus!

A. First, Peter makes it clear that this miracle is not about him but about Jesus.

- Look at verse 12
 - **Acts 3:12: So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"**
1. Don't ever think it's about man.
- You can give too much credit to the messengers of the gospel—

- Peter had no power to put life into this man's dead legs and neither does any other ordinary human being.
- Nor did Peter have some kind of merit based on his own godliness that secured a blessing for this man.
 - We hear so much about Peter or about the saints—
 - but that is not where our focus is supposed to be.
 - The church gets off track when they think that men can make the lame walk and the blind see and the deaf hear...
 - We protestants can think this about preachers...
 - But preachers can't change anybody.
 - God uses His word to heal, but it only the power and the merit of Jesus that changes people.

TRANS> It's not about the messengers—

2. It's about Jesus! He is the One who did this by His power and godliness!

a. Peter sets this forth in verse 13:

- **Acts 3:13: The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus,**

- And look at verse 16:

- **Acts 3:16: And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.**

b. Do you see what Peter is saying?

- "Jesus is the one who did this."
- "We completely depended upon Him for this miracle—it was all His work."
 - "It was through faith in His name..."
 - "faith in Him as the One who has been openly revealed!"
- His name refers to His personal presence and power which has been revealed.
 - To believe in His name is to receive Him as He has been revealed in the gospel...
 - as the Son of God died for us and was raised again for our justification.

B. And here Peter proceeds to show us just who Jesus is revealed to be!

1. He ascribes to Him three names—Servant, Holy One and Just, Prince of life—one name in each verse:

- a. In verse 13, Peter calls Him God’s Servant Jesus!
 - This is not just **a** servant of God, but **the** Servant that Isaiah spoke about who would come to bear the sins of His people in obedience to the Father...(Isa 53)
 - The One of whom the Father said, “My servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high (Isaiah 52:13).
 - The One who would bring Israel back to God
 - The One who would be given the nations as His inheritance (Isa 49).

 - b. In verse 14, Peter calls Him the Holy One and the just!
 - All through the Scriptures, God is called the Holy One.
 - Jesus is given this name because He is God incarnate and because He is without sin.
 - We are called holy because we are cleansed by Jesus, but Jesus is holy in Himself.
 - And just, or righteous—that is also the name that Isaiah gives to the branch that will grow up out of the root of Jesse...
 - The one who alone is righteous and who brings righteousness.
 - My friends, we don’t have any righteousness in ourselves—it is all from Jesus!

 - c. In verse 15, Peter calls Him the Prince of Life.
 - He is the one for whom and by whom all things were made...
 - He is the source of life because He has life in Himself.
 - And now that we are dead in sin, He is also the only source of new life.
 - He is the way, the truth and the life,
 - He is the resurrection and the life.
 - Without Him, we are as dead as a barren desert.
 - He is the only one who can make the lame man walk.
2. Peter explains that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has glorified Him.
- Peter is not speaking about the performance of this miracle at that which glorified Him,
 - but about all the things that were done to reveal that He was the Messiah who came from heaven to save His people from their sins.
 - In other words, He has shown Him to be His Servant, the Holy One and Just, the Prince of Life!
 - He has vindicated His claim to be all of these things when the Jewish authorities had denied Him.

- And how did He vindicate Him and glorify Him?
 - Verse 15—by raising Him from the dead!
 - By the resurrection God reverses the sentence of condemnation that men had placed upon Him in God's name!
 - By the resurrection He declares Him to be the Son of God with power, risen with healing in His wings—salvation for the nations.
 - By the resurrection, He shows that His sacrifice for His people has been fully accepted and that He is Lord and Christ!

 - And Peter says that he and the other apostles are witnesses that God raised Him!
 - They saw Him and they have been declaring Him .
 - And now their witness is verified through the power that has just been seen upon the lame man...
 - It is through faith in the name of Jesus—God's Servant, the Holy one and Just, the Prince of life—who was crucified and raised.
 - It is through faith in Him as all of these things that has given this man perfect soundness in His legs!
3. Peter then speaks about how wrong it is to deny Him.
- a. He lays it on really heavy!
 - They are completely out of accord with God in their rejection of Him!
 - 1) In verse 13, he shows that He is God's servant, but they denied Him even when Pilate could find no fault in Him and wanted to let Him go!
 - How wrong they were!
 - Their judgement was worse than that of a pagan governor!
 - If you reject Jesus, your judgement is just as off!
 - 2) In verse 14, he shows that they chose a murderer over the One who is Holy and Just!
 - What distortion!
 - What blindness!
 - What darkness!
 - Here is our depravity—that we prefer what is corrupt and vile to what is holy and pure.
 - 3) In verse 15, he shows that they killed the Prince of life whom God raised up.

- How contrary they are to God!
 - The One He loves and raises up to live for ever is the One they could not bear to keep alive in the earth!
 - Was it because He loved people and healed them?
 - Was it because there was no hypocrisy in Him and they felt so exposed by Him?
 - Indeed, that is why people avoid Jesus!
 - That is why you avoid Jesus if you do!
 - He is holy and pure and He makes you uncomfortable even though He is good and gracious and came to save.

b. What a condemnation this is of us!

- We do not fervently embrace Jesus—the One the Father vindicated!
 - In our natural selves, we are so opposite to God—so contrary to Him.
 - We don't even want the One who came to give us life!
 - We prefer to see Him taken out of the way—we prefer a murderer to the Holy and Just One.
 - We want nothing to do with the very One who heals us!

TRANS> He is God's Servant, the Holy One and the Just, the Prince of Life—

- How can we reject Him?

III. But now see how Peter proclaims the mercy of God in Christ!

- My friends, this is the good news!
 - Peter shows that Jesus will give life to you even though you have rejected Him—if only you will repent!
 - As surely as He made this lame man walk, He will make you walk!
 - You don't have to go on being lame!
 - Receive Jesus as He is revealed! Believe on His name.
 - The same faith that healed this man will heal you!
 - That is the great picture that is given to you here!
 - Lameness ends with Jesus Christ!
 - It will completely end and you will have perfect soundness!

A. See how tenderly Peter appeals to them!

1. He has just told them how wicked and wrong and out of sync with God they were to reject Jesus...
 - but now he softens the blow a little...
 - a. In verse 17, he tells them that he knows they acted in ignorance...as did their rulers...
 - **Acts 3:17: "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.**
 - This reminds us of Jesus' prayer from the cross when He said,
 - "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
 - It was not an intentional sin in the technical sense—a sin for which there is no pardon...
 - It was with a culpable and wicked ignorance that they did not recognise Jesus—it was blindness that arises from sin—
 - but they had so suppressed the truth and were so warped that they did not know that He truly was the Son of God.
 - As Paul says in Corinthians, "if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."
 - A few of them did know—and for them there was no pardon.
 - but by far the bulk of them did not know—
 - They should have known, but sin blinded them.
 - b. And then Peter adds that despite their wicked deed in crucifying the Prince of Life, God intended it for good.
 - It was His will for Jesus to be crucified.
 - It was clearly foretold by the mouth of the prophets!
 - All through the Old Testament!
 - What was with all the sacrifices that were offered but a testimony of the suffering of Christ?
 - What was with the experience of Israel in Egypt and subsequent deliverance but a picture of Christ's suffering and exile followed by His resurrection?
 - And so with the captivity and so with the life of Joseph and so with the life of David...
 - There was exile and then restoration.
 - Suffering and then resurrection.
 - Even the very life of Job as blessed, then cut off, then restored.
 - The sufferings of Christ are everywhere set forth in the OT.

- And then there are the more direct prophecies...
 - There is the magnificent testimony of Psalm 22 where Christ is seen as crucified and crying out to the Father,
 - only to be heard and raised up to gather His church and lead them in praise to God for God's accepting of His sacrifice!
 - And there is the very clear testimony of Isaiah 53 where our Jesus is seen making His soul an offering for sin...
 - where all our iniquities are laid on Him and we are pardoned through His suffering and sacrifice.
 - Truly, as Peter says in verse 18...
 - **18 "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.**
 - God's purposes have not been defeated by their slaying of Jesus!
 - They have rather been perfectly fulfilled!

2. This applies to you also...

- Never suppose that your wickedness can overthrow God's purposes.
 - You might well mean it for evil, but God will use it for good.
 - And He is ready to forgive you—to count it all as ignorance on your part and to freely forgive you if you will only repent!
 - You see, His purpose of grace is not thwarted by anything that you or anybody else does.
 - There is still room for pardon.

B. Hear the promise to free forgiveness and new life that Peter proclaims!

- Having said, in effect, “you have done this great wickedness against Christ which has only served to fulfill God's purpose,” he now says (v. 19)
 1. “Repent therefore and be converted (or turn)”
 - Don't keep holding on to your wicked ignorance in your pride.
 - Repent of your rejection of Christ—it is enough.
 - Don't hold on to the lie—turn from it—deal with how wrong you have been to reject the very one who came to save you...
 - And He will yet save you!
 - But if you hold on to your wicked hostility toward Him...you cannot be saved.
 - Repent and be converted!

2. Just look at the promise that is given to you if you will!
 - a. First he says that your sins will be blotted out!
 - The word literally means wiped away—
 - You see, they wrote on papyrus and the ink did not sink into it—it stayed on the surface and they could wash it off—erase it!
 - Oh brothers and sisters—that is what the LORD does with our entire record of sin and rebellion if we repent and turn to Him.
 - Jesus died to take it all away and His death does not fail!
 - Your sins are completely removed from the record and He keeps on wiping away all the new ones that you commit too!
 - You are fully restored to the living God!

TRANS> Then, as Peter goes on to say,

- b. “times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord!”
 - There is nothing so refreshing as to know that your sins are forgiven and that God is with you to bless you and to work in you!
 - And brothers and sisters—He is!
 - If you have repented and turned to Jesus, God is with you forever and all along the way there are times of refreshing from His presence.
 - Jesus is with us, now by His Holy Spirit, and soon in person!
 - He will never leave you or forsake you.
 - Yes, we must suffer at times now—just as He suffered—but only that we may know the fellowship of His sufferings...
 - only to prepare us for greater glory in the time to come!
 - Perhaps you feel lame and helpless at times, even as a believer...
 - but be assured—the LORD is with you to bless all your trials.
 - He is faithful!
 - And the day of resurrection is coming!
 - That is the next thing...
 - He blots out our sins...
 - He sends times of refreshing...
- c. And soon He will come in person!
 - So come to Him for the blotting out of your sins and for times of refreshing from His presence now...
 - and then God will send Jesus—He will come again.

- By coming to Him now, you place yourself between the already of what Jesus has done and the not yet of what He will do...
 - Already you have forgiveness and times of refreshing...
 - Soon, but not yet, God will send Him to restore everything!
 - That is the hope of the final resurrection when Satan will be cast out and the curse will be abolished so that all things will be restored.

- This is what it says—beginning in verse 19 for context...
 - **Acts 3:19: "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, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.**

- Jesus is not going to come back until all the elect have been gathered in to the fold.
 - That is why this verse sounds as though we have to repent before God will send Jesus.
 - There is a sense in which we do—if we are elect.
 - We hasten His coming by repenting and by calling others to repent—with each one who does, we come closer to the time of His return when everything—*everything* will be restored!
 - The whole creation groans now, waiting for this great day.
 - And we ourselves groan in these bodies...
 - Jesus has healed us, and yet we are waiting to be completely healed.
 - The promise that Jesus will give us perfect soundness is constantly set forth in the word of God.
 - God has spoken it by the mouth of the holy prophets since the world began.

- He has told us that He has a gracious plan... of life...
 - In the Garden of Eden, there was the tree of life...
 - And after the fall, there was the promise of the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head—the serpent who brought about the rebellion.
 - All things will be restored—that is the message of the Bible from the beginning to the end.

3. Peter uses the promise of a Prophet that was given by Moses as an example of the promise that God will restore all things in Jesus.

- In Acts 3:22-23, Peter says:

- **Acts 3:22-23: For Moses truly 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. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’**

a. These were potent words for Peter’s audience.

- Long before Jesus came, the Jews had come to understand this prophecy as spoken concerning the promised Messiah!

- He would be the final prophet who was like Moses, only greater.

- As a prophet, He would come to show us the way of God and to lead us into that way.

- It was potent because they already believed that it spoke about the Messiah—they already knew that.

- They only needed to accept Jesus as the one who was that prophet.

TRANS> But there is also a potent warning attached to the promise!

b. Peter is very clear—You can’t go on rejecting Jesus and receive His blessing.

- Every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.

- If you will not have His salvation, there is no salvation at all.

- He is the way, the truth, and the life—no one comes to the Father but by Him!

- You are lame and you cannot serve God until you turn to Jesus.

- He is the one who heals you and restores you so you can walk with God.

- Without Him, you can do nothing.

- Every soul that will not hear Him will be utterly destroyed from among the people...

- They will not participate in the salvation that He brings.

4. Peter stresses again that all the prophets have spoken of these days...these days of the Messiah that began with Jesus appearing in the world.

- This was important to show that this was not a new religion, but a continuation of the one true religion.

- In verse 24 He says:

- **Acts 3:24: "Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days--these days of the Messiah**

- a. With these words Peter, having just given one example of how Moses had spoken about Jesus, now explains that all the rest of the prophets did as well!
 - Samuel was the next major prophet (Joshua is probably included with Moses) and he foretold of the coming of Christ as did all who came after.
 - Samuel did so particularly in anointing David as King who was chosen out of the lowly roots of Jesse because he had a heart for God...
 - God raised David up to restore His people...
 - And David became the principle type of Jesus Christ who was to come and fully restore them by His own holiness and power.
 - Over and over again Christ was set forth to Israel as the hope of salvation.
 - Over and over, God's blessing was promised through Him!
 - In Isaiah 9, He was called a child born for us and a son given to us whose name would be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace!"
 - The One of whom it was said that...
 - "Of the increase of His government and of peace, there will be no end! Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgement and justice from that time forward, even forever."
 - This was the promise of the restoration of all things!
 - He is the branch of righteousness, the Lord our righteousness who comes from the roots of Jesse.
 - He is the Sun of righteousness who arises with healing in His wings.
- b. As the covenant people to whom all these prophets spoke and from whom they all came,
 - Israel was greatly blessed!
 - As the sons of the prophets, they were the first to hear of Christ!
 - God brought Him forth for them.
 - You see how Peter speaks of the privilege they had over all peoples in verses 25-26:
 - **Acts 3:25-26: "You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."**
 - That is why Jesus came!

- To save His people from their sins!
 - To bless His people by turning them from their sins with a blessing that was to spread to all the families of the earth.
 - That is what Jesus does—
 - He takes those ruined by the fall...
 - Those who are lame and who cannot walk...
 - And He gives them legs so that they can walk and leap and praise God—
 - What they could never have done apart from Him, they do!
- c. And my friends—now you are in that privileged position that Israel was in!
- For generations, God has been speaking to our fathers through the ministry of the gospel.
 - Jesus and His saving restoring work has been declared to us again and again through the preaching of the scriptures among our people.
 - This is our inheritance.
 - He has come to bless us by turning us away from our sins.
 - He has come to bring to us the full pardon and full restoration.
 - But as with the Jews...
 - if you will not hear Him—if you will not repent and turn to Him...
 - You will be utterly destroyed from among His people.
 - So get up my brothers and sisters!
 - Jesus is among us to refresh us and to enable us to walk!
 - Don't lie around—
 - Rise up and walk through faith in Him!
 - Do what you can only do by His grace!
 - Start walking and leaping and praising God!
 - He came to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.
 - Do not spend another day more without this blessing.

Conclusion:

If you have come to Jesus, you are marvellously able to walk! to walk with God!

- And though the full blessing has not yet been given—and we still have some lameness...
 - Complete restoration will come—just as all the prophets have said.