

Acts 3:12- 4:4

Saving faith

(What is the nature of the faith that saves?)

Introduction

1. Chapter three begins with a dramatic healing that resulted in great interest in the Apostles' ministry.
2. What follows is an evangelistic sermon that calls Israel to repentance.
3. We can learn valuable truths about the nature of saving faith as we carefully read Luke's summary of Peter's message.

A. Saving faith has to do with Jesus. (not the blessings)

“¹² But when Peter saw {this}, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, {the one} whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. ¹⁴ But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ but put to death the Prince of life, {the one} whom God raised from the dead, {a fact} to which we are witnesses.

1. The issue is not physical healing but the living Jesus and our relationship with Him.
2. Israel's actions are contrasted with the actions of God.
 - a. You disowned Him yet He is willing to embrace you.
 - b. You put Him to death yet as the Prince of life He is raised to give you life.

<i>What has God done?</i>	<i>What has Israel done?</i>
God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus	you delivered up, and disowned Him
God raised from the dead	you put to death the Prince of life

3. **A lesson for us** – While salvation from temporal trouble is often a part of God's will for us, it is fellowship with God that is the real blessing. Mark 2:1-12. Jesus is not just a chaplain for the Kingdom or our blessings. He is the main thing.

Jesus is not simply a chaplain for

<i>My blessing</i>	<i>The Kingdom</i>
Health, prosperity, grace, feel good, happiness, etc.	Social justice, peace, political reform, material prosperity, etc.
Jn. 6	Heb. 6:1-6

B. Saving faith has to do with faith. (not faithfulness)

16 And on the basis of faith in His name, {it is} the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which {comes} through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. 18 But the things, which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

1. In contrast to the people of Israel who rejected Christ, this lame man received Him.
 - a. It was “faith in His name” that healed this man. The name of a person represented the person. Mark.5:34; 10:52; Luke 17:19; In Acts, Luke seeks of “the name” of Jesus at least 33 times (2:21, 38; 3:6, 16; 4:7, 10,12, 17-18; 5:28, 40-41)
 - b. This faith is said to “come through him (the lame man not Jesus).” In other words, the faith is outwardly expressed by the lame man’s walking and leaping and praising God.
 - c. To be sure it was Christ who healed but it was the faith that brought the blessing of Christ to this person. The point of the passage is contrasting this man’s faith and its resultant blessing with Israel’s lack of faith and its failure to receive a blessing.
 - d. **A lesson for us** - Saving faith is simply “calling on the name of Jesus” with the trust that he will save us. This faith will be evident as we walk in newness of life. Saving faith has an inner conviction (trust from the heart) and an outer expression (baptism and discipleship).
 - e. We might distinguish between three kinds of Christian faith.

<i>Saving faith</i>	<i>Sanctifying faith</i>	<i>Serving faith</i>	<i>Supplying faith</i>
Trust in Jesus as our righteousness	Yielding our lives to the control of the Holy Spirit	Offering ourselves in service to others	Receiving specific blessings
Baptism & Confession of Christ	Discipleship & holy living	Ministry & bearing fruit for the Kingdom	Healing, deliverance, prayer, etc.

<i>Rom.4:5</i>	<i>Rom.6:11</i>	<i>Rom.12:6</i>	<i>Matt.9:29</i>
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2. Peter indicates that “all the prophets” announced that Jesus should suffer.
 - a. This is clearer in some passages than in others. Isa.52-53 is the clearest expression.
 - b. The point is that the suffering of Christ was a clear and vital part of God’s plan for his ministry. In Acts, Peter does not talk about the cross, atonement, etc as does Paul. He rather lumps it all in the word, “suffering.”
3. **A lesson for us** – Just as Christ suffered that this lame man might be strengthened, so we should lay down our lives that others might be blessed. Phil.2:5-8; Rom.12:1-8

C. Saving faith has to do with repentance. (not moral renewal)

19 Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, 21 whom heaven must receive until {the} period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. 22 "Moses said, *'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you.*' 23 'And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and {his} successors onward, also announced these days. 25 It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, *'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'* 26 For you first, God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one {of you} from your wicked ways.”

1. The focus of this sermon is very important. It is not about receiving a healing of the body nor is it about moral rearmament. It is about the forgiveness of sins through trust in Christ.
2. The pattern of the sermon is like Peter’s first sermon in Acts two.
 - a. The display of power that you see comes from the resurrected Christ.
 - b. This is the man you crucified.
 - c. The Prophets speak of him.
 - d. Repent and have your sins forgiven.
3. The sermon speaks of the promise of a new covenant with a Spirit that will create within God’s people the power and willingness to obey God from the inside out.

4. The blessing of Christ will come only as the people “turn from their wicked ways.” What does this mean? There are two ways of looking at verse 26.
 - a. The blessings come only as we bring out lives under successful management so that we no longer sin in any way. Those who hold this view usually modify it to refer to “intentional sins.” This view creates some difficult scenarios. For example, it suggests that we are not saved by grace but by empowerment to keep the law.
 - b. The “wicked ways” in question are the sins mentioned in verses 13-15. The sins of refusing to identify with Christ as “our savior” and participating in his execution. This is the preferred interpretation in my view. If Christ has taken away our sins, then the issue standing between us and God is Christ, not our lack of moral power to keep the law.

Justification	Sanctification
Repentance from dead works (pride of self righteousness) to faith in Christ’s righteousness.	Repentance from sinful habits to a walk that conforms to the glory of God.
Turning from self (generally) to Christ	Turning from specific sins to obedience.
Mk.1:15; Heb.6:1	II Cor.12:21

5. **A lesson for us** – We will never have assurance of our salvation while we are focusing our lives on our performance before the moral law of God. We find peace only as we focus our attention on Jesus and our faith in Him.