

- I. Story: The 200k Bible that sits under glass.  
My point isn't to criticize... just to picture something that is supposed to be *useful* being rendered *useless* and even *wasteful* because someone forgot what it exists for in the first place.
- A. This is precisely what happened with God's people in Israel, and so often happens in the church. *When we disobey our mission, and forget that we are a movement, we become a monument.*

## II. Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>And I will make of you a *great nation*, and *I will bless you* and make your name great, *so that you will BE a blessing*. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and *in you ALL the families of the earth shall be blessed.*"

- A. Abraham's descendants, Israel, were *chosen* to be blessed by God *so that they could bless all the other people groups in the world... bring them in*
- B. Israel accepted the *blessing* but rejected and squandered the command.
1. This is the main point of the Book of Jonah.
- C. Jesus, in the place of Israel, became the fulfillment of this squandered command.
1. *And then He commands His disciples to finish the work...*

## III. Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses *in Jerusalem (city)* and in *all Judea (region)* and Samaria (*region of outsiders*), and to the end of the earth (*world full of outsiders*)."

- A. So, what we will read in Acts 3 is the beginning of **a story about the people of the King, filled with the Spirit of the King, fulfilling the mission of the King?**

## IV. Acts 3

- A. <sup>1</sup>Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. <sup>2</sup>And a man *lame from birth* was being carried, whom they laid daily *at the gate* of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms *of those entering the temple*.
1. This man has likely never actually been inside the temple courts. (Leviticus 21)
- B. <sup>3</sup>Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. <sup>4</sup>And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." <sup>5</sup>And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup>But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I

give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”  
<sup>7</sup>And he took him by the right hand (*Peter grasps the hand that was likely extended out to receive charity*) and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. <sup>8</sup>And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and *entered the temple* with them, walking and leaping and praising God. (*This healing made him able to enter in*) <sup>9</sup>And all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup>and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. <sup>11</sup>While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon’s.

1. We might be tempted to just chalk this up as a miraculous healing that gave the apostles an opportunity to preach.
  - a. And though that *is* what happens, I think Luke wants us to see more.
  - b. Because of the Scripture Peter activates in his sermon that follows, Luke wants us to see this event as a picture concerning the mission of Jesus’ people.
2. **The mission** of the people of God has always been the same, whether Israel then or the church now: **bringing people who are *outside* the Kingdom, *inside* the Kingdom.**

C. <sup>12</sup>And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, *as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? (“You think WE made him walk... that’s silly and impossible. But who did?”)* <sup>13</sup>The *God of Abraham* (*Peter is hyperlinking back to that calling of God on Israel*), the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. <sup>14</sup>But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, <sup>15</sup>and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

1. First, Peter links Jesus to forefathers and their mission in the world.
2. Also, Peter is trying to answer the question: “How did we get here? How did the chosen people of the King get to a place that when the King showed up, they didn’t recognize Him and *murdered* Him?”
3. **Rebellion: When the people of God habitually reject their King’s mission, it inevitably leads them to reject their King.**
  - a. I think today, the American church stands at a very similar crossroads.
  - b. What is the antidote to our rebellion?

D. <sup>16</sup>And his name—by *faith* in his name (Jesus!)—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

1. **The antidote to our wickedness is not complicated.** It may not be easy, but it is a simple concept. It's **one word, with a will and actions to back it.** The word: **"Yes."**
2. Peter uses a variety of terms to describe the proper response to the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah King.
  - a. v. 16: faith, v. 19: *"repent"*, *"turn"*, v.22: quotes Moses-*"listen"*
  - b. Call it what you will, but faith, repentance, listening, obedience= YES!
  - c. Yes, to what? Yes, to the King *and* His mission. To make disciples and teach them to obey everything Jesus has commanded.
3. But which "yeses" are the most important? Question reminds me when you tell your kids to do something and they ask what will happen if they don't: "Dad, I need some more info to determine if brushing off what you said is worth it."
  - a. This is NOT the heart-posture of a true Disciple.
4. So, which yes is the most important? The next one:
5. **The next "yes" is the only "yes" that matters because *it's the only one you have.***
  - a. *And THIS yes prepares you for the NEXT yes.*
6. Now look at the GRACE of God:

- V. <sup>17</sup>"And now, brothers, I know that you acted in *ignorance*, as did also your rulers.
- A. Now, ignorance isn't always morally neutral. There are things we *should* know... things that we *don't know* because we have *refused* to know or let sink in.
    1. So, this is a sinful ignorance. And we are often guilty of it as well.
    2. But look at the merciful invitation of God toward the guilty:

- VI. <sup>18</sup>But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his *Christ would suffer*, he thus fulfilled. <sup>19</sup>Repent therefore, and turn back, *that your sins may be blotted out*,
- A. The sins we've committed in rebellion are blotted out in response to our faith-fueled repentance.
  - B. So the past is dealt with... but now Peter turns his eye to the *future*:

- VII. (*Repent, turn back and be forgiven of your sins so*) <sup>20</sup>that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that *he may send the Christ* appointed for you, Jesus, <sup>21</sup>whom heaven must receive (*or hold*) until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.
- A. The people of God, living in repentance... a posture of YES to the King, is what will ultimately precede the return of the King.

VIII. <sup>22</sup>Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. <sup>23</sup>And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’ <sup>24</sup>And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. <sup>25</sup>You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ <sup>26</sup>God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”

- A. Peter is hyperlinking again to the covenant and call of Abraham and the people of Israel:
  - 1. You exist to be my witnesses to the rest of the world.
  - 2. God sent Jesus, His servant, to you *first* to bless you by calling you to repentance.
  - 3. Anything but getting on mission with the King is *wickedness*.
    - a. Most of Israel did not listen to this message... continued to reject Jesus
- B. We, the church, those faithful to Jesus, are those who now carry this torch. And so, here’s what it boils down to for us:
  - 1. Heaven is holding Jesus until the church’s mission is accomplished and Jesus returns to take His throne.
  - 2. Matthew 24:14 makes it VERY clear: The church’s mission is only accomplished, and Jesus will only return when the Gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed to all nations (ethnicities).
  - 3. Our mission, like Peter and the disabled beggar, is to bring those who are outside, into the kingdom. More accurately, the Holy Spirit working *through us*.
- C. **We can do this.**
  - 1. Not because we are special or able... but because we too have the Holy Spirit.
  - 2. Story: Free Burma Rangers documentary... Dave and Karen Eubank: why are their lives remarkable and mine is not? I think it is this: Their lives are marked by a very long and continuous string of “yes’s” to King Jesus. My life is an unpredictable string of some yes’s, some maybes and quite a few “no’s.”
  - 3. All that is left is for the people of Jesus to repent of our sleepiness, our normal-ness, our maybes and our no’s. Instead, answer with a joyful “yes.”
  - 4. **String enough “yes’s” together and we will have a *mission* that is accomplished and a *holy church* that is ready for the return of our King.**

IX. Communion

- A. Today we remember Jesus by taking communion. But communion is not only a remembrance, it’s also a commissioning of sorts.

1. In the Old Covenant, the holy bread that was set out in the Temple was only ever to be eaten by the Priests.
  2. Jesus offering ALL believers to eat this bread is one sign that we are ALL called to live as priests... extending the love and mercy of God to all who will listen.
- B. As you take the bread and the cup today, certainly remember *back* to the sacrifice of Jesus that “blotted out your sin”.
1. But, also look *forward* and embrace the trajectory that Jesus’ sacrifice bought you for... to accomplish the mission of King Jesus on earth.