

# Acts Highlights - Part 2

by George Verwer

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*The book of Acts highlights seven biblical principles: healing, proclamation, repentance, exclusiveness, boldness, the work of the Holy Spirit, and persecution.*

**Duration:** 30:18

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:6, Acts 3:1-6, Acts 3:12, Acts 4:31, Acts 5:29

**Topics:** "Book Of Acts"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Acts and highlights seven life-changing principles. The first principle is healing, as seen in Acts chapter 3. The second principle is proclamation, emphasizing the importance of boldly preaching the message of Jesus. The third principle is repentance, which is a recurring theme in the book of Acts. The fourth principle is exclusiveness, emphasizing that Jesus is the only way to the Father. The preacher also mentions the importance of trusting in God's word and not relying on our own understanding.

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## Transcript

God bless you, it's good to be back with you in the Book of Acts. This is part two. As we look at chapters three through five, I've been studying a commentary by a friend of mine, and it's amazing the details that my friend has gone into, especially on these two messages of the Apostle Peter.

So we don't have the time to go into those details, but if you'd like the link to my friend's commentary, his name is Tom Constable. His dad was my wife's boss when I went to rent a film and met Trina. That changed the course of my life.

Some of you have seen that in the film George for Real. I've had a great breakthrough with my website, georgebrower.com, in that now I can introduce people to Redeem TV, who are offering my film free of charge. It's an answer to prayer because it's, of course, many, many other films.

Let's just pray as we look into the Book of Acts together, these three chapters. Father, we thank you for your word. I thank you as I've spent a very refreshing time in these chapters and in my friend's commentary.

Once again, I've been challenged to be the kind of person that you want me to be in the power of your Holy Spirit. Help us, Lord, again, not to be hearers of the word, but to be doers and show us what we can

put into practice from these biblical teachings and principles. In Jesus' name, amen.

I hope some of you perhaps are taking note. I'm sharing seven life-changing principles from the Book of Acts, especially from these three chapters. Some of these principles, of course, they go throughout the entire Book of Acts.

You can turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter 3. I think if you missed my first lecture, it's available on YouTube. I've looked at part of it. And, of course, I always appreciate any feedback.

I read it all personally. But here we have Peter and John. Pick it up at chapter 3. We're not going to be able to read too many large portions from this great passage, especially those somewhat long sermons by Peter.

Peter and John went to the temple one afternoon to take part in the 3 o'clock prayer service. As they approached the temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate.

And so he could beg for the people going into the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money. Peter and John looked at him intently.

And Peter said, Look at us. The lame man looked at them eagerly expecting a gift. But Peter said, I don't have any money for you, but I give you what I have.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk. Then Peter took by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankle bones were healed and strengthened.

He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk. Then walking and leaping and praising God, he went into the temple with them. There are seven biblical life-changing principles from these two great chapters.

The first one is the principle of healing. God does heal. The devil is very clever.

He manages to bring confusion and controversy over almost every major doctrine. Always trying to push people into one extreme, which we have with some people. God doesn't heal today, to the other extreme.

God always heals. There's no other option. Even further extreme, we don't need doctors.

I've seen so many people hurt by extremism on the teaching of healing. But as I've been going through the whole gospel of Mark lately, and the other gospels, and now the book of Acts, we cannot run away from the fact that God heals. There are other passages, many, many in the book of Acts, showing how the Lord heals people.

He doesn't heal everyone. Jesus is gone. The apostles who were unique are gone.

Maybe we will not always have those same results. It's interesting that Jesus didn't go around just healing everyone, and it's only God who heals. And we have to be aware of trying to manipulate God through doing extreme things, especially if a loved one is ill.

We sometimes go into prayer and fasting, and then if that person isn't raised up, the devil tries to bring in confusion and tries to bring in discouragement. So you'll be able to continue this study on your own, and I hope that God will bless you, and you'll have a balanced, common-sense, biblical theology of healing. The

second biblical principle is the principle of proclamation.

And it's beautiful that both in chapter 2 and now in chapter 3, we have this tremendous emphasis on proclamation. And God takes quite a large portion of his inspired word in the book of Acts to give us these two sermons by Peter, who, of course, was only at that time proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles. Let's look at chapter 3 and verse 12.

Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. People of Israel, he said, what is surrounding, what is astounding about this? And why look at us, though we had made this man walk by our own power and godliness? For it is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors, who brought glory to his servant Jesus by doing this. This is the same Jesus who you handed over to be rejected before Pilate, despite Pilate's decision to release him.

And, of course, Peter goes on. The key verse in many ways is verse 14. Now turn from your sins and turn to God so that you can be cleansed of your sins.

That leads us to our next key principle from the book of Acts and from these chapters. And it's the principle of repentance. It's interesting that in one translation, the word repentance is actually presented as turning around, turning away.

We know that repentance involves turning away from sin and turning to God. And we have an important principle here, and it was repentance from the basic message of the gospel of salvation. Even so, in some cases, the word repentance is not mentioned.

In other cases, the word repentance is mentioned. For example, in John's gospel, we have the very clear biblical principle, quite important in my life, that except a man be born again, he'll never enter the kingdom of God. And Billy Graham, and you can get Billy Graham messages by just Googling his name.

I listened to him a couple of weeks ago. He was preaching in Charlotte in 1958, just three years after I came to Christ through his ministry in New York City. But we don't find that terminology in the book of Acts.

In fact, in different parts of the book of Acts, we get different ways of sort of expressing the gospel and what it is to believe the Lord Jesus Christ. But certainly, repentance is a vital part of it. We believe that there's not only that initial repenting and believing on Jesus for salvation, but that repentance is also the key to ongoing revival.

Many of you know that I greatly push that book, Calvary Road. We give them out free of charge. This is the 70th anniversary this year or next year of the book, Calvary Road, which came out of the East African revival.

And when the Holy Spirit worked in East Africa, many of them were already believers. But they had to repent because they were living double lives. They were living in sin.

And it's when they repented and confessed their sin, God just began to work. And then many nonbelievers impacted by it all came to Jesus. All of my life, my first passion has always been revival, not firstly missions.

It was all tied together, of course. But in many ways, our own fellowship, initially called Send the Light, later called Operation Mobilization, was a revival movement, in which we had these prayer meetings in which the Holy Spirit would convict, especially young men, of sin in the sexual area. And they would confess it, sometimes for the first time in their life.

And there would be prayer. And then there would be ongoing fellowship to help one another if we had different problems. And even when I first came to Europe, my passion was to be able to gather large numbers together so that I could share this message.

I spoke every night at those initial conferences when we became Operation Mobilization, calling people to repentance. And many of them were lukewarm. We'd often speak from the Book of Revelation about lukewarmness.

We'd often speak about the fire of God. And we used that terminology, which isn't used so much anymore, that people need to be on fire, need to be on fire for Jesus. And I was thinking of a quotation by a great man of God named Samuel Logan Bringle, one of the leaders of the Salvation Army.

And he gave this description of fire, which is such a reality in the Book of Acts. What is fire? It is love. It's faithfulness.

It's hope. It's passion, purpose, determination. It's utter devotion.

It's divine discontent with formality, ceremonialism, lukewarmness, indifference, sham, noise, parade, and spiritual death. It's singleness of mind. It's God the Holy Ghost burning in and through a holy, faithful man.

I remember when I had my first smuggling expedition, before we even had the name Operation Mobilization, into what was known as Yugoslavia. And before we went across the border, we met two godly missionary women in Austria. And they taught us that song from the Salvation Army.

I have it somewhere here in this old Bible. Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire. And that should be our prayer as we study the Book of Acts.

That we'll experience the reality of the Lord. And certainly, it's linked with the challenge of repentance. There's a number of other references to repentance.

Just in these three chapters, we won't have time to look at. The fourth biblical principle we especially see at this time is one of the hardest principles for the day and age in which we live. It's the principle of exclusiveness.

I remember listening to a tape by a man who greatly influenced me, Dr. John Stock, who is the Director of All Souls here in London, whose meetings, by the way, each Sunday are going all over the world. You can easily find them. And he shared in this tape that in the way ahead in our culture, the way our culture is, even a lot of churchanity, the hardest part of the message of Jesus was exclusive.

His exclusiveness. And that's expressed especially in Acts chapter 4. Let's look at it. Verse 12, there is salvation in no one else.

There's no other name in all of heaven for people to call on to save them. And, of course, we think of John 14, 6, where Jesus clearly said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.

And, of course, we're reminded even in this passage when we read about Ananias and Sapphira that God is also a God of judgment. Sin must be judged. No sinful human being can stay in the presence of the living God.

That's why God said, It's only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Yet today, especially in Europe but also other parts of the world, if you say Jesus is the only way, people really start to think of you as a narrow-minded bigot. Unfortunately, some Christian leaders when interviewed on TV found it hard when these commentators asked these hard questions.

Well, do you believe every Jew is going to hell? What great wisdom we need in our culture when we're asked difficult questions. Sometimes I say to people, Look, I'm struggling. I'm struggling enough with the concept of heaven that I can never get in there, much less trying to understand hell.

I have to leave it with God. But we have a just God. And we see that there is such a thing as judgment.

And the reason I believe we have this story of Ananias and Sapphira here in this passage is just to awaken us to that side of God. Obviously, this does not happen very much. But it happened in the very beginning of the church.

God's tremendous outcry against hypocrisy, against pretension, against just wearing a mask, against playing church. Unfortunately, in God's mercy, he doesn't judge people so instantly. But judgment is coming, of course, for all those who have not experienced the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So principle one is healing. Principle two is proclamation. Principle three is repentance.

Principle four, exclusiveness of the gospel. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by him.

Let's not trust our own understanding but lean on God's word. I often quote those verses from Proverbs. Trust the Lord with all your heart.

Lean not to your own understandings. In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will guide your path. And then the fifth biblical principle, which just jumps out of these pages, is the principle of boldness.

Look, for example, at chapter 4 and verse 31. Chapter 4, verse 31. Sorry, I'm on the wrong page here.

After this prayer, the building where they were meeting shook. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they preached the message with boldness. There's another example later on when they were put in prison, and they got out of prison, and they were told no longer to preach this message.

And immediately they started preaching the message, and they spoke and said, We cannot help but continue to declare the message of the Lord Jesus. And, of course, there was a great uproar. There are a number of other passages we don't have time to look at.

Sharing the boldness of these early disciples, the very two messages of Peter in chapter 2 and chapter 3 are just so bold. I don't think that I can easily preach that kind of message if it was to a specific nation. And, again, he was addressing Israel.

And in one of the verses it indicates that his initial dream was for all of Israel to repent. But, of course, that never happened. But individuals came to Jesus.

And that's how the church has been born. That's how the church has grown. And I think of how many people today in certain countries, their dream was their whole nation would come in the revival.

They go fasting and prayer for a whole month for their nation to come in revival. I remember that 40 years ago in America, 20 years ago. And yet, if we're really honest, that's not happened at least to the extent people were praying.

Now, the Holy Spirit, of course, in my view, is just constantly bringing people to himself. Constantly there is personal revival. But it doesn't always happen on a national scale.

And we must never let that discourage us any more than Peter not seeing his dream as he preached this message in Acts, allowed it to discourage him. That continued as one of the great leaders in the church. And, of course, later in Acts, we're going to see the apostle Paul coming into the picture and sharing the gospel to the Gentiles.

And, of course, Luke, who gave us the book of Acts, was a Gentile. It seems like a very easy thing for us today. But in that day, it was very unique.

It was very controversial. And there was tensions, even at times between Peter and Paul, to some degree, Paul and Barnabas over the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles and whether they would have to continue to have some Jewish practices like circumstances, which is spoken about quite often. And then the sixth biblical principle, really it should be listed as the first, is the overall principle of the work of the Holy Spirit.

We read in verse 31, as they prayed, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. In our last session, we looked at the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit initially moved in such a powerful way. And, of course, this past Sunday, just yesterday, we celebrated Pentecost Sunday.

There are many, many other references to the work of the Holy Spirit here in the book of Acts and in these three chapters. May God give you extra time to study some of them. And then the seventh biblical principle that I want to emphasize at this time is the principle of persecution.

Look at chapter 5 and verse 18. The high priest and his friends, verse 17, in the Sadducees, chapter 5, reacted with violent jealousy. They arrested the apostle, or apostles, and they put them in jail.

But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, go to the temple and give the people this message of life. So the apostles entered the temple about daybreak and immediately began teaching.

When the high priest and his officials arrived, they convened the high council, along with all the elders of Israel. Then they sent for the apostles to be brought to trial. But when the temple guards went to the jail, the men were gone.

So they returned to the council and reported the jail was locked with the guards standing outside. But when we opened the gate, no one was there. When the captain of the temple guards and the leading priests heard this, they were perplexed, wondering where it would all end.

Then someone arrived with the news that the men that had been jailed went out in the temple teaching the people. And I referred to that before, how they felt they could never stop declaring the message of the

gospel, even though they were told by the highest officials they must not do that. That, of course, leads to the complexity many have on the mission field, when it's illegal to do something.

And we often refer to those words for maps. We have to obey God rather than man. It's a tough one in some situations.

We need a lot of wisdom as we face things that are not what we would like in terms of black and white, but a little bit gray. Certainly the basic principle holds. But the more important principle I'm trying to emphasize right now is that as Christians there will be persecution.

We see that right through the Book of Acts. And, of course, Peter ended up in prison. Later on he was in prison.

Remember, we'll get to that chapter 12. But many were gathered in prayer, and so soon he was out of prison. And later we'll look at this conspiracy actually to kill the Apostle Paul, where 24 men said they would not eat.

They would not eat until the Apostle Paul was dead. And probably tomorrow or our next session we'll be looking at Stephen and how he was martyred, the first martyr that we read about in the Book of Acts and the Word of God. So persecution is a basic part of living for Christ.

Persecution in many Western countries doesn't come often physically because the laws of the country are holding people back and controlling the situation. But many believers, even in Europe, are suffering from discrimination, suffering from wrong articles written against Christians in the press. Turkey is one of our primary fields.

And in Turkey there have been lies on television, lies in the newspaper against Christians. And, of course, even in the United States, certain parties love to attack the Christians, and they always pick usually on some extreme Christian who's done something really stupid. We even get that on the news here in Europe.

This is, of course, all the strategy of the enemy, to discredit the gospel, to hinder the work of God. We need a lot of wisdom, especially if we begin to face greater persecution. But there are many other forms, of course, of suffering, which we continue to look at as we study this book.

So let's review in our minds these other principles. Number one is healing. Number two is proclamation.

By the way, I think that emphasis on proclamation is needed because there are many voices, even from believers, saying, well, we don't need to preach so much. People don't want to be preached to. We just have small groups.

We just have one-on-one. I believe in all those things. But, you know, I always say because Billy Graham proclaimed the gospel and the book of Acts, we see that proclamation is the greatest emphasis.

It isn't firstly helping people in their physical needs. That is there. But the priority is the proclamation of the gospel.

Again and again we see that. And then repentance, then the exclusiveness of the gospel, boldness, the Holy Spirit, and persecution. I wanted to read another quotation that was on my heart.

I have this old Bible that I hardly ever use. Maybe I can show it to you. It's falling apart.

But on special occasions like this, I spend time in this old Bible looking at some of my own notes. And in this Bible I have a number of quotes by men of God that have really impacted me. And so I close with this quote from Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones.

By the way, 8 million of his messages have been downloaded on the Internet. Very easy to find. Because some people, when they emphasize the Holy Spirit, they think, well, I really can't do anything.

It's just the Lord. And they become very passive, waiting for God or waiting for the Holy Spirit to sort of lift them up or push them in or bless them in a special way in which they feel, therefore, like doing some witnessing. But oftentimes we have to remember the principles of Jesus to deny self, take up the cross, and follow him.

And we have to be ready to exert ourselves. Paul said, I bucket my body and bring it into subjection. As I've often said, I used to play tennis.

The ball is in our court. God has done his part. Jesus died on the cross.

The Holy Spirit has come. The Holy Spirit is living in us. So we have to exert ourselves.

We have to take that step of faith. And here's this great quotation from Dr. Lloyd-Jones. Nothing is more obvious about the teaching of the New Testament than this, that the Christian life is a life of activity, a life of vigor, a life of exertion.

The strength is given to us by the Lord, but we must act. May this be another week in your life of biblical action in the power of the Holy Spirit. God bless you.

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