14 – 20 April 2024 Learning to live after our mistakes

# **Acts 3:12-19**

# **New International Version**

**12**When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? **13**The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. **14**You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. **15**You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. **16**By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

**17**“Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. **18**But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. **19**Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Bible notes

Words and actions belong closely together in Acts. Speaking God’s Word with boldness is accompanied by signs and wonders. The action comes first as Peter heals a lame man, ‘in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk’ (3:6). Now, as the crowd runs towards them in astonishment, Peter explains what has happened. When Peter ‘took him by the right hand and raised him up’ (3:7) the lame man was given ‘perfect health’ through Jesus. This is the new life that began with Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus is the author, or pioneer, of this risen life, and the same title is used of Jesus in connection with his death and resurrection in Hebrews 2:10 and 12:2.

Peter accuses the crowd of Jesus’ murder, ‘You killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead’. He doesn’t choose here to mention his own shameful part in the story, falling asleep when asked to pray with Jesus in his agony (Luke 22:45-46), weeping bitterly after denying three times that he knew Jesus (22:62). But Jesus had said to him, ‘When once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers’ (22:32).

Now he urges the crowd to repentance with similar words, ‘Turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out’. In Jesus’ suffering, to which he contributed; in Jesus’ resurrection, to which he witnesses; and in the repentance that he proclaims, Peter sees the fulfilment of the loving promises of God. This echoes the words of the risen Jesus to the disciples in today’s Gospel, ‘Thus it is written’.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

Peter said he would die with Jesus but denied knowing him. The resurrection first seemed to the disciples to be an idle tale. Understandably, when the risen Jesus appeared and invited them to touch his tortured body, their reaction combined disbelief and terror, wonder and joy. They saw the consequences of their own failings in the same moment they apprehended the forgiveness available to them. The psychologist Steve Taylor has interviewed many who, like these disciples in a time of crisis, have experienced ‘awakenings’ to love, compassion, and new aspects of reality. He calls this ‘transformation through turmoil’.

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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**Questions**

* When in your life has a mistake become an opportunity?
* How do/should we treat others who make mistakes?

How might this approach to mistakes be received by people outside the church?

## Prayer

 Adapt to your local context.

Lord, we all make mistakes.  
Some of our mistakes hurt you.   
Some of our mistake hurt other people.   
Some of our mistake hurt us.  
Lord, help us to learn from our mistakes and not to be hard on ourselves.   
And when someone hurts us, Lord help us to forgive. **Amen.**

## **A prayer to end the Bible study**

Lord, thank you that you don’t give up on us when we fail,  
that you offer us a fresh start through your forgiveness.  
Guide and teach us that we may learn from our mistakes,  
And walk with us into each new day, In Jesus’ name. **Amen.**

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