

Read: Acts 3:11-20

Sing a Little Ditty of Praise!

Acts 3:11-20

While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them . . . When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? . . . The God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed. . . . You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. 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 given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. . . I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Years ago, there was a cartoon character named *Psalty the Singing Songbook*. Psalty had a few hit songs , perhaps his biggest hit being, “Amen, Praise the Lord!” It is an action song sung with energy by many Sunday schoolers and teachers. If there is a lull in the lesson, or the students need a brain break, nothing gets the kids moving like getting out of their seats and following the directions to this little ditty; “I’m gonna jump down, turn around, touch the ground and praise the Lord!”

Right before our reading—a man unable to walk since birth was healed in Jesus’ name and performed a similar sequence of actions. “He went...walking and jumping, and praising God” (Acts 3:8).

After witnessing the commotion of the crazy events when Peter healed the man, people composed an action verse of their own: “We were astonished, came running, showed surprise and stared at them!”

That’s when Peter began to do some finger-pointing at the surprised people. He walked them step by step through Jesus’ journey to Calvary. He said, “You handed him over, disowned him, released a murderer instead and killed the Lord.” That is not as catchy or happy as the fun Psalty song, but it had to be said. Peter knew the people “acted in ignorance”—he alerts them to what they had done without knowing they had done it.

God used those awful actions for his purpose. Like he often does, God twists, turns, and flips something bad into good for those who love him. Jesus, the author of life and composer of all, was killed. And if that was the end of the stanza, we would never feel like singing again. But there is more to the stanza of salvation, “God raised him from the dead!” (Acts 3:15)

Thanks to the Holy Spirit who worked faith in our hearts, we are not ignorant of that stunning song of salvation! We know and believe that our sins have been wiped out because of Jesus, and that gives us reason to “*Jump down, turn around, touch the ground, & Praise the Lord!*”

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name one thing you heard in today’s devotion that makes you want to “*Jump down, turn around, touch the ground, & Praise the Lord!*”
- After today’s devotion is done, have someone look up “Amen, Praise the Lord!” so you can do all the actions!

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Besides singing, what are some other ways you can praise the Lord?
- Discuss the following: Singing praises to God only counts as praise if it sounds pretty.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Put yourself in the sandals of one of the people who didn’t know what they did to Jesus. How would you feel after hearing the laundry list of all those awful things you did wrong that ended with Jesus being killed?
- After Peter showed them their sins, he refreshed them with the sweet gospel message. Play the word association game. In 30 seconds, come up with all the words that you think of when you hear “refresh.” And that’s how we can feel knowing our sins are wiped away!

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, even when things aren’t going well in our lives, please help us remember what you have done for us, and by faith, we can join in singing this song, “Repent, turn to God, be refreshed, and praise the Lord!” Amen.