

Make the Message Clear and Plain
Acts 3:12-20 & 24-26

When you have an important, shared mission, a clear and plain message is essential. Peter's message in Acts 3 includes these clear, consistent points: 1) Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. 2) God the Father raised Him from the dead. 3) Many witnesses saw the risen Jesus. 4) This was what the prophets foretold. In 1 Cor. 15, Paul said his message and the message of the early church has the exact same points.

Peter's message includes 2 promises: through faith in Jesus, "your sins may be wiped out" and "times of refreshing may come from the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:2 uses a familiar word to describe the promises Peter mentioned: "By this gospel you are saved."

The word translated "wipe out" means that Jesus wiped our sins and mistakes off the record of our lives. The expression "times of refreshing" described the time when the Messiah would bring refreshing peace and rest. That time has begun through Jesus. The word "saved" means that Jesus's main ministry wasn't to teach us how to be better but to save us from our sins.

Nothing in the gospel is about cleaning yourself up, doing good deeds, or participating in the rituals of the church to save ourselves. Jesus has done what was necessary for us. The word "gospel" was the title of an announcement sent out by a King or Emperor to his subjects telling them that a victory had been won on their behalf in battle and that they should come to the celebration.

So, Jesus's death on the cross and resurrection from the dead defeated our greatest enemy, wiped the record of our sins away and refreshes our soul. This is what it means to be saved. You don't have to achieve them for yourself. You couldn't if you wanted.

The Bible says that we all have fallen overboard spiritually and are going to be lost eternally. The gospel message is that we have a fast rescue boat. His name is Jesus. What you need to do is have the faith to get in.