

Health Check!

Acts 3¹²⁻¹⁹; Psalm 4; 1 John 3¹⁻⁷; Luke 24³⁶⁻⁴⁸

*In their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering.
[Luke 24²¹]*

One of the great tests of our physical and emotional health is our ability to sleep and the Psalmist, today, says that one of the blessings that God gives is the ability to sleep: **in peace I will lie down and sleep.** But we will not tolerate what on poet suggests:

*Now I lay down to sleep: the sermon's long and the subject deep;
If he gets through before I wake, someone give me a gentle shake.*

You could certainly expect that that crowd who heard Peter after the healing of the lame man – begging, to whom Peter and John said, **I have no gold or silver, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk** – and addressed them:

YOU handed over Jesus to Pilate, even though Pilate wanted to release him.
YOU rejected the Holy and Righteous One.
YOU chose a murdered in his place.
YOU killed the author of life.

Obviously, Peter is no longer **startled and terrified** in the presence of the Risen Christ, nor **in joy disbelieving and wondering** – he states that, despite what had been done **God raised him from the dead.** The things of which he was able to say **we are witnesses** changed him and he was inviting others to share that transformation. How? **Repent and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out!**

Repentance is so much more than saying sorry. It is being different – so much so that we are different people.

One theologian (James Dunn) says of the Old Testament view of repentance: *He who commits evil finds further evil willed by God. But he who repents of his evil finds a God who repents of his evil.*

Someone who says that they have repented but then goes and does the same things again hasn't repented. Repentance that is genuine goes on to do what God would do in the situation and circumstances we find ourselves.

That leads on to the joyful and confident assurance of which John writes in his Epistle.

Certainly, John picks up that theme of the need for repentance – **everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness** but then the repentance that leads to faith makes a difference, **no-one who abides in him sins.**

As we have observed, the practical effect of this is clear: **everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.**

His enthusiasm as the chapter we read begins is infectious:

✘ **See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called the children of God; and that is what we are.**

How do you define yourself? The memorial of the father of one of my predecessors is at the east end of the south aisle: in full armour above and in a shroud below – a reminder that some of the things we think matter, don't. How glorious to be able to say, **Child of God.** By Baptism, by adoption, by choice that is what we are. It is the only title or honour that lives with us.

✘ **Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.**

Christian hope is through life into the new life that is with God when what we know and experience now comes to an end in death. What a relief it will be when we don't have to try and won't let God or ourselves down anymore!

✘ **And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.** Going back to what we said earlier about repentance, this shows us that we don't change because of the fear of punishment but because we are inspired because that is the way we become more like Jesus.

While sleep may be a reliable test of our physical and emotional health, the test of our spiritual health is always how much we let go of what we have been and how much we are like Jesus.