

“The Power of Ministry”
Acts 9:32-43
Jerry Grey

Introduction: “The Master’s Pillow”

Mark 4:38

38 Jesus was in the stern, **sleeping on a cushion**. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, **don’t you care** if we drown?”

Oh, how we see Jesus’ humanity in this passage. The Son of Man sleeps on a cushion. When given a choice, God Himself chose to have a creature comfort!

We also see a question for the ages by the disciples?

Teacher, don’t you care? This is a question that has been asked by the greatest theologians of all time. This is a great debate among theologians and bible students.

Theologians have even coined a term to try and explain the “so called” conflict between the sovereignty of God and the Benevolence or love of God.

You may study what we call the issues of **surd** evil.

Theodicy Definition:

What is theodicy? **Theodicy** is a philosophical attempt to explain why God would allow evil to exist in the world. Within Christianity, for example, God is omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), and omnibenevolent (completely good), a World-Creator that also cares for each human being personally. If this is the case, people wonder, how can evil exist? This seeming contradiction is called the **problem of evil**, and theologians have been attempting to solve it for centuries.

Erikson's Dictionary of Theology says, "a theodicy is an attempt to show that God is not responsible for evil."

Surd evil Says Erikson, An evil that cannot be utilized for good, no matter what operations are performed on it.

In the thought of Edgar Sheffield Brightman it is an evil that cannot be utilized for good, no matter what operations are performed on it. Hence, surd or absurd.

If God is sovereign, then why do bad things happen? Can God really stop bad things from happening? If He can, and doesn't, does that make God unbenevolent or not loving? Or, God forbid, unkind.

I promise you on the authority of God's Word – He cares and understands. You may not want to admit it, but you have thought this, and many of you serve Jesus because you don't want to go to hell, but you think God is unkind.

The study of theodicy and Surd evil is a dangerous one because it has taken many people down a hole of unbelief and cause them to live an accusatory life before God.

This is not the God of the Bible. The Word of God and the cross stand as eternal statements to the benevolent nature of God. The selfish nature of human beings has been displayed since creation. Mankind could not keep one command to safeguard his perfect world and dominion that was given to him by the grace and loving hand of God. Then when man sinned and was without hope or ability (Romans 5:8) to get his dominion back, God sent his Son to redeem lost sinners. Jesus is eternally and eternally fixed in the likeness of man as a God-Man because of our irresponsible sinning.

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Dominion: Gloriously given, legally lost, righteously regained.

Lamentations 3:37-42

New International Version

- ³⁷ Who can speak and have it happen
if the Lord has not decreed it?
- ³⁸ Is it not from the mouth of the Most High
that both calamities and good things come?
- ³⁹ Why should the living complain
when punished for their sins?
- ⁴⁰ Let us examine our ways and test them,
and let us return to the LORD.
- ⁴¹ Let us lift up our hearts and our hands
to God in heaven, and say:
- ⁴² "We have sinned and rebelled
and you have not forgiven.

How can we say that God is not benevolent when we all deserve Hell? How can we say God is not loving and kind when we are redeemed? You were redeemed and predestined by a doctrine of love. In love, you were predestined. I am here today to defend the name of my Father.

We love because God first loved us. For God so loved the world. That he gave his only begotten Son. Give thanks To the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures forever. But God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. No, in all things we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor

powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God.

The problem is not that God does not love us... the problem is that we are ungrateful sinners that don't love God. I'm here to defend the name of Jesus.

Context: Do you remember the keys to understanding Acts?

Keys to understanding Acts: *We will look at **two places**, **two races**, and **two people**.*

- *Jerusalem to Rome*
- *Jew to Gentile*
- *Peter to Paul. **We are in the process in our text of moving from Peter to Paul and Jew to Gentile right now.***

Also remember the Keys to the kingdom: We are about to see the third Key revealed In chapter 10.

Keys of The Kingdom:

- ~ Jews Chapter 2:1 Key 1
- ~ Samaritans 8:14 Key 2
- ~ Gentiles 10:44 Key 3

One of the fascinating things about where we are and seeing God work through these men is that we get to see God grow and change these men spiritually to help them do what God called them to do. Obviously, we have seen in the conversion of Saul the mighty

change via his conversion. Saul became a loving man who said he would forfeit his salvation for the people of Israel.

Context: If you have read ahead at all. You will see that we come to a unique place in this passage that drops the story of Saul and picks up the story of Peter again. In quite a change that seems to be an awkward move on the part of Luke. You would think after the conversion of Saul we would continue on with the life of Paul, but we revert back to the story of Peter (8:25).

Boice notes correctly that, “We do not pick back up the life of Paul until Acts 13. What is going on in this portion of the book? When we analyze Acts, we find that the first 12 chapters are mostly about Peter. Beginning with Acts chapter 13, Paul becomes the central figure. **What we have in 9-12 is a blending. As Peter recedes, Paul comes forward. Yet, this is not just an overlapping. As Luke puts this material together, he shows that Peter, the great apostle to the Jews, and Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, were not teaching or doing two different things, but were actually one in their doctrine and work (Boice p. 164).**

I would also add that we see congruent miracles performed by Peter and Paul. Luke presents Peter as one who was on the same level of spiritual significance as Paul. Both heal a lame man, and both raised someone from the dead. **These are two extremely powerful apostles.** These men are the two main characters in the book. Don’t forget the contextual analysis I taught you.

Gal 2:6-10

⁶ As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. ⁷ On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised,^[a] just as Peter had been to the circumcised.^[b] ⁸ For God, who was at work in Peter as an

apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. ⁹ James, Cephas^[c] and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

This is a strange section of scripture. You would expect after Saul's conversion we would be seeing nothing but Saul's life.

~ Chapters 1-12 deal with Peter and the Jews.

~ Chapters 13-28 deal Paul and the Gentiles.

Before now, Ananias is afraid to go to Saul.

Now we will see Peter is afraid of Cornelius.

9-12 are transition chapters in Peter and Paul's ministries.

* Peter is beginning to do what all the Apostles should be doing while they stay in Jerusalem. Moving out.

Recount the story of Peter and how he changed so dramatically after his denial and filling at Pentecost.

Peter – One of the inner circle – James, John & Peter.

— First mentioned in Matthew 4:18 – casting a net. He was told to follow Jesus to become a fisher of men.

— He walked on water.

— Fell asleep in the Garden instead of praying.

— Proclaimed Jesus to be the Christ – The Son of the Living God. First to say it.

— Cut off an official's ear during the arrest of Jesus.

— Denied knowing Christ at His arrest.

- Later he asked to be crucified upside down because of his unworthiness.
- A fisherman from Bethsaida.
- First one Mary Magdalene came to when she found Jesus' body missing.
- John beat him to the tomb and looked in; Peter got there and **went** in.
- An impetuous man, hot headed, abrasive fisherman Jesus called “the Rock.” I like people like Peter. They get things done. ***It's not always pretty, but things get done.***
- A prominent person in Acts as he enters Gentile territory – unafraid of the unclean land and people.
- Throughout his time with Jesus, he made the most of it. Can I encourage you today to make the most of the opportunities God gives you?***

2 Cor. 6:1

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

Pentecost

Peter is a new man. He is now filled with the HS and preaches Christ boldly, witnesses, leads, writes, etc.

The way Peter copies Jesus' style of ministry is undeniable.

Here in our text – Luke begins to reveal God's will for Peter. He was chosen with Paul to open doors never opened before. He had learned from Christ well.

Our passage this morning shows God's love flowing through Peter to people in need. You will find as you grow in Christ that 90% of ministry is showing up. Meeting physical, mental, and emotional needs is what

ministry is all about. We do this through salvation, benevolence, love, and ministry. It's what Christianity is all about. Love, ministry, and Christianity will open the door to sharing the gospel.

Text: Read Acts 9:32-43:

Peter is a new man. Filled and bold. From denying Christ three times to restoring him with three phrases. Feed my sheep. Look at the words he wrote after his surrender and filling at Pentecost. These are some of the most beautiful words you will ever read. Yet, he writes now some of the most beautiful words about ministry. Listen to these passages and see what he learned with Jesus in the circle of ministry.

Peter 1:3-9: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

NIV

1 Peter 1:23-24

²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For,

“All people are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
NIV

1 Peter 4: 7-11

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.
NIV

1 Peter 4:12-13

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
NIV

1 Peter 5:2-4

² Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.
NIV

What Did Peter Learn from Christ as He Ministered with Christ?

Better Yet... what have you learned from the ministry of Christ in the gospels?

I. Jesus loved people. That means you!

Verse 32: He traveled about the country and checked on the saints. Phillips says that Saul may have been asking piercing questions of the apostles as to why they were not trying to reach the world. Get out of Jerusalem. With Peter's newfound popularity and press, I am sure people all over wanted to see him and have him minister in their area. The world was waiting for the gospel. Just like it is today.

Physical:

a. Jesus cared about others

Jesus does care about our Physical needs –

Matthew 10:42

*“And if anyone gives even a **cup** of cold water to one of these *little ones who is my disciple*, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”*

John 5:1-15 - 38 years of sickness. The Pharisees only complained because he carried his mat on the Sabbath. That's cold.

The Healing at the Pool

5 Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. **2** Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda^[a] and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. **3** Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. ^[4]^[b] **5** One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. **6** When Jesus saw him lying there and learned

that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

⁷ “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

⁸ Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” ⁹ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, ¹⁰ and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

¹¹ But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”

¹² So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

¹³ The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

¹⁴ Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

(Mark 2:11 - Take your mat) The four men let their friend down through a roof to get him to Jesus.

* Peter saw this. Peter did what Jesus did.

In John 6 – Jesus fed 5000 people. He introduced the question to the disciples, “Where shall we buy bread for all those people to eat?” Jesus was teaching them to do what He did.

Verse 33: Peter finds a man bed-ridden 8 years. He had to have felt hopeless. Obviously, Peter had the gift of healing and used it for God’s glory. Peter took no credit for the healing, and because of that many were saved because of it.

Greek: iaomai, to heal or make whole. The entire man was healed: mind, body, and soul.

He was told to make his own bed. I love this. Why did Peter say that? Why did Jesus use the same words when he healed the lame? Because no one would ever have to carry their bed or make it up again. They could do it themselves.

Verse 35: The people who lived in Lydda turned to the Lord. Turned is the Greek word **epistrepho**. Means to come again, return or turn. To revert or convert. Used in Matthew 24:18 in a negative sense... “When you see these things happening, don’t turn back to even get a coat. Run for the hills.”

b. Jesus cared about

Mental needs -

Luke 8:27 ff – Demon possessed man of the Gadarenes. The people loved the pigs more than the man. Jesus tenderly helped him mentally and cared for him.

I believe Peter learned from this. A scary situation, to say the least. Jesus is in control of mental illness. How tragic for those who suffer depression and sickness.

He cares! Jesus loved this man.

c. Jesus taught Peter to love people Emotionally -

Luke 8:46- **3** And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, **44** Came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd. **45** And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? **46** And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out

of me. **47 And** when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. **48 And** he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

When the woman who had the issue of bleeding for 12 years and touched Christ, it brought healing. Jesus asked. “Who? touched me?” It was Peter who said. “Lord, the people are crowding and pressing against you.” Jesus said, “No – there is a distressed person who touched me in faith.” Peter learned that Jesus cared for her emotionally. **Go in Peace!**

Many people today struggle with emotion difficulties. Many people will not see help and will never take medication. I encourage you to see help. If you break a leg, you will go to the Dr., but if you have a chemical problem, you think that’s not worthy of a doctor’s care or that it’s a lack of faith to seek help. Your emotion problem may actually be a physical problem. Go see a physician.

d. Jesus taught Peter to love people.

Spiritually –

- The woman caught in adultery was told she was not condemned. Go sin no more.
- Nicodemus was told to be born again.
- He scolded Simon for thinking ill thoughts of a woman who poured her perfume out on Christ. (Mark 14:9) Jesus said of her spiritual act that it would be spoken about wherever the Gospel was preached.

Simon the Leper's house in Bethany was a teaching ground for spiritual ministry.

Back in Acts 9:32-35, Peter ministers to this man physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

- * Jesus taught him that to love people is supreme. People are the ministry.
- * Thank God Peter wasn't looking for a target group of a certain age group, or the man may have been overlooked.
- * Loving people in these ways means we love them eternally.
- * 8 years he is bedridden. Peter heals him – God gets the glory and people turn to the Lord. Amen!!!

II. Jesus taught Peter not only to love but also to care for them. Relieve suffering if you can. He loves and cares in life's restoration and also in death's resurrection.

Verse 36:

We are introduced to a precious saint. She did good. She helped the poor.

Her name means gazelle. She is beautiful, and she was loved. Of all the people who have to die, why Tabitha?

When the best, innocent, and beautiful get sick and die, it shocks and causes confusion in our lives spiritually.

- * The bible does not hide the truth.
- * Life has tragedies in it. We do not have the capacity to explain it all.
- * What we can do is show up in numbers and love people through ministry. Just show up.

Verse 38:

I have gotten this call, “Bro. Jerry, can you please come?” “Can you come now? Can you come to Joppa?”

***when you are in this position, you do not have to raise the dead. Just go at once! 90% of the ministry is showing up. Deacons beware. Don’t underestimate the power of a call.

Verse 39:

A powerful picture of what is going on. Their world has fallen apart. They clasp the things Tabitha had made to remind them of how much life she once had. Our modern funerals are just like this.

Verse 40:

Both of these stories have related events in the Gospels when Peter learned from Christ.

John 11 is the story of Lazarus and how Jesus raised him from the dead.

Very quietly and privately, Peter prays and calls her name.

Why did he not do this in a showy fashion?

He may have had faith, but it may not be God’s will to heal. He protected the family.

* This is the most intimate place you will ever be invited to. The death chamber is reserved for Shepherds only.

The CEO and hirelings care not for these stressful situations.

*As you minister here – you become God’s representative. Your ministry during times of death is essential and important. One friend of mine used to say to the seminary students, “If I don’t need my preacher when someone dies, then when do I need him?” Ministry opportunities increase 100 fold during times of physical, mental, and spiritual pain.

Make good use of those opportunities.

Verse 41:

How would you like the opportunity to do this, just one time? Even in the power of the resurrection, we see the power of human touch. She has been raised from the dead, and yet Peter took her by the hand and helped her up.

Does using a Heart defibrillator count? Did you know that modern medicine has raised more people from the dead than Jesus.

Exegete freely verses 36-43:

Peter does what Jesus Did!!!

Mark 5:22ff

²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷ **He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.** ³⁸ **When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.** ³⁹ **He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.”** ⁴⁰ **But they laughed at him.**

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ **He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha kum!*”** (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At

this, they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this and told them to give her something to eat.

Verse 42:

People are saved because of this resurrection! God gets glory!

Spiritual Life Application:

(Promises I make to you:

1. Dorcas and Lazarus had to die again.
2. John 11 – Jesus tells the family He is the Resurrection
3. Divine delays – It would happen anyway no matter if Christ was early or late. It is all for His glory.
4. Death, Hell, Grave have no victory over us. You must not live a defeated life because of loss. This life is temporal – God is eternal. He has promised that His grace is sufficient. For the Christian – we have hope. It's real, it's powerful, It's available.
5. In eternity, it will all be perfect. We have yet to experience perfect relationships and situations here. The reunions in heaven will be perfect, spiritual, and finally satisfying.
6. 1 Corinthians 15:26 – The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ **For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.** ²⁶ **The last enemy to be destroyed is death.** ²⁷ For he “has put everything under his feet.”^[c] Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸ When he

has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

7. Finally – I promise, Jesus cares and understands – Mark 4:38; - 35-41

Closing:

Paul Opposes Cephas: Gal 2:11ff

¹¹ When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

¹⁴ When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

¹⁵ “We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles ¹⁶ know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in^[d] Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

(He wants us to have faith).

Peter gets it!!

Verse 43: Peter is a different man. God is teaching him to love others. Where is Peter staying? With Simon. That used to be his name. What does Simon do? He works with dead animal skins. That’s not the place for a legalistic Jewish boy. That Tanner is unclean.

The next big adventure is a trip to the house of a Gentile. Peter is about to go lead a bunch of unclean dogs to Jesus and see them Baptized in the HS. God does care for us. He died for Gentiles too.