It is a privilege to know something that other people don’t know. For instance, you know English. English may seem easy for you, but it’s not so easy for someone to pick up as a second language. Imagine having this conversation with someone who is just learning English.

You say to the person. “Pick it up. Let’s go.” “Pick it up? What should I pick up?” “No, it’s a phrase that means hurry up. Come on, get a clue.” “Get a clue? What? Am I a detective, I get clues? “No, “get a clue” means, “Wise up. Be smart.” There’s a song on the radio. You say. “Oh, I can’t stand this song.” “But you’re sitting not standing. What does you standing have to do with this song?” “No, I can’t stand it, that’s a phrase that means I hate this song.”

See how hard English can be? Lots of figures of speech that don’t literally mean what you’re saying, but we all know what they mean, because we’re experienced. We deal today with the subject of ignorance. We know something that many people don’t know. This calls for us to be patient teachers, like St. Peter. With our patient words, we seek refreshment for us and many others. What refreshment? Let’s find out. By faith, forecast times of refreshing.

Peter and John had just healed a man who’d been crippled from birth. The people knew this man had been crippled. Now they saw him walking, jumping, and praising God at the temple. A crowd of people gathered and wondered. How did this happen? Peter saw their wonder, and said. “Men of Israel, 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?” Miracles still happen today. Through Christian prayer, people have been healed where the doctors said a recovery was next to impossible. People wonder, “How did it happen?” The answer is always the same. Peter said.
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.

The name of Jesus is the holy power that unleashes true miracles. And the spiritual miracles are far more impressive, even than the physical ones. I can’t remember a time that I was not a believer but I know the truth of Psalm 51. “Surely I was sinful . . . from the time my mother conceived me.” Romans 8 also says. “The sinful mind is hostile to God.” That means I was God’s enemy till he had mercy upon me, and healed me through baptism, turning my heart of hatred into a heart of love, through the washing away of my sins in Christ. Your life story is also an astounding miracle, a transformation from hate to love, through faith in Jesus Christ.

When the crippled man was healed and the crowd gathered in wonder, Peter wanted to heal the crowd, through the power of Jesus’ name. To heal sinners, one must always cut through the ignorance. One must always start with the hard truth. Peter informed that crowd that they were murderers. Why did they disown the Holy and Righteous One, and ask that a murderer named Barabbas be released to them? The answer was, because they too were murderers. They had killed the Holy One. Peter told them the blunt truth. “You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.”

You killed the author of life. Could there ever be a crime greater than this? The suspect in the Boston Marathon bombing was found guilty the other day. That was a despicable act, that he and his brother planted a bomb, knowing it would explode just as weary marathon runners were about to finish the race. They planted a second bomb, purposely timing it to explode when emergency personnel would be gathered at the scene. That is monstrously evil. But can it match what this crowd had done? They killed the author of life. The Lord from whom
all life comes, without whom there would be no life, and they had killed him. You and I are just as guilty of this horrendous crime. The Bible makes clear that our sins caused Jesus to die. We all like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord laid on Jesus the sin of us all.

So Jesus, the author of life, was killed because of our sin. Can God ever forgive us? Of course, because the Father had planned for Jesus to die, just so that we could be forgiven. That was the news Peter gladly shared with the crowd. Yes, you killed the Author of life. You were ignorant, but God raised Jesus from the dead. So repent of serving idols. Know that Jesus is the Son of God. Know that Jesus is the Christ, he is the Holy and Righteous one you’ve long been waiting for. Turn to him, that your sins may be wiped out. Wiped out, that’s a powerful way to put it, because a powerful thing has happened. It was a violent death that Jesus died, nails blasted into his hands and feet, his body hoisted into the sky, as God’s justice crushed him. But every violence done to Jesus was violence done to our sins. Our sins have been wiped out. You sitting here in church today listening to this sermon, turn to Jesus that your sins may be wiped out. In fact it has happened. Your sins have been wiped out, obliterated, annihilated, whatever strong word you want to use, your sins are gone. They are removed from God’s sight forever.

That means times of refreshing. This word refreshing in our text can mean the coolness that the wind brings, when it is hot outside. We are blessed to know true and lasting relief. Many people deny that there is any true relief in life. You wonder how unbelievers can face death and other major hardships. They probably don’t take the time to think deeply about life, because if they did, they would have to admit that their lives are meaningless. Without a loving
God in control of my life, I am living just for pleasure, but when the pleasure ends, then what? Where do I turn? Turn to myself but I am too weak to help myself. Then what?

To people suffering in this kind of ignorance, we know the answer. Turn to God, the living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That times of refreshing may come from him. If there’s someone you love who is stuck in a rut, someone you wish could be happy and could turn their lives and their attitudes around, you know the way. It’s through repentance and faith.

Just as you know that in English, “step on it” means hurry up. And you know that “hitting the nail on the head” means saying something exactly right, so you also know that Jesus is your dear Shepherd. When you’ve sinned, turn to him, and he heals you. It’s so natural and wonderful, our pattern of life by faith. But for many people, this way is not natural at all. Turning to Jesus in faith is as foreign to them as a foreign language that they do not know. But let’s pray for the patience that the apostle Peter had speaking to that crowd. When you deal with unbelievers and they’re harshness, it’s easier to be patient as you remember, “Hey, these people are being rude because they don’t know any better. If I didn’t know that Jesus was the true Son of God, I wouldn’t care about him or his Word either.”

Many people are ignorant of the truth, and they hurt themselves through their ignorance. You hear of people today who are trying to change their gender, or people who say that homosexuality is something they don’t need to repent of, or you hear of heterosexual people who are sleeping around and having affairs. These are sick behaviors, the sickness of sin. The loving thing is to say to them, “Turn from this. You are hurting yourself and you are sinning against God. Repent and turn to God that your sins may be wiped out.” That goes for any sin,
including substance abuse, the sin of using hurtful words, and the sin of refusing to hear the Word of God. Just as by God’s grace, we have been lead to turn from our sins to Jesus.

We want everyone to have times of refreshing. It is no relief to live unrepentantly in sin.

The prophet Jeremiah said what would happen to false teachers who refuse to preach repentance, and what would happen to the ignorant people who listen to them.

_They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace. Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when I punish them,” says the LORD._

God has devastating punishment in store for everyone who refuses his call to repent and believe, but by God’s grace many people do heed his call. The apostle Thomas felt no shame denying Jesus’ resurrection, till he came face to face with Jesus. The shame Thomas felt was soon replaced with the sweetest refreshment, as Thomas touched the grooves in Jesus’ hands where the nails had been. “My Lord and my God” was his happy shout of faith. In our text, when the crowd rushed to see how the crippled man was healed, we don’t know how many in that crowd listened to Peter’s sermon and believed. Hopefully many did.

You may know people who you’re not sure if they trust in Jesus. They haven’t clearly expressed faith. Pray for the person. Keep praying for them. Speak to them boldly as Peter did to that crowd. For God loves you. He loves you dearly. That’s why he has given you sorrow over your sins, and he’s given you relief by placing you into the loving arms of Jesus, in whose arms you will rest forever. May God lead more people to see their sins and be sorry, that they may turn to Jesus and their sins be wiped out, that they may enjoy times of refreshing. For there’s no refreshment like what we have, living in the gentle breeze of Jesus’ forgiving grace. Amen.