

Implications of Christ's Victory over sin and death - 1 Peter 3:8-22

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[0 : 00] And our faith is the only faith that doesn't give a set of rules to follow to earn your way to everlasting life. It's the only faith that says that God himself came to earth and conquered death so that you and I, simply by approaching him in belief and faith, will live with him forever.

And because of that, there are some implications of that faith which we're going to look at this morning. So if you want to look at chapter 3 and verse 8 in 1 Peter, we'll take a look. Peter writes, Finally, all of you be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing. Because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

For whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good.

They must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

[1 : 19] Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear their threats. Do not be frightened.

But in your hearts, revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. Keeping a clear conscience so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better if it is God's will to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits.

To those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.

[2 : 26] And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also. Not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience towards God.

It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand. With angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for the privilege of gathering in your name once again. Thank you for the fact that you do not wait for us to get our lives together before you accept us.

But you simply hold out your arms and wait for us to approach you in faith and in belief. Because you have conquered death and there is nothing else we could do that would bridge the gap between you and us.

So be with us this morning. May what I have to say be brought low. May your own words ring true and loudly this morning. And may all things be done to glorify you and to edify your people.

[3 : 35] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. I don't know about you but when I think about victory I tend to think of two things. War and sport.

Not always in that order but nevertheless. I think about famous images like the American Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima. Some of you have seen that statue in Washington D.C. or the Allies when they blew up the swastika on the top of the Nazi headquarters in Nuremberg. But less violently. Ronan O'Gara kicking drop goals. I already heard someone on the way in this morning say yeah yesterday would have been a good day for that.

Welcoming home the all Ireland winning team. Haven't had to worry too much about that in Cork the last few years. These are things we feel a part of. Something that makes us feel we're part of something bigger than us.

It makes us believe we're involved in something great. And those things happen for a time. And then they fade away. History moves on. But the greatest victory in the history of the world wasn't fought in a battlefield.

[4 : 44] It wasn't won in a sports field. It was when Jesus Christ triumphed over death itself. Over sin. In the language of Genesis.

When he came to earth as the one who would crush the head of the serpent. Christ's victory is our victory. We're a part of it.

And we benefit from it greatly. Chiefly and most obviously. Because when we put our faith in Christ. Christ. And is finished work in defeating death.

We ourselves defeat death. But we're going to look at two other implications this morning. Two ways we participate in this victory. Peter tells us about. If you have the notes in front of you.

You can follow along. Otherwise feel free to take notes as you go. Firstly. We participate in this victory. By having fellowship. With one another.

[5 : 41] Inside the church. And secondly. By being gentle. With people outside the church. So let's dive in. Christ's victory means we are to have fellowship with each other.

Verse 8. Finally. All of you. Be like-minded. Be sympathetic. Love one another. Be compassionate. And humble.

Underlying that phrase. All of you. That's all of us. Over the last few weeks. We've seen Peter talk to us about specific relationships. Marriage.

The workplace. Civil government. Telephone companies. And the people who have phone plans. That sort of thing. But now. Peter's done with that. He's getting back to all of us.

Married. Single. Employed. Student. Whatever the case might be. No matter our personal circumstances. Our situation. This passage. Is directly.

[6 : 40] For every person in this church. No matter where you're coming from. And without using the exact word. Peter introduces us. To this idea. Of fellowship. Now we talk about fellowship a lot.

The Greek word is koinonia. It means. Sharing something. Having something in common. Partnering in something. So when Peter says. All of you.

He means. All of you. Who share. This common bond. We who confess with our mouths. That Jesus is Lord. And believe in our hearts. That God raised him from the dead.

It's what we have in common. The fellowship isn't just. When we hang out. And have food. Or drink coffee. But please do stay. Having said that. For coffee. After the service today.

So what does it look like. True fellowship. Well Peter describes it. Being like-minded. Sympathetic. Loving one another. Being compassionate. Being humble. It can be a hard world.

[7 : 39] Out there folks. I don't know if you feel like that. But I do sometimes. And when life is hard. Where are we going to turn? Something material? Netflix and ice cream?

Gin and tonic? Are we going to try and deal with the stresses and demands of this world. By filling our fuel tank. With something that's just going to run out again. And make a start all over again later.

When we suffer. We ought to turn to the fellowship we have with one another. And because we ought to do that.

We are to be like-minded. Sympathetic. Loving. Compassionate. Humble. And we need to ask ourselves. In fact I have to ask myself.

Are we? Am I? Am I sensitive. To the concerns. And the troubles. Of my brothers and sisters in this church.

[8 : 37] When one of us is in pain. Do we respond to it in love. And compassion. Are we humble enough to put our brother or sister's pain. In front of our own comfort.

Do we weep. With those who weep. If someone in our church is housebound. Because of chronic illness.

Do we let ourselves forget about them? Do we act like we think it's all in their head? If someone is in tears. As I was talking to someone recently.

If someone is in tears. Because they struggle with same-sex attraction. And they don't want that. They want to glorify God. If someone is in tears because of that. Do we gossip about them?

Here's another one. If someone is despondent. Because they're addicted to pornography. Do we condemn them? As some kind of pervert? Or how about when we're the topic of conversation. [9 : 39] When we feel that people. Are gossiping about us. Or we're the target of someone's insults. Or being embarrassed. How do we react? Do we retaliate?

Do we kick up a fuss? Do you demand it to be discussed at the next members meeting? Or do we quietly approach our brother and sister? And have a meaningful conversation with them? Friends. If we want to be loving. This is the point. If we want to be loving. And kind. And forgiving. And merciful. To the world. Outside the church. We need to have this solid foundation. Inside the church. With all of us. Because verse 9. We were called. Underline that word. Called. To repay evil.

With blessing. And therefore we have to envelop. One another. With blessing. We don't repay evil. Or insult. By retaliating.

[10 : 43] But in the words of Jesus. By turning the other cheek. Repaying it with a blessing. Because. To this. You were called. There's that word again. So that you may.

Inherit. A blessing. Now I don't know. If you've been lucky enough. To inherit something. Whatever it is. House. Money. Car. It pales in comparison. To our inheritance. Which is in heaven. And it's guaranteed. This inheritance. To those. Those whose faith. Is in Christ. And whose lives. Reflect. The reality. That their faith. Is in Christ. And one of the ways. In which we reflect. That reality. Is by having. Fellowship. With one another. It's how we prove. We're the ones.

To whom this. Inheritance belongs. By the fruit. Of our lives. The fruit. Of not returning evil. With more evil. Gossip. With more gossip. Envy.

[11 : 37] With more envy. But with fellowship. True. Fellowship. We were called. Verse 10. To keep our tongues. Our speech. From lies. And slander.

We were called. Verse 11. To pursue peace. Among us all. Because. Verse 12. The Lord. Is attentive. To the prayers. Of those.

Who are righteous. This is our calling. To be. Righteous. Not by our own efforts. Not by trying as hard as we can.

To try and please God. But. By standing. With Christ. In victory. Over sin. And death. Because Christ.

Has conquered sin. We are born again. We are born again. Not. Necessarily. Just as an individual. But into a family. Into a new family. Of brothers.

[12 : 32] And sisters. And. Let's face it. We are going to spend. The rest of eternity. Worshipping. And singing praise. To God. So we need to spend time.

On this earth. Modeling out. What does that look like. And we won't get it right. Every step of the way. We won't get it perfect. Because in the words of Paul.

Now we see. Through a mirror. Dimly. But then. We will see perfectly. We'll spend together. Eternity together.

In the praise and worship. Of the one. Who set us free. From sin and death. The servant. Who suffered. But didn't strike back. The lamb.

Who was silent. In the face of insult. And just look at verse 19. For Christ also suffered. Once for sins. The righteous for the unrighteous.

[13 : 27] To bring you to God. He was put to death in the body. But made alive. In the spirit. That's the Holy Spirit. And that same spirit.

That brought Jesus back. From the dead. Romans 8 tells us. That same spirit. Lives. In you. And me. The same spirit.

By whom Jesus conquered death. Took up residence. In you. When you believed. In Jesus Christ. And unites you. Therefore. To every other believer.

The same spirit. Jesus prayed. By whose power. In John 17. That we would be one. One. Just as he and the father. Are one.

Our fellowship friends. This is what Christ. Desires of us. It's what he would have us do. By his own example. By his prayers. So let's not just attend church.

[14 : 28] Let's not just clock in at 11. Clock out at 12. Let's have fellowship. With the church. Real fellowship. Let's be the church.

Get involved. Start praying with. And for other people. And ministering to. And alongside. Other people. Because through all this.

By giving this picture. Of fellowship. Christ's victory. Is our victory. And we demonstrate. That he conquered death. As we seek to be loving.

And merciful to one another. Just as he was merciful to us. So we're to have fellowship. Secondly. And finally. We participate in Christ's victory.

When we are gentle. With the world. Outside the church. Verses 13 and 14. Let's have a look. Who is going to harm you. If you are eager to do good.

[15 : 28] But even if you should suffer. For what is right. You are blessed. Do not fear their threats. Do not be frightened. And we've talked a lot about this. Over the last few weeks.

Haven't we? The people are going to harm you. They're going to insult you. They're going to mock you. Don't let it be because you deserve it. You know. Breaking the law. Stealing from the boss. Disrespecting your spouse. Whatever the case might be. If you do these things. You're just inviting suffering. On yourself. Is Peter's point. You're just making your own life difficult.

So. Just like we should strive. To live in peace with everybody. Inside the church. We should strive. To do the same. Outside the church. If you do suffer.

And it's because you're not doing anything wrong. Don't think God has forgotten about you. Don't think God is punishing you. In fact. Look at what Peter says.

[16 : 26] If this happens. If you suffer for doing the right thing. You are blessed. Now that's always been a strange one to me. Because I'll be honest. When I suffer. I don't feel blessed. I don't feel particularly good.

About my suffering. I don't feel happy. That I'm suffering. Which is what blessed. Ultimately means in Greek. It means happy. I'm not standing back going. Oh I'm so glad that people are gossiping about me.

I'm so happy that people are insulting me. Because of my faith. I'm so happy that all of these things are happening. And there doesn't seem to be any way out of it. It's not what it means.

It doesn't mean you're overwhelmed with ecstasy. Because you're doing what's right. You're being picked on anyway. Blessed means so much more than just being happy. It means ultimately. When everything fades away.

And this world is gone. That you belong to the Lord. And nothing. Nothing. Friends.

[17 : 26] Will take you out of his hand. Maybe you're bullied at school. Like I was. When I was a kid. Maybe when you're at work.

You're given all the soul destroying jobs to do. No career advancement. Maybe people gossip about you. Maybe people make up false rumors about you.

Things just aren't true because they have an agenda. In all these things. Nothing cuts you off. From the love of God. And in that you are blessed. And yes you've got avenues open to you.

To make your life better. No one is saying sit back and take it. You can tell the teachers. You can go to the workplace relations commission. You can get a lawyer. But.

What if those things don't work? What if nothing works? What if. Even though you have a case. Nobody else sees it. What if.

[18 : 24] In the final analysis. There's no real way. Out of your situation. Where you're suffering. That's when you look to the words of Jesus. Who said. Blessed are those.

Who are persecuted. Because of righteousness. For theirs. Is the kingdom. Of heaven. Let me ask you a few questions. Who is the most unfairly persecuted person in history?

Jesus. Who is the most righteous person. In history? Jesus. Whose death atoned for your sins. And my sins.

And the sins of everybody who would believe in him. And make us righteous in God's eyes. Jesus. You see friends. It's because of the death of Jesus. That you can stand in front of that bully. Or that boss. Or that gossip. Or whoever it might be. And not fear their threats. But verse 15.

Because you revere Christ as Lord.

[19 : 23] You can give them an answer. A defense. A reason for this hope. That is in you. This living hope. And we do this.

By being gentle. With the world around us. Not shouting our head off. Not shouting our head off. Not answering back. Giving back more of the same.

Insults. Gossip. All that other nasty stuff. Because of Christ's victory. Over sin and death. The ones who make your life hell now. Will not stop Christ.

From drawing you to heaven. It's impossible. And because of that. We share in his victory. By being gentle. With the world around us.

Not responding. Not retaliating. By being gentle. Look at the end of verse 15. On into verse 16. But do this with gentleness and respect.

[20 : 20] Keeping a clear conscience. So that those who speak maliciously. Against your good behavior in Christ. May be ashamed. Of their slander. I was thinking about how to. Go through this.

I think it speaks for itself. So let me just say a couple of things. Don't give smart answers. When people ask you. Why are you a Christian? Don't be unkind.

In your evangelism. I've seen some stuff. In social media lately. Frankly. That makes me embarrassed. Let's be kind.

Let's be gentle. Let's not give people a reason. To think. We're just saying words. And we're just part of a club. Or an organization. But. Our heart is really cold.

In those moments. Ask the Lord. As I have to. Daily. Lord. Help my heart. Overflow with gladness. For what you've done for me. And help me to say something like this.

[21 : 16] I have this living hope. I have this assurance. That we'll never die. No matter what comes my way. In this life. With all the bullies. And all the gossips. And all the bad bosses.

And all of that kind of thing. I know my eternal life. Is secure in Christ. And in Christ alone. Because Christ. Is victorious. Over death. Itself. And when I put my faith in Christ.

I participate. In that victory. And in response to that. I won't retaliate. Let's be gentle. Let's be kind. Because verse 17. It is better. If it is God's will. To suffer. For doing good. Than for doing evil.

In other words. If they are going to talk smack. About you anyway. If they are going to. Pick on you anyway. Which will often happen. No matter how rightly.

[22 : 11] You want to do things. If they are going to come with. Preconceived ideas. And notions. About who you are. Don't react to it. My dad used to tell me.

When I was in school. And going through those times. Dan. Don't let them have the satisfaction. Just don't react to them. Pretty good life advice. Don't give them back. More of the same.

But simply point them to Christ. By your deeds. By your words. By your attitude. Gentle. Kind. And merciful. Because after all. Isn't that what Jesus did? Think about this. When they put the chains. On his wrists.

He could have. With a word. Caused them. To disintegrate. Into ash. When they put the nails. On the palms of his hands.

[23 : 07] With a thought. He could have sent them. Flying back. Into the faces. Of his executioners. And when they lifted. The cross into position. He could have called down.

Twelve legions of angels. The gospel tells us. With a breath. Vanquished. The entire Roman army. Just like that. But he didn't do those things.

I'm going to finish in a second. But think about this. Jesus suffered those things. He suffered. Knowing. That this suffering. Was the decisive. Victory. The decisive moment.

In that victory. Over sin. And death. And in this victory. Verse 19. Tells us. He made proclamation. To the imprisoned spirits. If there was a candidate.

For one of the strangest verses. In the Bible. By the way. This is probably. Close to the top of the list. So who are these people? The imprisoned spirits. Verse 20. Tells us. Those who were disobedient.

[24 : 05] Long ago. When God waited patiently. In the days of Noah. While the ark. Was being built. I remember the first time. Reading this. And going. Who are these imprisoned spirits?

And then reading verse 20. And then thinking. Peter. That doesn't help me very much. Doesn't clear things up for me. So I ask. Did Jesus go back in time? Did he.

Go through the floor. And descend into hell. And talk to these people. Is that what Peter means? I don't think so. I think. That in his resurrection.

Having conquered death. Jesus. Proclaimed. His victory. He announced his victory. Proclaimed in Greek. Ek keroutsen. It's a military term.

It means when you've defeated. A great army. And you send word back home. That you've won. And the victory. Is done. And Peter uses this picture. Of Noah's flood.

[25 : 01] The whole world drowned. Underwater. When eight people. Were saved in the ark. By floating. Over. The water. His resurrection.

And his triumph. Announces. That death. Has been. Defeated. But why the reference. To the flood. Well verse 21. Baptism. Is the corresponding event.

For us. Now when you make a public. Declaration of faith. We don't stick you. In a rubber dinghy. Put you out. Onto the water. And send you off.

Into a hurricane. To see if you make it through. We should try that sometime. Johnny. Actually. Let it separate the real Christians. From the. Fake ones. Now that I've been baptized. I can suggest these kind of things.

We don't do that. Do we? You come. And you stand. In a pool of water. And we immerse you. Under the water. And then we bring you back up.

[25 : 59] Because that's a representation. Of Christ's victory. Over death. And how you participate. In that victory. When you go.

Down. Under the water. It is your old self. Dying. When you come back. Up. Over the water. It is your new self. Participating in Christ's victory.

You have this in your notes. So don't bother. Looking it up. I'll just read it. Romans 6. Verses 3 to 5. Don't you know. Paul writes. That all of us. Who were baptized into Christ.

Were baptized into his death. We were therefore. Buried with him. Through baptism. Into death. In order to. Just as Christ was raised.

From the dead. Through the glory of the father. We too. May live a new life. For if we've been united. With him in a death. Like his. In other words. If we've died with him.

[26 : 56] And because he was resurrected. We will certainly. We will certainly. Also be united with him. In a resurrection. Like his. And it isn't the baptism itself. That saves you.

Verse 21 still. Not by removing dirt. From your body. But by your pledge. Or your appeal. To God. For a clear conscience. By this symbol. About.

I am dying to myself. And I am putting faith. In Christ. And because Christ's victory. Over sin and death. Has taken place. By faith. It is my victory.

There's no formula. You don't sign anything. There's no litmus test. You simply believe. Your baptism is merely.

Your symbolic act of obedience. Whereby you participate. In the death. And resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. Because Christ's victory.

[27 : 54] Is our victory. And as I finish now. Remember that this victory. Is final. Verse 22. Jesus is sitting in heaven.

His work is accomplished. With angels. And authorities. And powers. All in submission to him. The ones who mocked him. The ones who beat him. The ones who executed him.

They're all under his feet now. Just like one day. The bully. And the gossip. And the abusive. Teacher. Or boss. Or whoever. They all.

Are under Jesus' feet. Jesus' words on the cross. Weren't. It's begun. They weren't. I've started something. And now you can continue it.

Jesus' words on the cross. Were. It. Is. Finished. This is a final victory. Are you trusting in something.

[28 : 51] Other than Christ. Are you hoping the fact that you pray. Or fast. Or eat the right kinds of food. Or try and be a nice person. Will get you your ticket to heaven.

Friend. Believe me when I tell you this. There is nothing. There is nothing. You can do. That hasn't already been done. In the finished work of Jesus.

There's no entrance exam. There's no secret handshake. Or password. Lord. Jesus bore. The father's anger. Against sin.

By himself. So that simply. If you believe. In your heart. That God raised Jesus from the dead. And confess with your mouth. That he is Lord.

Then that's enough. You live forever. One of my favorite old hymns says this. And then I'll finish. I need no other argument. I need no other plea.

[29 : 52] It is enough. That Jesus died. And that he died for me. Amen. Let's pray. Father we thank you.

That we. Can stand before your throne. Not by our own efforts. But by your finished work on the cross. By your victory over death. We thank you. That you invite us.

To participate in that victory. If we simply come to you. And believe. That you are the Messiah. You are the son of God. Who has destroyed our death. And destroyed our sin. We thank you Lord. That you haven't left us alone. But that you have made us born again. Into a new family of believers. Just like the one in this room. To help us Lord. To be gentle. And loving. And kind. And compassionate. And humble. And merciful. With one another. So that we would have true fellowship. That we would bear one another's burdens. We would weep.

[30 : 46] With those who weep. And rejoice. With those who rejoice. That we would look. Father. To the relationship. That you have with your son. As the basis for the relationship.

We ought to have with one another. And help us Lord. Be gentle with the world around us. When we get the taunts. And the insults. And everything nasty Lord. We pray that. You would. At that moment.

Fill us with your spirit. Such that we would respond. Like Christ. And turn the other cheek. Who did not come into the world. To condemn the world. But came into the world.

To save it. So help us Lord. As we close in song. And come to your table. Help us to reflect. In the realities. Of being born again. Into a new family.

And reminding ourselves. Of the sacrifice. That made us born again. Help us to lift up our hearts. And our voices. In worship. And help us to give glory to you.

[31 : 43] In everything we do. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen. I'm going to invite the musicians. To come back up. I'm going to hand over to them then.

But I just first want to say. If you've never heard this message before. If you've never heard about this Jesus. If you've never heard about the God. Who sent his son. So that you might live. You're not.