

Suffering for Good Conduct Leads to Blessing

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[0:00] 1 Peter 3.18 1 Peter 3.18 1 Peter 3.18

One aspect that makes Christianity, there's many, but one aspect that makes Christianity stand out from many other religions is that it is simple to understand.

The Gospel is not easy, but it's simple. Even a child can understand the points of the good news of the Gospel. Who God is. He's the Creator.

We're obligated to Him. We're sinners. We're lawbreakers. God sent His Eternal Son, who lived, who died, who was resurrected. Your response?

Repent and believe. That's the Gospel. Even a child can understand that. Take Islam, for example.

[1:49] To really understand that as a religion, one should learn Arabic, which is the second hardest language in the world. Not to say that everything in the Bible is easy to understand, though.

As a matter of fact, this passage that we read is probably one of the hardest verses to interpret in 1 Peter. Actually, probably in the top ten, maybe even in the top five verses to understand in the whole Bible.

With one of the most confusing statements along with that. The Spirit's in prison. What the heck is that supposed to mean?

Baptism now saves you? What in the world is he talking about? We started last week looking at the formula for Christian weirdness.

By God's grace, we're called to be wise, winsome weirdos in this wicked world. And the formula that we looked at last week for Christian weirdness, suffering leads to blessing.

[3:13] And today is part two of that. Suffering leads to blessing. I'll put it in a couple statements for you just by way of reminder.

Suffering for the sake of righteousness leads to God's blessing. Suffering for the sake of righteousness leads to God's blessing. Or another way to say it.

If we suffer for having good conduct in Christ, we should sanctify Christ by speaking Christ, fearing Christ, and living like Christ.

Because suffering for good leads to God's blessing and vindication. The gospel is all about this.

This is all about the gospel.

The fact that Jesus Christ suffered and died, he was blessed. How? He was resurrected. He ascended into heaven.

[4:10] He got blessed. And not only is he blessed, but then he gives us the blessing. He brings us to God. So, he's blessed.

We get blessed. Suffering, having good conduct in Christ, leads to blessing. This is what the gospel is all about.

Another way to state it. God will bless and vindicate us if we suffer for having good conduct in Christ. So, there's no need to fear or be troubled by people.

Instead, speak the gospel and live wise, winsome lives for Christ. Remember, Peter kind of shifted things, so to speak, in verse 13.

Now he's talking about our persecutors. What do we do when we're persecuted for living Christ? For being a Christian? But not only is he talking about suffering in that regard, but any type of suffering, really.

[5:15] Any type of suffering, whether you're talking about suffering that's going to come from persecution, or any type of suffering, you've just gotten news that you have cancer. The suffering is going to lead to God's blessing.

It will. Speak the gospel then. Live wise, winsome lives for Christ. Other things we said last week.

The way of suffering leads to blessing and God's vindication. It is mandated to us to keep speaking and living out the gospel word just like Christ did and just like Noah did.

The path of suffering leading to blessing was the path that Jesus called his followers to take. I mean, what Jesus said, if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it.

If you lose your life for me, you're blessed. That's the formula. And if you think this way with people, they'll think you're absolutely nuts.

[6:20] You're crazy. To think that, to believe that suffering leads to blessing, who wants to suffer? Nobody wants to suffer. Ah, but we know that it leads to God's blessing.

We get blessed. So we're ready for it and we welcome it whenever God has it for us. Which is why followers of Christ, just like Noah, will have to tread the same path of suffering as they speak and live the truth.

And since Noah was vindicated by God, being saved, we'll look at that in a moment, and Christ was vindicated by God, being resurrected. We'll see that too. So we will be vindicated and saved in the end.

We get the blessing now and later. We get the blessing now of being saved. All our sins are forgiven. What did Jesus do? He brings us to God.

We have relationship with God. We have a connection, a fellowship with God. It was marred by our sin. There was no relationship. And yet God made it possible through Christ.

[7:30] We get blessed. So we're blessed now, and then we get blessed in the future. We're going to be vindicated, resurrected, and we're going to rule with Christ, the glorious Christ.

What more do you want? I mean, this makes Black Friday look like nothing. Right? We're blessed now and later.

Now and that Christ's suffering on the cross for sins is done to bring us to God. Later. And that we have the hope that we will be resurrected and totally vindicated. Praise the Lord.

So, whichever view you take on verses 19 through 20 regarding the spirits in prison, and there's quite a few views you could take on this.

We'll look at that in a moment. This formula, suffering leads to blessing. We're going to see how the text tells us it's confirmed by Christ himself, by the example of Noah, and the repeated ordinance of baptism, which constantly reminds us of his resurrection, and our own transformation, now and later.

[8:50] See, that's why we, that's one of the reasons why we get baptized. Why you get to see it, because it's just a constant reminder that you're blessed now, and you'll be blessed later.

You're resurrected now, and you'll be resurrected later. It's a constant reminder to you. And we're going to see how Peter shows us this.

Okay? 19 through 20. In which, also, he went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison.

What? When we're talking about this, in verses 19 to 20, there's three questions to answer. Who, what, and when.

Three questions need to answer. And how you answer those questions will determine where you're at and what view you take on this passage. Who, what, when.

[9:52] Who are the spirits in prison? What did Christ preach? When did Christ preach it? Who, what, when.

There's at least five different views you can take on this passage. At least five. With other varying views that combine the details from each of the other views.

So you can have seven up to ten different views on this passage. So I'm going to list all ten. No, I'm just kidding. What? I can't write that much. No, I'm just kidding. I'm not going to do that.

I'm actually going to express to you the dominant view and then the view I take with Wayne Grudem. When I do my study for 1 Peter, I use seven different resources.

And out of the seven, only one took Wayne Grudem's view. And that was Wayne Grudem. Oh, okay. Here's the dominant view.

[10:54] Probably if you have an ESV study Bible or even your, your Mac Daddy study Bible, you'll have this dominant view in the passage. Here's the dominant view today on this passage in verse 19 to 20.

After Jesus died or after he rose, but before he ascended to heaven, he traveled to hell and proclaimed triumph over the fallen angels who had sinned by marrying human women before the flood in Genesis 6.

That's the dominant view today. I'll put it another way. Christ Jesus gave a proclamation of judgment to the fallen angels, sealing their doom because he triumphed over deaths and in hell and brought redemption to humanity.

This proclamation took place post-resurrection while these spirits were in prison. Jesus announced his victory over them. So that's the dominant view today.

Which like I said, if you have your MacArthur study Bible, ESV study Bible, that's probably the dominant view you'll find. Even in NIV study notes might have that as well. Here's a view I take and reading Wayne Grudem's, how he defends this view, he does this very well and changed my view 12 years ago.

[12 : 18] And it got rehashed this past week in my own study. And this is a quote from him. When Noah was building the ark, Christ in spirit was in Noah preaching repentance and righteousness through him, that is Noah, to unbelievers who were on the earth then but now are spirits in prison, which means people in hell.

So in other words, another way to say that is in which also he, that is Christ, he made proclamation to the spirits, he did that through Noah. In spirit, Jesus was preaching the gospel to the people in Noah's day.

Now those spirits are in prison, they're in hell. But Jesus was in Noah preaching the gospel to those people at that time. And that's the view I take as well. This view connects much better with the context for the following reasons.

And some of these I get from Wayne Grudem as well. In the context, Noah and his family were a minority persecuted by hostile people. That's exactly what Peter was talking about.

Noah was righteous and doing good in a wicked world. That's exactly what Peter has been telling us the whole time. your good conduct in Christ. Noah feared God.

[13 : 43] He feared his command to him to build the ark. That's exactly what Peter has been telling us. Fear Christ. Fear God. Noah witnessed boldly to those around him.

In Peter's second letter, he called Noah a preacher of righteousness. And Peter here in 1 Peter, he calls us to speak boldly the gospel.

Be ready to give an answer. A defense of the faith. Another thing, Noah was awaiting judgment to come. That's what Peter is telling his readers and us.

And of course, Noah received the blessing. Did he suffer? Yeah, he did. Most likely ostracized from the people around him.

Probably millions of people that were there on the earth at that time. Ostracized. Not to mention the fact he was in an ark with a bunch of animals. That's not easy. That was no fun.

[14 : 47] But his suffering led to his blessing. He was blessed. God saved him and his family. So we should sanctify Lord to Christ by speaking Christ, fearing Christ, and living out Christ in our lives because suffering for good or for the sake of righteousness leads to God's blessing since the same thing happened to Christ.

He was blessed, we get blessed, and the same thing happened to Noah. So, let me propose to you the Christian formula for weirdness, how it's confirmed in four different ways in our passage.

first, Christ in his suffering, we looked at that in verse 18, notice verse 18, for Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, nor that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirits.

Then you come to point number two. It's confirmed by Noah in the flood. Verse 19, in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison.

In which what? The spiritual realm. Look at verse 18 again. Having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

[16 : 10] What causes to be brought to God? Jesus Christ was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit. Well, what does that mean? He was put to death in the realm of the flesh, but he was made alive in the realm of the spirit, the Holy Spirit, the spirit.

He moved from an earthly existence to a resurrected existence. Or, another way to put it, Christ lives now as a resurrected person in the realm of the spirit.

The flesh is a human sphere of existence. The spirit is a spiritual sphere, or in the realm of the spirits. And his activity, it's lasting, it's eternal. Well, guess what?

Jesus did something else in that spiritual realm. He went and preached to the spirits who are now in prison. Which we will take to refer to human spirits.

I do not believe he's saying these are angelic spirits. Because, look at the next part of verse 19. He made proclamation to the spirits in prison, and then verse 20.

[17 : 22] Who once were disobedient when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah. Stop there. Never, never, never in Scripture is God ever said to have patience for angels.

He always has patience for humans. Because he wants them to repent. to see them repent.

Scripture, never in Scripture is God said to be patient with angels to see them repent.

He's patient with humans to see us repent. God awaited eagerly to see them repent. By the way, angels are never said to have disobeyed in the days of Noah.

Never. God's patience was traditionally the 120 years in Genesis 6, verse 3. Genesis 6, verse 3 says this.

Then the Lord said, My spirit shall not strive with man forever because he also is flesh.

[18 : 26] Nevertheless, his days shall be 120 years. That's the time that God was patient with man. He wasn't patient with angels. Nor are angels ever said to be disobedient.

Genesis 6 says humans were disobedient. They were wicked. They were horrible. There was horrible sin taking place throughout the whole world.

I'll read that too. What does the Lord say? The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth.

Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he'd made man on the earth. He was grieved in his heart. And the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky for I'm sorry that I've made them.

There's nowhere angels are being disobedient. It's about people. They were the ones who were disobedient. God waited patiently for sinners to repent due to the gospel proclamation done by Christ through Noah.

[19 : 41] God is a patient God. He's slow to anger. He's abounding in steadfast love for sinners. God is gracious wanting to see sinners repent but they willfully disobey the command.

I have up there 2 Peter 2 verse 5 Noah is called the preacher of righteousness and then in the book of Jude verse 15 Enoch was preaching the Lord came with many thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment upon all to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. Now where is this talking about angels? It's about humans. God is patient with humans. God wants sinners to repent. God's arms are wide open for sinners to repent not to angels.

If you're here and you're not a follower of Jesus Christ his arms are open to you for you to repent. I mean that's the whole aspect of the gospel. Do you need to repent and trust in Christ?

Do you need to come to Christ today? Don't delay. God and his holiness should condemn us but yet he sent Jesus Christ his eternal son who lived who died and arose respond by repenting and trusting in Christ.

[21 : 12] There's the gospel. God wants you to respond. God desires to save sinners. And that's what we see in the passage. Notice the next part of verse 20.

Awaiting in the days of Noah during the construction of the ark into which a few that is eight persons were brought safely through water. So into the ark they have safety.

Corresponding to this he's going to talk about that but he's talking here first about the ark they're building the ark into which into the ark the few that is eight persons they were brought safely through water. Notice water is not a positive thing here.

It's negative. They were brought safely through the water of judgment. Thus we will be delivered out of judgment just like Noah was.

They were brought safely escaping through the water of judgment. Water is bad. Water is not good. It's judgment. So Noah stayed faithful.

[22 : 22] He had good conduct in Christ. He's proclaiming Christ and God's going to bless him. Noah in the construction of the ark in the flood it confirms this that suffering leads to blessing.

Christ in his suffering Noah in the flood here's a third one. Baptism in its symbolism that's another confirmation that suffering leads to blessing.

They were brought safely through water and corresponding to that baptism now saves you. What in the world is he talking about? What is he saying? He's making a correlation corresponding to that corresponding to what?

Christian baptism and the flood. How do they relate? Water is seen negatively by here by Peter. So water is symbolizing God's judgment or death. Going under the water symbolizes going down into the grave in death. That's what the water symbolizes.

[23 : 31] The water is bad. You don't want water. That's not what you want. But when he's talking about baptism now he's corresponding baptism to the waters of the flood.

Another way to put this. As Noah fled to the ark and his family they fled to the ark so we flee to Christ for salvation. And this salvation is depicted in the waters or the judgment of baptism. They were brought safely escaping through the judgment of water. So we could actually say water depicts suffering. And they endured through it.

See baptism is a clear picture of what we deserve. Let's pretend that this is filled with water. The picture here of somebody sitting down the water is bad. It's negative. He's symbolizing something.

[24 : 42] Baptism symbolizes when you go down under the water you're dying. There's judgment. It's death. It's bad. But when you come up out of the water it symbolizes resurrection.

New life. Transformation. A whole new you. So he's corresponding that. The flood was bad. The water was judgment.

Right? The flood they were being judged. Humans were being judged. God wiped off everyone from the face of the earth. But they fled to Christ to have salvation.

In the same way we flee to Christ and we cling to Christ and so the waters of baptism I've died. This is a bad thing. Now I've been made a new person. That's the whole depiction of baptism.

Let me come back. Isn't that fun?

[25 : 45] Where am I at? Oh! Coming up out of the water displays being kept safe through the judgment of sin and being resurrected to a new changed life.

A life devoted to God. That's why he says notice baptism now saves you. Not the removal of dirt from the flesh. Not an outward physical act which cleanses the body from dirt.

Not just taking a bath which is a ritual. I mean some of you don't take baths but most of us do take baths and we smell you all the time.

But it's a ritual. This is not like the ritual. It symbolizes something. Notice what he says. But an appeal to God for a good conscience or another way to translate that word is a pledge.

So it can be translated as appeal or pledge. It's a pledge to God for a good conscience or it's an appeal to God for a good conscience.

[26 : 53] Pledge denotes some form of commitment. Right? Appeal denotes requesting or asking God for something. You pledge when you pledge you commit or you pledge to maintain a good conscience.

Appeal means you appeal to God to grant grace asking for forgiveness excuse me or for a right attitude. What does he mean by good conscience?

a good moral disposition a person possesses. They're conscious of their duty to God. That's why I translated it pledge.

I think pledge seems better from the context. He's talking about a commitment. baptism So baptism is not an automatic right of forgiveness or of a cleansing.

It comes with a particular heartfelt response to God. A person would give a confession of faith in Christ when they're being baptized. So it's a pledge to maintain a good conscience that I'm committing myself to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[28 : 06] That's what baptism is. We do this ourselves. When we do a baptism and someone comes here to the waters of baptism they have to tell you how they came to Christ and they have to tell you the gospel.

They're testifying to you and they're publicly displaying what's happened to them. Right? They're publicly telling you I've died I've been judged I've been placed under this water which depicts death horrible separation from God but now I come up out of the waters I'm a new person I'm changed I'm transformed there's a new Vicente there's a new Michael there's a new Travis there's a new Tyler there's a new Ward a new gym we're different now we're changed it's about being united to Christ the water has no magical power water because it's a bad thing water's bad if he's saying baptism saves you well you would think the water would be good right?

no it's not Peter saying it's bad water is bad it's a bad thing because it depicts judgment it's not about the ritual it's about having a pure heart towards God you're saying I pledge oh here's the

other thing I was going to say normally in churches the thing that's done by tradition now to show that you're making a pledge to Jesus Christ to commit to Jesus Christ actually I'll ask you the pledge that people make to show they're going to come to Jesus Christ is when they do what? is when they come down the aisle right? that's now tradition I think it's better for us to go with what the Bible says should be the way that we do the pledge how does somebody pledge themselves to Christ is it through walking the aisle no that's why I will not do an altar call I don't do altar calls if you want to make a pledge to Christ you want to do that come get baptized this is the way the New Testament shows us how you make a pledge to Christ this is how they do it not walking the aisle but getting baptized it's about having a pure heart towards God I mean think about it Peter just said that Christ suffered in order to bring us to God why would he say baptism is the thing that's going to bring you to God well that's dumb he's not saying that it's a big contradiction baptism is a symbol of the person dying to sin and pledging themselves to

God as a new person just like Christ did at his resurrection and that he was totally changed and was vindicated by God this depicts Jesus Christ he died he was buried Jesus was judged Jesus faced the curse Jesus faced judgment on behalf of all those who repent and trust in Jesus that's what Christ did and then he was totally changed right when he resurrected oh he was changed he just showed up in some room transformed a resurrected body totally changed and vindicated by God remember Christ vicarious or substitutionary atonement he suffered on behalf of the sins of another he died for his people the righteous one for unrighteous people he faced the judgment of sin for all those who repent and trust in him that's why you get baptized because you are identifying with Jesus you're saying

[32 : 24] I have been cursed with Christ I have been judged with Christ and now he's changed me I'm a new person I'm pledging myself to Jesus Christ I want all of you to hold me accountable to this that's why we do baptisms that's why Christ's suffering is not an example for us to follow necessarily it's a way to lead us or bring us to God to fellowship with God himself a relationship marred broken and wrecked by our sin and guess what his resurrection confirms this hope which leads us to our second excuse me fourth point the fourth way we see this confirmed is Christ in his resurrection and ascension it's confirmed suffering leads to blessing verse 21 through the resurrection of Jesus Christ Jesus resurrection makes a new birth possible and baptism is a symbol of this new birth resurrection taking place the way we have the assurance that God will bless us granting us grace is a very resurrection of Jesus

Christ I mean think about it if there was no resurrection there's no point to being baptized there's no point I mean that's why in the New Testament with Acts chapter 2 why they were baptized why baptism became so connected to believing in Jesus that's why there's no reason to be baptized because baptism is the perfect depiction of judgment of sin of being cursed and coming up out of the water you're a new person you're resurrected if there was no resurrection there's no need for baptism the only way baptism as a pledge is a legitimate way to tell others of one's commitment to Christ is the resurrection of Christ Christ's resurrection is the way we're given a clear conscience by God we testify he's changed us he loves us

I will live for him it's not about walking the aisle it's about getting baptized notice he says to the resurrection of Jesus Christ verse 22 who is at the right hand of God having gone into heaven look at this confirmation that we have that we will be blessed he's at the right hand of God that's a position of power of authority of honor he reigns now it's signified one has the authority and the power of a king so Jesus Christ has full authority as king with the power of God himself having been totally vindicated by God and glorified by God that's why he says gone into heaven his ascension followed his resurrection and this is important because it confirms that he truly did resurrect and it foreshadows our own ascension and our own rule with him so not only is baptism a depiction of what's happened to me now but baptism is now a reflection of what's going to happen to me in the future because that has happened to Jesus

Christ it's confirmed by his resurrection and ascension he's been resurrected he's ascended I will resurrect I will ascend and we will rule with our king I mean you want to talk about blessing that's a blessing right no amens to that okay thanks mom he'll puss me out 20 bucks every week so anyways that was a joke I only give her 10 after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to him Christ's final victory and authority over the angelic powers here's his status at the right hand of God Jesus Christ has complete universal authority over all all of them are subject to Christ he's been given all authority in heaven and on earth Matthew 28 19 our afflictors our

afflictions our persecutors will not have the last word they won't think about it if Christ has done all of this then we have sure absolute total long lasting no shadow of a doubt confidence that when we suffer for good conduct in Christ for righteousness sake

God will surely bless us he will he'll bless you doesn't mean he'll take away the suffering but he'll be there he'll support you he'll give you grace to live as Christ you have everything to gain in the future everything you'll get it all whichever view you take on verses 19 through 20 one thing I want to drive home is how this formula is confirmed by Christ himself the example of Noah and the repeated ordinance of baptism it constantly reminds us of his resurrection and our own transformation both now and later that's why when there's going to be a baptism I mean we should be here all the time granted yes how much more so for baptism because it's a constant reminder

[38:42] I've died I've been transformed I will die and I will be transformed it's a constant reminder it should be a constant blessing to us every time someone gets baptized it should bless us not only in the fact that we're going to that that person's pledging to Christ but it's a reminder that all of us is pledged to Christ all of us is pledged to Christ and all of us will be transformed and all of us are being transformed and all of us will be transformed that's that's the blessing so I propose again to you the formula and believe me if you believe this you're an absolute crazy lunatic suffering leads to blessing it does God's words confirmed glorious Christ thank you that you took the curse the water of judgment so we can be blessed so that's why we can say glorious

Christ you're the greatest of all delights there's no greater sacrifice you lay down your life for us we join with the angels who sing about how gloriously awesome you are oh Christ you are the glorious Christ we hail the power of Jesus name because you oh God are a mighty fortress you Lord Jesus have done all this help us for those that are suffering for those that are under affliction and tribulation trials and difficulties help them to know beyond a shadow of a doubt the confidence that this suffering will lead to blessing and you will bless them you are with them you are with your own so help us to fear you to trust you to love you we pledge ourselves to you oh glorious

Christ if you would take a few moments and ponder what we've seen in God's word have a few moments of silence for you to think and to reflect upon the passage that we've seen this morning after a few moments we'll have our time of giving singing our last two songs in our closing prayer spend this time be encouraged by God's word and his promises to you deliver or when God would end a milky panting then leave a book and we're taking the charge to me or to