

Victory in Jesus

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Date: 23 August 2026

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[0:00] Our text is going to be verses 18 through 22, but I do want to back up and just read from verse 13 down because the text this evening is kind of just a continuation of what we looked at last week.

So the Bible says this in verse number 13, And who is he that will harm you if you be followers of that which is good? But and if you suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you of the reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Having a good conscience that whereas they speak evil of you as evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

For it is better if the will of God be so that you suffer for doing well than for evil doing. Verse 18, here's where we're going to pick our text up this evening. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein a few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

[1:26] The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone up into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Last week, Peter kind of told us and really showed us how to live our life and how to respond when doing right costs us. Because we're going to try to do the right thing as we live for the Lord, and sometimes it's not going to go how we think it should.

You do the right thing, you take a stand, you stand on the principles of the Word of God, and sometimes people are going to react the wrong way. And we can either be controlled by fear, or we can trust in the Lord.

And Peter shows us how do we do that. We sanctify God in our hearts. We keep a clear conscience the way that we live our life, that faithfulness, sometimes faithfulness brings suffering.

[2:26] But when we have a clear conscience before God, we understand we're doing what he's called us to do. But that raises a question that he really answers in these closing verses. He says, how can we have this confidence when doing right costs us when life gets hard?

And Peter's answer is super simple. Look at Jesus. Because he's writing to a people that are suffering. But he says, I just want to remind you, Jesus suffered too, but suffering never wins. Because Jesus defeated it. We sang that song, Victory in Jesus. That's not a catchy Baptist hymn we sing, and we sang sold and praise God. No, that's a truth from the Word of God.

And he's writing to a people saying, listen, I know life is hard, but there is victory. And it's found in Jesus Christ. So that's what we're going to look at this evening. Let's go to the Lord in prayer and ask him to help us. Father, thank you for the time to open up your Word again.

What a privilege it is every time we have the opportunity to read it for ourselves, to proclaim it from the pulpit, to hear it in the Sunday school class. Lord, I pray you would help us to take these truths and just be reminded of the wonderful victory that we have in you and through you.

[3:30] It's not something we have to wait for one day. It's not something that's just reserved for us in heaven, but Lord, it is available right now, and we would live in that victory that you give. Lord, I pray that you would help my thoughts and to guide my words.

And there's some difficult places here in this text to explain it with clarity. Lord, I pray that it would be a help to us tonight. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. I loved the text this morning in the sense where Luke says, this is what the text is about.

I wish that every text that you came to in Scripture said, hey, you're about to read this, and I just want you to know this is what it's about. So you can go into it kind of having a good, clear understanding of, okay, this is what the author is meaning.

This is what the Holy Spirit wants to pull out. And then there's texts like 1 Peter 3, 18 through 22. It's not like that. Maybe you were reading that, and I said a couple of things.

As I was reading, you think, well, I thought every time you get in the baptism, well, you say this water doesn't save you. And Peter says, baptism now also saves us. So it's one of those texts that we come to, and it seems confusing, and we may not agree with everything Martin Luther says, but I loved with this when I was studying it.

[4 : 44] You know, when you come to difficult passages, I go to some commentaries, and I start looking at it, and here's what they say. I don't know what it's talking about. Martin Luther said, a wonderful text this is, a more obscure passage than almost any other in the New Testament, so I do not know certainly what it means.

I'm like, what a blessing. But I do think, I'm not smarter than Martin, I'm not saying I'm smarter than Martin Luther, but I think when we dig in, I think sometimes we make the text more difficult than it is. I think there's some great truths that we can find here, and Peter's going to talk about some things that when we read it, verse number 19, he talks about Christ preaching to the spirits in prison. He's going to take us back to the days of Noah.

He's talking about baptism and saving us, and if you're not careful, that verse right there has taken some people on some wild goose chases that really don't end up where it needs to. So as we dive into this passage, we're not going to belabor some of these and go through all of the views that people have out there, but what I want us to do is, where Scripture is clear, we want to be clear.

We can't be dogmatic about things that we are, the Scripture's not dogmatic about. And sometimes we don't have to know everything. I love talking about some of these things. You get in here, and this has a lot of similarity to the book of Jude, and everybody wants to know who the fallen angels are and who these spirits are, and there's all kinds of things out there.

[6 : 06] But I don't want us to get so fascinated with the difficult parts that we miss what's obvious. Because Peter's showing some things, and while there are some details in these verses that we're going to try to do the very best we can, Peter's main point is not difficult at all.

Here's his point. Jesus wins. That Jesus is victorious. We see the very last verse. He's on the throne. That is where he was getting to, that Christ suffered, but suffering wasn't the end of his story.

Jesus died, but that wasn't the end of the story. He was put in the grave, but that wasn't the end of his story. That Jesus Christ was and is and always will be on the throne.

And that is the thrust, that is the main idea of this text. And he wanted these believers to be encouraged because they were experiencing suffering, and they were being mistreated for their faith.

And he tells us there in verse number 17, if you're going to suffer, and you will in this world, if we live for Christ, we will suffer. I mean, we don't like to hear that, but Paul said all that live godly shall suffer persecution.

[7 : 13] And Peter reminds us in verse 17, as it kind of jumps us into our text tonight, if you're going to suffer, suffer for the right reasons. Do it because you're living for Christ and taking a stand on his truth.

So as we come to the text that we're focused on here this evening, Peter isn't abandoning this subject of suffering and giving them some theology lecture. No, in fact, he's doing the exact opposite.

He's saying because this is a reality in your life, because these are things that you face, and he knew where their suffering was heading, because no one suffered more unjustly than Jesus Christ did.

Nobody suffered like Christ, and the suffering, though, that he went through wasn't final. It didn't have the final word. And as Christians, that's still our hope.

Because when doing right costs us, sometimes the faithfulness that we have and we strive for in our life, it's not going to make things easier. That doesn't seem super popular, and saying it out loud, I'm like, man, I wish that wasn't true.

[8:16] But the reality is sometimes we're going to live for Christ. You're going to go to school and try to live for Christ. You're going to go to work and try to live for Christ. And it might make things a lot harder. But it's okay. Because we're not suffering because of wrongdoing.

We're suffering for the sake of Christ. And that's what he's reminding us here. So when we look at Jesus, we see that there is hope and there is a way to get through the difficulties that we face. And so our big idea is because of Jesus, it was victorious through his suffering, we can trust him in our own suffering, in our own difficulties in life. So we want to look at this text this evening and answer this question.

What does Peter show us about the victory of Jesus Christ? Well, what can we see in this victory that Jesus bought for us on the cross of Calvary? Well, the first thing we see is found in verse number 18.

His death brought us to God. It is death brought us to God. Verse 18 says there at the very beginning, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins.

[9:19] That word also really, as we read the previous text that we looked at last week, it connects it. That Peter's going back and looking at that truth and here's what he's saying kind of at the beginning of verse 18.

I know what you're going through. Jesus understands what is taking place and he knows what it's like to suffer. But I do want to remind us this. There's an enormous difference between the suffering of Jesus and our suffering.

The suffering that we went through is mainly because we live in a broken, sinful world. But Jesus wasn't suffering for his sins. He wasn't on the cross because he deserved it.

He was there to pay the price of our sins. He was there to pay a debt that we could not pay. Peter's already alluded to that in chapter 2. He told us, He who did no sin, neither was there guile found in his mouth.

And he's reiterating this fact over and over again that Jesus was completely innocent. He was completely righteous. And yet he suffered greatly. The Bible tells us there in verse number 18, the just for the unjust.

[10:29] I mean, that's the gospel right there. That's Calvary. We deserve the judgment. We were unjust. We were dead in our trespasses and sin. And Jesus took it on himself.

He paid that price. And Paul tells us that in the book of 2 Corinthians that he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God.

Here's what he's saying. He did that so you could have hope, so you could have joy, you could have peace. But notice that one little word there at the beginning of verse number 18, once.

Listen, Jesus' sacrifice does not need to be repeated. It's good for all time. It doesn't need to be improved. It is in no way needed to be supplemented by what we do.

Now, we serve Christ, and we love him, and we do things for him, but we're not doing that to kind of get us over the finish line. No, Jesus did that. We cannot work our way to heaven.

[11:29] He did it all. And Jesus didn't make a down payment on your salvation and say, hey, I got you started now. Finish it out. Praise the Lord for that. Because we couldn't afford it, and we couldn't obtain it.

And when he cried from the cross, it is finished. That's exactly what he meant. Hebrews 10 verse number 12 says this, but this man, talking about Jesus, after he had offered one sacrifice, for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.

He came and completed the task. That was his mission, to seek and to save and to put his blood there on the altar for our sins. And Peter wanted them to get a hold of this and not run past this truth because here's what it does for us.

It means that our confidence in God is not based on our performance. Because let's just be real, sometimes as Christians, we have a good week, a good month, a good couple months together, and we think, man, I'm doing pretty good.

But if you're like me, in my Christian life, sometimes we crash and burn. I'm thankful that's not based on when he's looking at my performance or anybody have a yearly review at work? You're like, man, I hope they don't look at those two months.

[12:40] I was good the rest of the months. It was real bad right there. Listen, I'm thankful that's not how God looks at us. In fact, when he looks at us, he sees his son, that we're robed in his righteousness.

Our confidence in God is not based in how religious we are. It's not something within me. Our confidence is simply in the finished work of Jesus Christ. That's what Peter says. For Christ has once suffered. He has once paid for the sins. And he tells us why he did that, that he might bring us to God. It gives us that certainty that we are forgiven. It gives us that certainty of eternal life. And heaven is our home if we place our faith and trust in him. But Peter goes even deeper. It wasn't just what Jesus did to bring us to God. Why he did it. Because our sins had separated us from God. Our sins had separated that fellowship. The Bible tells us in Isaiah chapter 59, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God.

[13:42] The payment had to be made. See, the greatest problem created by sin wasn't just the fact that we were on our way to hell. That's a big problem. But really, the greatest problem was we were separated from God.

I mean, we think of hell often. We think, man, it's a horrible place and it is. And we think the worst thing may be the fire and the torment. That's going to be pretty bad. But here's what it is. You are separated from God.

That's what sin does. It separates you. But Jesus knew that. And he came. He was the lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. And he came to reconcile us. He came and bought our life that we are purchased by his blood.

And because he bore our sins, he satisfied the judgment of God. And he opened the way. That's why he said, I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. See, Christianity isn't just about getting something from God. Here's what it really is. It's getting God. It's not just, oh, get out of hell free card and have some joy and peace in your life.

[14:48] No, it's about knowing him. That having a personal relationship with the creator, that we get to know him and to call him our father. We get to enjoy him now. And guess what? We get to enjoy him forever.

That he's invited us. There's a nameplate and a chair at the table for me. Listen, I don't have to sit at the little kid's table anymore. Hopefully I'm not at the little kid's table in heaven. Actually, the little kid's table is a lot more fun at Thanksgiving, by the way.

Yeah, there's not all the kind of politics and all kinds of things going on over there. I mean, we're talking about squishies and all kinds of fun stuff at the little kid's table. See, what Peter's reminding us here in verse number 18 is Jesus didn't just rescue us from something.

He brought us to someone. He brought us to God. Sometimes we're thankful. I'm thankful he rescued me, but it's so much more than that. It's so much better than that.

And really, why he's reminding us of this is because when we think about that, when we think about all that Christ did and what he suffered for us, it really should change the way that we understand suffering and how we view what we walk through and how we view the difficulties and the trial in our own life.

[15:55] And Peter was bringing them to this point because we have seen in these first three chapters, I mean, they're going through it. He said, listen, I know you're going through it, but let me remind you, Jesus went through something much worse than anything you can think of because he loves you.

And it reminds us that there is a hope that we can have. See, because of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, suffering cannot take the greatest thing I possess. It cannot.

I mean, people can reject you and you still have God. I mean, people, circumstances can change all over the place. I mean, they can be up and down every single day, but you still have God. I mean, you can lose things.

You can lose someone very dear to you. They can pass on or whatever it might be, but you still have God and you have hope if they know Christ. And even death itself cannot separate you from him.

I'm reminded what Paul told us there at the end of Romans. I mean, you ever having a bad day, you're going through it, read Romans, the very last part of Romans chapter eight. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

[16:57] You know what that is? That's real victory. That's victory that lasts. That's not victory based on all these worldly things. Look at the last phrase of verse number 18.

The Bible tells us this, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. Peter just reminds them, hey, they killed Jesus. Now, we know he laid down his life, but he died.

But he's not there anymore. That he was quickened by the Spirit. His enemies thought the cross was his ultimate defeat and they viewed it as a horrible symbol. But you know what?

We're so thankful for the cross of Calvary now because Jesus took something that was so awful and turned it into something so beautiful. And we can look at the cross every time and every time we see it, we should be thankful for the price that he paid.

Even the disciples thought the grave was the end. Like, what are we going to do now? Mary went to the grave and she was distraught and she saw who she's supposed to be the gardener.

[17:56] She said, just tell me where he is. Where did they carry him away? And he said, Mary. The grave wasn't the end. It became the doorway to his resurrection. And he's just reminding these believers, and they knew this, that the cross, Jesus didn't lose the battle.

No, the cross proved he won the battle. That he won the victory. And at the beginning of verse number 19, Peter shows us just how far that victory reaches. And he shows us a couple examples here in these next few verses.

And this is kind of the part of the text where you think, what is he saying here? Verse number 19, but which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison. Now, we read that and automatically I'm thinking, who are these spirits?

Where did he go? What did he preach? What is going on right here? We're really faithful Bible students over the years, and there's going to be differing opinions. They look at these verses in several different ways.

Some believe Peter is describing Christ by the Spirit, preaching through Noah to the wicked generation, which we see him talk about Noah there in verse number 20. That Jesus was speaking through Noah as he preached.

[19:06] He was a preacher of righteousness for 120 years as he was building the ark. Another very common held belief is these spirits in prison refer to the fallen angelic beings associated with the rebellion and the wickedness surrounding the days of Noah.

You look at Genesis chapter 6 and you've ever heard of the Nephilim? It's a rabbit hole. You can get down it really, really deep, but that's kind of what's taking place and that following his death and his resurrection, Christ proclaimed his victory over them.

And there's other interpretations as well, but I just want us to remember as we were going to say a few things about it, Peter didn't write to give these suffering Christians an interpretive puzzle. Like, figure this one out.

That's not what he's saying. Here's what he's saying. Hey, you have hope because of what Jesus did. My personal opinion is the interpretation here and we find here in verse 19 and 20 seems to fit the language and the context of the spirits in prison are the fallen angels.

Are these beings that we see in Genesis chapter number 6 that were connected to the terrible wickedness in Noah's day? When you read Genesis 6, they said that wickedness was, every thought of the man was continually wicked.

[20:20] And these specific fallen beings, they caused a lot of problems. We don't know exactly what it is. There's a lot of different opinions. That's another sermon for another time. But Peter uses this similar language here in chapter number 2, verse number 4, in 2 Peter, excuse me, here's what he said.

For if God spared not the angels that sin, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. Quite a while back, we preached through the book of Jude and Jude speaks very similarly of these angels as well.

He says this, these angels who kept not their first estate, God has reserved them an everlasting change under darkness unto the day of judgment.

So I think what Peter is wanting us to see here and we're going somewhere, so hang on with me. I know this is kind of a little difficult to articulate. But I believe what Peter is telling us is that Christ proclaimed his victory over these defeated spiritual powers.

See, because they thought they had the victory. Even on the cross, they thought they had won and they are always, since the beginning of time, we see it all the way in the book of Genesis, all the

way up until the book of Revelation, where God is going to throw them in the lake of fire.

[21 : 32] Praise the Lord for that day. But they are trying to win the battle. They know they've lost now. When Jesus rose from the grave, their sentence was sealed. But they are looking for this victory and Peter is saying, I don't want us to misunderstand, that Jesus didn't preach to them and offer them a second chance.

That's not what's taking place. The word preached is this, it means proclamation, to proclaim, to herald. This isn't a second chance after death. No, here's what Jesus is doing.

This is what Peter is saying, that Jesus, this is a declaration of victory. That all of these evil spirits, all of these fallen angels, because they're real, by the way. I know we get weirded out sometimes and we talk about angels and demons, they're real.

We're not battling what we see. No, we're in a spiritual battle. That has been that way since the beginning. Satan had done his worst. Sin tried to do its worst.

Death had done its worst. But Jesus still won. That's what Peter is saying here. Evil has never been outside of God's control.

[22 : 36] He doesn't look at these wicked fallen angels that fell from heaven when Satan fell and think, man, I don't know what to do. I don't know. They're out of control. No, they did some things on this earth. We don't know what it is. Maybe one day in heaven we'll know.

But God says, because they did that, they're being punished even now. They're being reserved until the day of judgment. And so that's what Peter does in verse number 20. He takes us back to Noah's day and he reminds us, he says, which sometimes we're disobedient.

This is the reason they're in prison. When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein a few, that is eight souls, were saved by water.

So he takes the reader back and says, listen, you remember the days of Noah? You remember the account? The earth was filled with violence. Humanity had rebelled completely against God.

And put yourself in Noah's shoes. I mean, Noah had to, from his perspective, had to think, we're losing this battle big time. I mean, Noah's preaching, can you imagine preaching for 120 years and nobody listens to you?

[23 : 43] I mean, that would be awful. He's there and the Bible tells us there's only a few people that enter the ark. How many? Eight people. Out of all the people that heard Noah preach over and over and they'd come by and they'd mock him and say, why are you building a boat, man?

We live in the desert. What's going on here? And he had to keep wondering, Lord, it just seems like we're not doing anything. We're not making any progress. And at eight people, Noah certainly didn't have the majority.

He didn't seem like he was on the winning side. But Peter's reminding these people that are spread abroad and all over Galatia and really on the run and been displaced from their homes.

He wanted them to understand this. Never mistake being outnumbered for being defeated.

Because they had to feel like they're losing. I don't know about you, but sometimes in life it feels like we're losing.

I mean, we see this all throughout Scripture. We see the psalmist says, why do the heathen rage? Why do they just get to do whatever they want? He says, I'm looking all around and it seems they have all the cars and all the houses and all the money and they have no problems and we're over here trying to serve God and we don't have any of those things.

[24 : 51] But then the psalmist reminds himself when God shows up everything's going to change. And that's kind of where Peter's taken them. He wanted them to understand that yes, the Roman world around them it seemed enormous and Christianity seemed so small.

And that's why he took them back to Noah's day. It's kind of like this, hey, we've seen this before.

We've seen this kind of situation where it seemed like all the world was against us but guess what? God showed up. God made it known. See, there was a day when Noah looked like a fool until the rain came. Then they were trying to get in the boat but God had already closed the door.

There was a day when evil appeared to be winning until God judged it. That's kind of what he's reminding them there. That Jesus' victory on the cross it brought judgment, it brought vindication for those that faithfully served God.

That Noah wasn't this crazy man just standing out preaching to a bunch of people that weren't listening and he's just telling us and telling these believers, listen, Christianity, we cannot measure the truth by the popularity.

[26:00] Because the closer we get to the return of Christ, I think we're seeing it in our own life and culture, the truth of the word of God is getting less and less popular. But it doesn't change the truth of the word of God.

We can't water it down. We can't say, well, you know, that's just an old book. No, it's a timeless book. It's settled in heaven forever. God knows what he's doing and really, this is nothing new. Like Peter told these people, we've seen this before but God's going to show up.

See, God has never needed a majority to accomplish his purposes. Peter's readers needed to know that. And I would imagine we probably need to know that too and just be reminded of that.

God didn't call us to be the biggest and the best and the greatest. He just called us to be faithful and let him handle it. And that brings Peter to another picture from Noah's day, the flood. And through this picture, he kind of shows baptism.

Look at verse number 21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[27:12] Think, Peter, what in the world are you saying right here? I mean, does Peter mean that the physical act of baptism washes our sins away because that's what it looks like? Absolutely not.

That is not what he is saying. In fact, Peter immediately tells us that's not what he means in that very next, in the parentheses. He's saying that that's not what it is but here's what he wants us to understand.

Peter is teaching that getting into water does not save. He's not teaching that. I say it every single time and I know you get tired of it maybe but I'm going to say it every single time because I don't want people to think, oh, I've been baptized because maybe you've asked somebody, you know the Lord is your Savior?

I've been baptized. It's not what I ask. Do you know the Lord is your Savior? Baptism is just an outward picture of an inward transformation in our life. baptism cannot wash sin from the heart. Water can wash our body. Only Jesus can cleanse the soul. But that's why there's a very important little phrase at the beginning, the like figure. What he's doing is he's referring to the flood and he's using it as a picture and the waters represented God's judgment against sin.

[28:21] And yet, Noah and his family passed safely through the judgment. Why? Because they were in Christ. That's what the ark is. The ark is a picture of Christ.

That when you enter into Christ, that's why Peter and Paul and all of these New Testament writers, they keep saying that phrase, in Christ. In Christ. When you're in Christ, guess what? You're protected. You're saved.

Why? He has the victory. That's what Noah was. He was protected because he trusted in Christ. And Peter sees this illustration of the believer's salvation. Just as baptism becomes the outward picture of an inward identification with Jesus Christ and his death and his burial and his resurrection.

He wants us to see that here. Romans 6, 4. Therefore, we are also buried with him by baptism into death. That as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of God the Father.

That's what baptism is. We are buried in Christ and we are raised to walk in newness of life. It pictures our death and the burial and our resurrection and now we're a new person. We're a new creature.

[29:25] And when somebody follows Christ and believers baptism, they are publicly identifying with what Jesus has already done. They're saying, I have victory in Jesus Christ. He's my Savior and I'm going to follow him the rest of my life.

So I just want to make this very clear like Peter is saying. Baptism is important. I'm in no way downgrading baptism. It's important. It's commanded. In fact, it's the first step of obedience.

That every believer in Jesus Christ should be baptized. And if you haven't been scripturally baptized, here's what Peter says. Get it done. God wants us to do that.

But baptism isn't the Savior. Jesus is. The sign of baptism doesn't save you. The Savior does. It's just this outward picture that our hope rests in a living Savior.

Because if Jesus stayed dead, we have no gospel. If Jesus stayed dead, death won. If Christ didn't raise from the dead, Paul said, of all men, we're most miserable.

[30:30] We might as well pack up and go home and do something else. But Jesus is not dead. That he was risen from the dead. And so Peter's message to these suffering Christians isn't hang in

there, guys.

I mean, hold on until Jesus comes. That's not what he's saying. No, his message is much greater than that. His message is this, that Jesus has already passed through the suffering and come out victorious on the other side.

And so can you. Because if you're in Christ, just like Noah was in the ark, listen, the floods may come and the difficulties are going to be there, but you're safe. You're secure. You're in the one that gives victory.

And if you belong to him, his victory determines your future. I'm not going to heaven one day because I'm a good person. I'm going to heaven one day because Jesus Christ saved my wicked soul.

I mean, that's really what Peter's reminding us. I mean, suffering can hurt you. Peter does not deny that in this book at all. Suffering hurts. Life hurts.

[31:31] But what he's saying right here is it cannot destroy your hope. The world may and tries to oppose the church, oppose the scriptures, oppose God, but they cannot defeat him.

He's already walked out of the grave. He's alive and well today. And apart from Christ, my conscience testifies against me. That's what Peter's saying.

I know I've sinned. I know that I've fallen short of the glory of God. I know I cannot make myself righteous. But he's reminding us in these verses, because of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I'm forgiven.

I can stand with confidence before God. Not because of what I've done, but because of what he's done for me. And so Peter has taken us from his suffering to Jesus' death to his resurrection, but victory doesn't end with an empty tomb.

Here's what he wants us to know as well, that our Savior ascended in victory. Look at verse number 22. The Bible tells us, who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God.

[32:38] See, the Jesus who suffered and was crucified and was buried and rose again, he's in heaven. And we see this. The grave could not hold him.

Death could not defeat him. And after the resurrection, Jesus went back just as he said he would. And I think sometimes we don't give the ascension of Jesus the attention it deserves.

It's just as important as part of the story. We talk about his birth, and rightfully so. You better get your Christmas shopping done, by the way. It's already coming. But I'm thankful for when we come and we get to preach on the Christmas story and the birth of Christ, and we talk about his life, and we're going through the Gospel of Luke, and Easter comes around, and we're thankful for his death and his resurrection.

And rightly so. We should be. But the story doesn't end with Jesus just standing outside of a tomb. No, it ends there in the book of Acts where Jesus is ascended into heaven, and the angels say, hey, why are you standing there gazing?

This same Jesus, who you saw go up, he's coming back in like manner. But that ascension, really what it shows us is this. It confirms the one who rose from the grave is really alive.

[33:50] That he ascended in victory. He wasn't hanging out. He wasn't like trying to get out of Dodge. No, he came, and he did what he said he was going to do, and now he's going to go sit down at the right hand of God the Father.

That's what Peter is saying, that his humiliation is over, the suffering is over, the rejection's over, the king has gone home, but the king is coming back. That he's still in control.

And that's what we see the very last thing that Peter wants to remind us, that the angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. Here's a wonderful thing.

Jesus reigns over all. Everything is a shadow under him. There is nothing. Really, that's the destination of this whole passage is he starts with suffering and death and all of these things, but it ends at a throne.

And one day, it's going to end all there. The entire humanity, we see that the great and small will stand before the throne. Because Jesus is on it.

[34:52] And throughout Scripture, the right hand is a place of honor and authority and power. Sorry, all you left-handers. You're already weird and the Bible confirms it.

My wife's left-handed in case you didn't know that. So that was mainly aimed at her, but then I look, she's in the nursery, so whatever it might be there. But Peter's language, it kind of echoes Psalm 110, verse 1.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Listen, Jesus isn't in heaven recovering from what happened on earth. I was giving Brother Jared a hard time when I texted him yesterday when it was his birthday. I'm like, hey, you feel 40? He's like, I do feel 40. It's like, I'm recovering, man. It's like, you know, every year you get a little bit older, you've got to recover from certain things. Jesus isn't recovering from anything. He's reigning. He's ruling. We look at our world around us and we think, man, this thing's falling apart. Let me just remind you, he's still in control. [35 : 59] But the Bible tells us that by him all things consist. It has the idea. He's still holding it together. Everything is still going according to plan. Jesus hasn't lost control in trying to figure out how to get it back on the rails.

No, it's going to get worse and worse as the days progress, but it just reminds us he's coming back again. And when he comes again, he's not coming as a suffering Savior. He is coming as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords because that's who he is. And that's what he tells us here. That he has no equal. That he has no rival. That he is above everything and everything is subject to him. And what a great encouragement for these early readers.

The government seemed to have all the power. The persecution was real in their life. The culture that they lived in seemed to care nothing about them and really would just be better off if the Christians were out of their way and they could live life how they wanted to. And it would have been very easy for them to look around and get discouraged and to look around and think, man, I chose the wrong side. I'm on the losing side. Here's what Peter says. [37 : 05] Stop looking down here. Why don't you look a little bit higher? Because Rome is not actually the one that's on the throne. Your persecutors aren't on the throne. The powers of darkness aren't on the throne.

Jesus is on the throne. And he is still ruling and reigning. Our confidence in this life isn't that everything's going to work out the way that we want. Here's our confidence in life. Jesus Christ is Lord. That's the confidence that we have. And nothing can change that. Nothing's going to change how that goes. I love what Paul says in the book of Philippians. Philippians chapter 2, man, it just is an amazing portion of Scripture. But he says that in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. Of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. We look at our world today, it doesn't seem like that's going that direction, but it is. [38 : 00] That one day, that every knee's going to bow, every tongue's going to confess, that all the people say there is no God, they'll stand before him one day. I'm so thankful that I did it on this side.

I'm thankful that when I see the Lord, I'm not going to be trembling because I'm scared of what's going to happen. I'm going to be trembling because of who he is. And I'll fall down on my face and worship him because he is worthy.

Because he is all what he has done for us. See, one day, Peter's reminding them, everybody's going to know what you already know. Jesus is Lord. So why should we abandon truth because culture changes?

Why should we compromise because obedience becomes uncomfortable? Why should we lose hope when suffering comes into our life?

He says we don't have to. The king has already won. The king is on the throne. The king has changed your life. Here in these five verses, Peter takes us from the suffering to the death, to the resurrection, to the ascension, to the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

[39 : 05] And he says, listen, suffering is real in your life. But it's not the end of the story. Because Jesus' life proves that. And if you belong to Jesus Christ tonight, your story is connected to his story.

That we are to be seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. In fact, we're already seated there. Whatever Jesus has, the Bible says that we're not just heirs, we're joint heirs with Christ. That everything that belongs to Christ belongs to us. I mean, you talk about something you don't deserve, that's all of us. None of us deserve it. Heaven's the only place where it's not fair. Everybody there, none of us deserve any of that. We didn't say, well, you know, this is fair, I deserve this. Nope. Hell's the only place where it's fair. Because that's what we deserve. But Jesus invites us in.

See, whatever happens between here and glory, suffering doesn't get the final word. Jesus does. That's why we can come to a funeral and see a loved one that's gone on before us and it hurts and we grieve and we cry and we sometimes ask, Lord, why?

[40:19] But death doesn't get the final word. Jesus tells us in the book of Revelation chapter one, he has the keys to death, hell, and the grave. He's victorious. See, Peter wasn't telling these believers, hey, everything, guys, is about to get easier.

I just came to the book of Jeremiah in my personal reading time. Man, they had some bad prophets around Jeremiah's time. Jeremiah keeps telling them, hey, you're about to go into captivity. Another prophet says, hey, guys, don't listen to Jeremiah, everything's good.

It's not good. Life is hard. Peter's not saying, hey, man, I just want to write this little book to you because everything's about to get better. He said, no, I want to write this little book to you to just remind you of something.

Jesus is Lord. I know you're facing that, and I know you're facing this, but you know what's going to help you? Jesus is Lord. He cares about you. See, here's what I want to leave us with tonight.

We're done. Because Jesus is victorious, suffering doesn't get the final word. So whatever comes your way, keep your eyes on the throne. Jesus always wins.