

The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 3:18-22

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[0 : 00] Good to see you here this morning. We are in a study in 1 Peter seeking to understand what! it looks like to live as exiles for Christ in this world. We are in 1 Peter chapter 3.

We are going to finish up the chapter this morning looking at verses 18 to 22. And if you want to put a title on this sermon, I have entitled this one, Suffering and Victory.

Okay? So let me pray for our time and then we will spend some time in the text together this morning. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we come before you this morning.

And just thinking about your promise to us when you encourage us to take your yoke upon us and to learn from you. And Lord, we love the promise you make to us that you're gentle and lowly in heart and that we can find rest for our souls in you. And Lord, I pray that we would find our rest in you today. And Lord, that would carry over in tomorrow and it would follow us all week. Lord, we want to be refreshed by your presence, by your spirit, by your word, by your people this morning. So we commit the time to you. Lord, I ask that you would work in each of our lives. And whatever we require today, would you provide. Lord, I pray that our hearts would be soft and malleable to your word. Lord, that we would have a posture of being humble and ready to learn. And Scott often encouraged us. Our response would be yes, whatever it is that you ask. So Lord, might this be just a beautiful fragrance, this worship as we yield to your truth today. And might you delight in it and do a good work in each of us. In your name,

Jesus, we pray. And all God's people said. Amen. Well, it's a little strange to me that we're in the heart of January and there's very little snow. We feel like there was false advertising moving us from the west side over to the east side. We thought we would get snow and blizzards and storms and I don't know, maybe that's going to happen in Spokane. That'll probably happen in March, right?

[2 : 37] But it's always interesting when there's a snowstorm to watch people. I like to, I'm a people watcher, Scott's a people watcher. You know, we're curious, we're interesting. And it's always interesting when there's a snowstorm and you just see the panic kind of begin to sort of ripple through society. And people started to go, man, we got to get to Costco. We got to get to Costco, right? And then everybody gets there and everybody buys all the toilet paper for whatever reason, right? We're going to weather the storm. We're going to have enough toilet paper to see us through. And people stock up on all sorts of things, batteries and flashlights. And maybe that's the time of year to pick up a generator.

And why? Why do people do this thing? They stock up because they don't know how long the storm is going to last. And they want to make sure that they have the resources to endure through it.

That's just a metaphor as we think this morning about Peter talking about enduring through the storms of suffering. And to do it well, to do it with courage, and to do it set apart, walking in a pursuit of holiness and being ready to give a defense for the gospel, maintaining a meek, humble posture, even when taking arrows from society at large for our alignment with Jesus. And as Scott preached last week, where Peter says in 1 Peter 3:17, he says, for it's better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. And that's a hard saying. I don't want to suffer on either front. But oftentimes when we feel like, oh, this is unjust, we want to fight.

And yet God says, oh, it's better to suffer that way. And I think it's beautiful worship unto the Lord. And I so appreciated Scott's, just the way that he qualified the section last week.

And today just carries over from that section. It's actually a two-parter. But I love that Scott reminded us that in terms of suffering, we probably have a qualitative difference in America in terms of our suffering for the gospel compared to many parts of the world.

[5 : 08] And I just, I think that's always important for us to sort of keep central in our minds and our hearts, not to minimize anything that anyone's going through here. But I think this is a word that often maybe hits harder in places where people are, they're losing their lives for identifying with Jesus. And yet, if we're called upon to suffer for identifying for Jesus, then maybe that's a very minimal level. Maybe it's just you're not included with a friend group. And you, your suffering is maybe a lot of loneliness because you're excluded or maybe you're maligned, you're made fun of.

But if called upon, what are the resources that we have to endure? And that's what Peter's going to talk about this morning. He's going to talk about the resources, primarily a central resource, but then I'm going to sneak in a few others. And I haven't even outlined this with numbers. So you're just going to, it's woven in. You got to really pay attention this morning. There's going to be a lot going on here. Thank you, Scott. Let me just read the passage for us. And it's going to be exciting. 1 Peter 3, 18 to 22. Peter writes, For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers, having been subjected to him. Okay. There's great simplicity, actually, in this passage, but there's also a fair bit of complexity. And what kills me about Peter is that he complained about

Paul being difficult to understand. And he says that in 2 Peter 3, 16. And then he writes this. Okay, I don't want us to lose the main thrust and the simplicity of the passage, as you begin to sort of like sputter mentally by some of the complexities. And there is much in here.

He talks about spirits in prison. What? Something about Noah. And then it sure sounds like baptism saves people. So we got our work cut out for us this morning. And I'm going to postpone the complexity as long as possible, but we're going to get there, church. So you might need to put a seatbelt on and we'll see how we do here. Okay. The main thrust, the main thing, the central resource that we have, as we have occasion to suffer, is right here at the beginning, verse 18. This is our central verse of this section. So let's read it again. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the Spirit. Because Jesus died in our place, making friendship with Holy God possible, we can face anything. That's the bottom line. That's the resource. You're suffering? You look to the cross.

God. The cross is a huge resource when the soul is in anguish. Because what it tells us is God already stepped in. That he has not abandoned you. God didn't avoid suffering. He didn't avert himself from it. He suffered at the hands of evil men. He didn't avoid it. He entered in. Our God is not some politician, celebrity, just virtue casting, but doing nothing. Our God stepped in to deal with our major, major, main problem, the fact that we're sinners. And death is on us. God stepped in.

[10 : 15] And I think people get angry with God, Christians get angry with God, as though he's somehow failed them. Or there's something deficient in his character because he didn't pull them out of the suffering.

And I want to be crystal clear this morning. There's nothing deficient in God's character. And when you wonder and you wrestle, you have to, as I do, have to run with total abandon to the cross.

Your soul is cast down this morning. Hope in the God who actually got his hands bloody on your behalf. Our salvation and the eternity of joy that awaits us for those in Christ, it was accomplished through the brutality of crucifixion. God stepped in. Amen?

And we have to go back to that often, which is why Jesus says, participate in communion often when you gather. To remember, I'm not far off. I already did the job. In fact, I said it's finished.

So we must not tamper or diminish the significance of what occurred that Friday afternoon 2,000 years ago. And by the way, there are deficient views of the crucifixion and Christ's resurrection of the cross that will not help you in suffering. Let me quickly just hit three ways that we can have a deficient view of the cross. Okay? First one is if we embrace Roman Catholic theology.

[12:01] Catholics get it wrong on this front. Their theology says that Jesus is actually not finished. The cross isn't finished. It's not a finished work. His death has to occur over and over again, which is what they do when they celebrate community. It's called mass. And the bread and the wine, it is somehow transmogrified into his actual body and blood. And so they believe. And so attending mass is fueled not by gratitude. It's actually fueled by fear that I don't quite have enough of God's grace.

I need more. I need more. Peter here clearly states, Christ suffered how many times? Once. He suffered once for sins. And I love how the writer of Hebrews puts it in Hebrews 10, 12. It says, But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

When do people sit down, church? When they're done. When the job's done. That's when you sit down. Friends, if you're in Christ, the job is done. You have been forgiven of sins past, present, future.

And it should not be based upon what we have done. And yet it is so. That's the goodness. That's the power. That's the joy of the cross.

That's why when we celebrate communion together, it's not a funeral. It is a time of celebration and thanksgiving for what has been accomplished on our behalf.

[13:58] And I love that. And I don't know if you notice, but your pastors do. Anytime we celebrate communion, there is like a qualitative upgrade in our worship after we get done participating.

Our elders see it. It's like, man, because it's a time of celebration and we're reminded, oh yes, we are forgiven. And it pours out in our adoration as it should be.

A second deficient view of the cross is, we could just say, Jewish theology. Ancient Jews had a very low view of the crucifixion. They saw it as something that actually denied the deity of Christ. Deuteronomy 21, 23 says, a hanged man is cursed by God. So they saw Jesus on a cross in large matter. They're thinking, man, this man is a blasphemer. He's paying the price for his false words. That's a false Messiah. I think they were in their mind going, how could the Messiah die and be crucified? I mean, I think actually Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1, 23 were quite incendiary, where he says, hey, I preach Christ, Messiah crucified, Christ crucified. He's preaching a crucified Messiah. And it says a stumbling block to Jews. Messiahs, Messiahs are great military leaders.

Messiahs, the word Messiah just means anointed one. They're deliverers. They're strong like King David. They liberate. They liberate. They don't suffer and die by crucifixion. That's a deficient view of the cross. And lastly, I would just say we'll call it exemplarism. Exemplarism theology. Example, like the cross is just an example for us. It's a good thing because it shows how committed Jesus was to his mission, but it's not a powerful thing. It simply shows us how to die as righteous people, right? No payments made. Jesus just, he was a noble man. You can follow his example. He believed this thing to the end, willing to give his very life for it. But this view, it delivers no hope in the midst of suffering because nothing actually supernatural occurred. Those are all deficient views. The correct view is this, that Jesus, his death was substitutionary in nature. It was substitutionary in nature. He died as a substitute for us. We could use the word vicarious, one in place of another.

I vicariously live through my son-in-laws. They do cool things. They like heal bodies and deliver babies and jump, one of them does, and another jumps out of planes and shoots rockets. And it's like, and I'm like, man, that's, that's, I do that too. But then I'm just behind my desk like this, looking at a screen. This is what I do all the way. I have to vicariously live through. Scott does too.

[17:26] We share, you know, one in place of another. Christ suffering his death, his victory, it's our victory. He did it in our place.

That's how it's a resource for suffering. His, his victory is ours. We know how the story ends. I mean, this is very different than rooting for your favorite sports team. I do that. But we're not adding anything. We, it doesn't, their victory is in ours. The Hawks won. It doesn't, you know what I did? I ate chips. That's how I helped them. It's not really my victory. Christ's death is our victory.

He did it in our place. And his victory assures ours as well. And really that's the whole flow of this passage, church, is that verse 18, suffering. And by the time we get to the end, verse 22, we see victory. Very different. Very good. Friends, we know how the story ends. We know that those in Christ, how does the story end? It doesn't. It actually never ends. It only gets better day after day after day in eternity. And it's not ethereal. It's not some weird like this, what is heaven? I don't know. I don't want to go. Sounds boring. It's not. Peter says in 2 Peter 3:13, according to his promise, we are waiting for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. A new earth. Earth 2.0. Righteousness dwells. And we have little like snapshots in this.

You know, it's like, if you've been to like the Grand Tetons and you're like, oh, that's beautiful. Or Yellowstone, you know. Or you've been to Banff. Or you're going. I want to go. And you're like, man, this is, it's like a snapshot. Those are still broken and fallen. And yet it's a glimmer. It's going to be better than that. It's earth 2.0. It's an improvement. And it's where righteousness dwells.

It will be so much more familiar than you think. I think we're going to experience eternity. We're like, we should have talked about this more. I get this. All right. I stalled as long as I could.

[20:08] In addition to the central resource of the cross, the fact that we're, we know how the story ends, we're promised heaven. See, I snuck that one in. Jesus did something else in history past to give us courage to endure in days of suffering until His return. And it is coupled with His finished work on the cross. It's a past event that we never consider. Why? Because it's complicated. It's confusing to both understand, believe, and explain. But I'm going to attempt. Here we go. Verse 19 and 20.

In which He, Jesus, went and proclaimed to the spirits of prison, because they formally did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight persons, were brought safely through the water. Okay, there is a lot of debate here, okay? On what Peter is referencing. It's so interesting to me, though, that he just referenced it as though those in the first century were like, yeah, oh yeah, yeah, we know. But for us, it's like, what? Let me say this. I am very comfortable with my understanding, my interpretation, but you are okay to disagree. This is not gospel. This is not a die or divide issue. I'm not alone.

Actually, Scott and myself are aligned in how we understand this passage. And so maybe that gives you, oh, okay, maybe there's credibility, but then you have to realize both of us are extraordinarily average, so you have to consider that too, okay? So we'll just see how this goes.

Why does Peter reference this past event, right, of Jesus proclaiming something to spirits in prison? Why does he reference this past event in this passage? And I think Peter puts this in as a preview.

It's like an appetizer to the main course. It's a preview, a promise of what to look forward to when the final judgment, when evil is vanquished forever. It's a preview.

[22:47] And I think there's great encouragement too when we actually remember that God's sovereign. We don't live in this dualistic reality of God and Satan being equals, okay?

The angelic realm, whether obedient to the Lord or fallen and existing as demons, that's a created part of the order, okay? And if I was Scott Liddell, Pastor Scott Liddell, I would pull out a box and I would open it and I'd say, Satan demons in the box, bam, okay?

So don't have this mindset of like, oh, it's Jesus and Satan and they're equals. They're not. Satan is a created being. So let's not inflate demons to a place they don't belong.

Now, let's answer the question. Who are the spirits in prison? Jesus went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison because they formerly did not obey when God's patience waited in the days of Noah.

Now, there are some that view these individuals as the unbelievers that were preached to in the days of Noah that just said, stick it in your beak, Noah, for 120 years.

[24:17] And so these are folks that rejected the offer of deliverance, offered to them. And so Peter is just saying, hey, these folks, they had the offer of deliverance, salvation, if you will, getting in the ark, and they said, we'll pass.

Now, I don't hold that view. I don't believe that those are the spirits in prison that Peter is writing about. This passage is actually a victory passage.

It's not an offer of salvation. Peter chooses words here where I think he's saying, hey, Jesus proclaimed victory. Proclaim Caruso to the spirits in prison.

He's not offering them good news. He's not preaching the good news, you angelizo. And so I think that's not who's being talked about. Then who are these incarcerated spirits?

I believe these are fallen angels, demons. And I believe these are demons that cohabitated with human women somehow.

[25:31] Again, I don't have all the answers here. Could it be that they possessed evil men? Perhaps. But these are demons who cohabitated with human women and were then sent to a holding tank, sequestered off until final judgment.

And I believe Peter here is referencing the occurrence mentioned in Genesis 6. And so we can turn there, Genesis 6, 1 through 4. And it says this, When man began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive, and they took as their wives any they chose.

Then the Lord said, My spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh. His days shall be 120 years. Verse 4. The Nephilim, or the giants, were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of man, and they bore children to them.

Again, these were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. Again, you don't have to hold this position, and we can still fellowship.

But who are the sons of God in this passage? There are two primary views. Okay? The first one I don't hold, but some would believe these individuals, described as the sons of men, are apostate Sethites, those from the line of Seth, the righteous line.

[27:14] And so according to this view, the sons of God were descendants of Seth, the godly line, who intermarried with depraved descendants of Cain, described here in this interpretation as the daughters of man.

The offspring of these intermingled marriages were said to be wicked tyrants. Now, problems with this position. Okay? This is a strange term to use for daughters of men if you're talking about daughters of Cain.

Why not just say the daughters of Cain? Additionally, this word, sons of God, it's absent in the Old Testament describing believers or followers of Yahweh.

Thirdly, this interpretation doesn't explain the outcome of these unions being Nephilim, being giants, mighty men, through simply religiously mixed marriages.

Now, the strength to that interpretation is the context and the contrast already laid out since Genesis chapter 4 of the godly line of Seth versus the line of Cain.

[28:28] I have friends that believe take that position and we will still go to Jimmy John's and eat sandwiches together. The second position are who are the sons of God from Genesis 6?

Angelic creatures. And this is the position that I hold and Scott. this is my best understanding of this passage. Sons of God were fallen angels who took on human bodies.

Somehow, we know in Scripture whenever you see angels they're always in the form of men. There's hold please.

There's one very obscure passage, okay, in Zechariah 5, 9 you can look up later that describes what looks to be angelic creatures that are female.

It may be a personification of wisdom but there is that one. But typically they show up in the appearance of men. At the grave of Jesus, right?

[29:39] The two visitors that come and visit Lot in Sodom, they appear to be just men. So, what are their capacities in terms of taking on like the actual form?

I don't know. And that's where I say the mysterious things belong to the Lord. I don't know. But I see these sons of God as fallen angels taking on human bodies to cohabit with women.

And the perversion was the intrusion or the invasion of the human race by fallen angels which resulted in the offspring which were monstrous giants.

the problems with this position let me give you a few even though I hold to it. There's no airtight position here friends.

But here's one of the problems. Matthew 22:30 says in the resurrection they, angels neither marry or are given in marriage or us but the angels they are like the angels in heaven.

[30:41] So, there's no marriage in heaven and we're like the angels. Okay? Angels don't marry. So, that's a problem. It's atypical. It's extraordinary. I don't think it says that this that would actually be maybe an argument for this that is so unusual.

Another problem first introduction of angels in scripture. It's a bit obscure. This would be our first introduction. Sons of God is only used of unfallen creatures in scripture other than here.

But the strength of this position is that the sons of God used exclusively in the Old Testament is of the angelic realm never of men.

Let me give you a couple examples. Job chapter 1 verse 6 it says this. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came among them.

It's speaking of the angelic realm. Job 2.1 Again, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan came among them to present himself before the Lord.

[31 : 54] I would say the strongest argument for this position actually is what we read in the New Testament. We always want to interpret the Old in light of the New.

A seminary professor said, hey, what was concealed in the Old is revealed in the New. And the New Testament makes reference of angelic sin corresponding to what we have read about in Genesis chapter 6.

Let me read a couple passages that reference this. It's in Jude 6. Chapter 1, there's only one chapter in Jude. So Jude verse 6 says, and the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

Oh, it sounds very much like Peter was talking about here. There's these angels, they didn't stay within their own position of authority, they left it, and now they're in eternal chains awaiting judgment.

Sounds very different than the demonic realm, the fact that we have a real adversary that roams about. This group, however, they're in chains.

[33 : 12] Peter talks, he likes this illustration so much he comes back to it in 2 Peter. 2 Peter 2 verse 4. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell, Tartaros, the bottomless pit, the deepest abyss of hell, he cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.

And then we also have the passage that we're looking at this morning here in 1 Peter 3. And by the way, 2 Peter, if you go on to the next verse there, verse 5, he references the days of Noah, as does Peter do in this passage in 1 Peter 3.

I would say additionally, this doesn't prove that that's the right interpretation, but here's a little bit more to consider. This view is not obscure. It was held since the days of antiquity.

Church fathers, Justin, Tertulli, and Ambrose, they all thought this was the correct understanding of this passage. I think this position actually explains to a degree the resultant unnatural race of giants and mighty men.

That's curious. That's very unusual. And yet if you have some sort of hybrid creature, man, angel, combo thing going on, hmm, maybe there's something to this.

[34 : 36] And I would say lastly, I think the severity of the judgment of a global flood, it sure sounds extreme. And I don't know if you've ever read your Bible and we know the flood story because we were taught it as children, but have you ever come to that and go, what?

Does God not know how bad things are today? Like, really? Only eight people? That's like the nuclear option.

That is extreme measures. And maybe that extreme measure indicates that the sin was something so unusual, so severely perverse of the natural order that God said, this is what has to happen.

Something has occurred to mar those created in my image. And I think it is very curious as we think about the first gospel promise in the Bible from Genesis 3.15, the proto-evangelium.

You can throw that around at meet and greets and you will sound pompous but educated. So it could go one of two ways. But it is a curious prophecy, right, that there will be a seed.

[35 : 58] from the woman, right? An offspring. And he will crush your head but you will bruise his heel. An offspring. So the fall of man, we're dealing with the correction of the fall of man and the way that God's going to handle it is an offspring's promise.

That is so odd. That's not how I would have done it. And so what has Satan's mission been since day one?

He knows the prophecy. Man, I've got to get rid of the Messiah. I've got to somehow undo the prophecy that there's an offspring promise. So what does he do?

Well, he worked through Pharaoh, if you recall. You know, in the days of Moses. Kill all the baby boys. Get rid of the Jewish people, the line through whom this Messiah will come.

Or how about Herod the Great? Jesus is born. Let's kill all the baby boys, two and under in Bethlehem. Get rid of this Messiah. And I just have to wonder if Satan has been at this even longer than that, that even in the days of Genesis, is he have this demonic agenda, I will pollute the seed.

[37 : 16] that no completely and uniquely human Messiah could ever be born. Things to consider.

There's a lot of questions that you have. I have them too. I don't have time to go into all of them. I know some of you are like, well, Jay, aren't like Nephilim giants after the flood?

Like, are you going to explain that? I'm not. Because I don't know how. I mean, I know, you know, what the spies saw in, is it number 13, 33? Like, yeah. I mean, they claimed to see, did they actually see giants?

We don't know. There's a lot there. You can email Scott and he will, he will explain it. Now, why do I like this interpretation?

And by the way, every time I come to this passage, especially in Genesis 6, I'm I always try to get out of that interpretation. I try. I can't. That's the best way I can understand it.

[38 : 21] But what I love about this interpretation, it actually reminds me that Satan's already defeated. Like, a portion of his forces, they're already incarcerated till judgment.

And I love that we have this. It's a down payment on what awaits the rest of the demonic realm. God. And when Jesus, between his death and resurrection, what was going on?

Well, he preached victory to these spirits. Right? Descended into the abyss and preached to these demons. And his message to them wasn't, hey guys, repent.

What was it? It was like, hey guys, game over. That's what it was. Game's over. It's like the second half hasn't even begun. I haven't even resurrected.

Game over. You've lost. And I love that. I'm about to resurrect from the grave. Pay attention. You've already lost. You've already lost.

[39 : 25] Friends, we can suffer and endure knowing the vilest adversary, Satan. He has no chance of victory. He has no chance.

Paul said it this way in Colossians 2.15. He disarmed the rulers, authorities, put them to open shame, triumphing over them in him. All right. Let's move on because we have another complicated thing to try to untangle.

Thank you, Peter. Finish up verses 21 and 22. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you. Not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers, having been subjected to him.

Now, Peter is reflecting back to the statement about Noah and the days of Noah. He says, which corresponds to this. He's talking about Noah and he's talking about the ark.

It was an instrument of salvation, deliverance from the flood. Salvation is a deliverance, but we're not saved through an ark.

[40 : 44] Okay? Spiritual, that saving in the days of Noah was not a salvation. It wasn't a spiritual salvation. It was a physical deliverance.

Peter transitions here to speak of now spiritual salvation. It's accomplished through what? The problem is he doesn't say through faith here, he says through what? He says through baptism.

And I think he's actually referencing water baptism here. Are we saved through water baptism? No. Okay? And what you do in light of difficult passages is you say, let's look at the rest, the whole of God's word.

And what does the breath say? Say, what does the whole of God's word say on this particular issue? The rest of scripture clearly teaches salvation is by grace alone through faith alone.

Water baptism is not the means of us being united with Christ. Faith is the means by which we are united to Christ and declared righteous. There's no better verse than Galatians 3.26 on this issue, which says, for Christ Jesus, you are all, you are all sons of God through what?

[41 : 57] Baptism? No. Through faith. Through faith. If salvation is through water baptism, why does Paul essentially sort of like promote, bragged in 1 Corinthians that he didn't baptize anyone?

He says in 1 Corinthians 1.17, Christ didn't send me to baptize. He sent me to preach the gospel. You remember the thief on the cross?

Was he baptized? No. Cried out to Jesus. It says, Jesus says, truly today I say to you, you'll be with me in paradise. Faith, belief, trust, all same words unite us to Christ.

Baptism symbolizes the union. And because in the New Testament, baptism typically occurred in concert with repentance, it's that sign, that symbol of beginning, it's often spoken of as the conversion process.

Friends, the wedding doesn't marry a couple. The vows spoken marry the couple. Even Peter, when he's talking about baptism here, he actually indicates that the power comes from faith.

[43 : 14] Okay? Not through the removal of dirt. He says that. Like, no, no, no, no. You're not saved through being washed in water, the removal of dirt.

He actually says that. You're saved through your appeal to God for a good conscience. What is an appeal to God for a good conscience?

It's faith crying out. We are united to Christ by faith. And I think it's a huge help or a huge grace in suffering is that now we have a good conscience.

We're clean. We have a new track record. That's a huge help in suffering. That there's no condemnation for those in Christ. Like, to know, even as we endure, whatever we endure in this life, that there's a day we will see holy God and he will say to us, you really were forgiven and you are forgiven and you're clean.

Well, I can endure things today knowing that that is so. As God looks at us through the blood of Christ, God says to us today, you're clean. You're clean.

[44 : 34] That is a resource in suffering, friends, more than you realize. And if you've ever lived with a guilty conscience, and you have before your trust in Christ, or if you've dabbled in sin as a believer and you've experienced some of that guilty conscience and then you get right, you're like, man, it's life.

It's the best. To know you're clean and to feel clean. It's a great resource as life is difficult. How much would you pay for a clean conscience?

You can't buy it. It's freely offered. And I think we can endure a tremendous amount of trial with the gift of a clean conscience. Knowing that God's wrath is no longer directed towards us.

And that real happiness, real joy, earth 2.0, righteousness dwells, God is present, that that awaits us, today we can endure.

Church, don't lose the simplicity of Peter's encouragement. And let me go back to our first verse, 1 Peter 3:18. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the spirit.

[45 : 49] Friends, that's joy. That's joy. I love this phrase. He brings us to God. We can't bring ourselves to God. That's the point.

Julie and myself went through this phase of watching every John Wayne movie ever produced. Like, it was like a whole thing when we were first married, and it was like kind of a hobby.

I think we've seen them all. But one stands above many of them, and it was remade in 2010, True Grit. And it was a fantastic film. I think Jeff Bridges does a wonderful job in the character of Rooster Cogburn.

But there's a great scene, the way this movie ends. Now, don't, don't, Jay, we were going to watch that movie tonight. No, you weren't. So I'm just going to tell you how it ends. Okay?

It's a wonderful scene because the protagonist, the young girl, Maddie Ross, this young teenage girl who finds a father figure in this old crusty, you know, U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn.

[46 : 53] At the end, she's, she gets, she's trying to avenge the death of her father, and Rooster kind of comes alongside, and then she gets bitten by a snake. And probably going to, you know, you get bit by a rattlesnake.

He has to get her to where she can get help. And Rooster does everything he can. He does everything. He rides, actually, his horse into the ground to bring Maddie. He's like, becomes this father figure to bring her into, to get her to the city, the town to where she could get help.

And then the horse goes down, and then he carries her for miles. And it's this wonderful scene of him just carrying this young, this young gal to safety. And it was, it was a feat that she couldn't do.

She couldn't do it on her own. It's a wonderful picture of the gospel. That's what Jesus did for us. Through his death, he carried us and brought us to the Father. And in that case, for Jesus, it cost him his life.

And the good news is, friends, today, he's alive. He's returning. I venture that he's returning sooner than we think. I don't have a date.

[48 : 00] How bad can things get, friends? And I think for God's people, unfading joy awaits. We have many resources, friends, as we suffer in this life.

Amen? Father, thank you for this word from Peter, even with some of the complexities. But Lord, thank you that you promised that we can endure.

We're not victims. We're more than conquerors. We're thankful that you suffered. That we could have new life. Lord, that we could be clean.

We could live with a good conscience. Lord, thank you that you've opened heaven's doors. That are home, that you're now preparing that place for us. Thank you for the down payment.

The demons know they've already lost. There's a portion of them that are already incarcerated. And we're on the winning side. Lord, would you encourage your people with these promises and with these resources today?

[49:01] And we will give you thanks. We pray all this for your glory alone, Jesus. Amen. Amen.