

# Courage in Christ's Victory

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good morning, church. It's good to see you this morning. Would you turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 18 through 22. We'll have it on the screen as I read it in just a minute, but let me encourage you to have it open as we walk through this text together. It's on page 955 in the Pew Bible, if you'd like to follow along there. If you're new to reading the Bible, the big numbers are the chapters and the small numbers are the verses. So 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 18 through 22. Actually, let me start reading in verse 17 so we can kind of catch the flow of Peter's thought. All right, let me read this for us, starting in verse 17.

For it's better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. 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. All right, let's pray. Father, help us to understand what on a first reading feels like a challenging text to understand, and help us not just to understand it, but to apply it to our lives today. Through your Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus, we ask this. Amen. Amen. So, I want to begin with a quote from Maya Angelou. Maya Angelou said, courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently. Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently.

This made me think of going to the climbing gym. If you've ever been climbing or gone to a climbing gym, you know that it takes kind of a fair number of skills, a fair number of virtues, as it were, to kind of work your way up the wall. But what can happen is that when you get pretty high up on the wall, is that you can get afraid. You're high up, you're stuck, and then your courage runs away. And then in the midst of the fear, it's like everything you knew, all the skills that you worked on, all the virtues just go out the window and you freeze. And maybe, maybe you even fall. And I think life can be like that. You know, we want to live a certain way. We want to be truthful, loving, honest, compassionate, bold. But when pressures or trials come, we get afraid. And then we freeze. And maybe we don't live the way that we set out to live.

We struggle to keep our grip on the wall. And maybe we even fall. And so, we need courage. Courage could just be one of the most important of all the virtues, because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently.

But, where does courage come from? How do we get it? Where do we get the confidence, the resolve, the grit to live how we know we should live? In particular, Peter, remember, is writing to Christians who are facing trials and suffering in their Christian life. More and more, they find themselves on the margins of society. Where do they get the courage to keep on following Christ, even and especially when it's hard, when it's against the grain, when it seems like you've got a lot to lose? Where do we get the courage to keep following Christ in the midst of suffering?

[ 4 : 1 3 ] Well, that's what 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 18 to 22, are all about. We're going to face trials and opposition and even suffering for our allegiance to Christ. And Peter says, here's where the courage comes from. Here's why and how you can stick with it, even when the fears and hardships come, even when you feel beleaguered and battered by a hostile world around you, when it feels like suffering and evil might have the last word. Peter says, take heart, Christian, in your suffering, have courage. Why? Have courage because Christ suffered for you and rose in victory.

Now, there are a lot of exegetical and interpretive tangles in the text before us, and we'll do our best to try to comb some of those tangles out as we go. But we don't want to miss the big idea of what Peter's saying here, and that big idea is clear. Christ died and rose again. He ascended in victory. He's seated at the Father's right hand with angels and authorities and power subjected to him. In other words, Christ has triumphed over evil. And if Christ has triumphed through suffering, then all those who are united to Christ, even though they suffer, will share his victory too.

His victory is our courage. So let's look a little closer at how Peter unpacks the victory of Christ in this passage so that we too might grow in courage. So first, Peter shows us Christ's victory over sin. Christ's victory over sin. This is verse 18. We see this right off the bat. Look again at verse 18. He says, 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. Now, as we saw, the immediate context of this verse is the suffering that Christians will face for their allegiance to Christ.

[ 6 : 16 ] And Peter wants us to not give up in the face of that suffering, but to keep bearing witness to Christ in gentleness and respect. But here in verse 18, he shows us how. He says, Christian, don't be afraid to suffer for doing good. Have courage. Why? Because Christ also suffered, he says. But Peter is saying more here than simply that Christ can sympathize with us in our suffering, although that is a great truth, right? But what Peter is saying here is something more. He's saying that Jesus came and did what no one else can do. He defeated our sin. Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous. Now, how is it that Christ's death can be effective to take away our sins?

That's what four sins means, after all, that Christ's death is a sin offering, paying the penalty for our sins. How can that be? How can the death of Jesus so long ago take away your sin and my sin?

Well, because it's as Peter says, it's because Christ is truly the righteous one. He was without sin, and therefore he had no guilt of his own to pay for. And so he could be the substitute for us, the unrighteous ones. On the cross, Jesus was enacting the great exchange. He, the righteous one, was standing in the place of the unrighteous ones, dying the death their sins deserved, so that we, the unrighteous ones, could come and stand in the place of the righteous one. Do you see?

The righteous for the unrighteous. Look at what Jesus's death accomplished. Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

I wonder if you've ever been invited to a party or an event of some kind, and you've just felt really out of place. You just, you look around at what the people are wearing or what they're talking about, and you just think, oh my goodness, I do not belong here. I am so out of place.

[ 8 : 25 ] Well, friends, the reality is, is that in the presence of a holy God, we don't belong there. None of us belong there. Not with all of our sin, not in the presence of God.

Psalms 15 talks about who, who can come into God's presence. David writes in Psalm 15, he says, O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? And then David says, he who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart, and who does not slander with his tongue, and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend, in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord, who swears to his own hurt and does not change, who does not put out his money at interest, and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. That's who gets to go to the party with God.

And you think, oh goodness, how can I possibly meet those standards? Not me, not you, but Christ can.

Christ is a righteous one, and he puts his arm around us, and he says, what's true of me is true of you now. Your sins have been paid for by my death, and your moral record has been filled out by my life, so now you do belong at the party. When the host of the party comes and says, no, no, no, you're with me.

You belong here now. Changes everything. Because of what Christ has done, you belong in the presence of God. He says, you're with me now. Once we were far off, but now we've been brought near by the blood of Christ.

[ 10 : 01 ] And then Peter says, did you notice this little word? Peter says, Christ died once. Once. Now we could preach a whole sermon on that word, because when Peter says once, he means that the death of Christ was so sufficient, so complete to cover all the sins of everyone who would ever repent and believe in him, that nothing ever, ever needs to be added or repeated to the work of Christ, to the death of Christ.

Christ died once for all time, and it's done. And what a great comfort that is when we face suffering and we need courage.

Because when we suffer, we can start to believe the lies that maybe we're suffering because God is angry at us.

Or maybe we're suffering because we've done something wrong. Or maybe we're suffering because God just doesn't care. But Peter speaks to our troubled hearts so in need of courage, he speaks this powerful word once.

Once. For all time, all your sins, past, present, and future, Christ suffered once. The righteous one for you, the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

[11:25] So if you are facing trials, Christian, know this and have courage. Christ has won the victory over your sin once and for all. In your suffering, God is not angry at you.

You haven't done something wrong as you face opposition and trial. No, Christ died for your sins. He's brought you to God. Have courage. But Christ's victory doesn't stop there.

After all, our trials and our suffering come, right, so often, because we live in a world that is so often hostile to God and God's people. So we need courage to face, we need courage in the face of this very real hostility.

And the longer you live in the world, the more you realize, as the Apostle Paul says, that our struggle isn't against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. In other words, there's a very real spiritual battle going on. Evil, you see, is, according to the Bible, evil sort of compounded in the world, right?

[12:32] Evil in the world isn't just sort of the individual moral choices of people, or what the Bible will call at times the flesh or our sinful nature. And evil in the world isn't just the structural or ingrained evil of cultures and societies, what the Bible sometimes calls the world.

Those two are very real, our individual choices and structural evil, both very real, both talked about in Scripture. But there's also a very real spiritual component to the evil that we experience.

That along with the world and along with the flesh, our sinful nature, along with corporate structural sin and personal individual sin, there's also cosmic hostility to God. Satan and his evil forces waging war against God and God's creation.

Now, I get it. A belief in demons can strike us modern people sometimes as a bit primitive, right?

Are we really going back there?

But, you know, when you think about it, is it really so hard to believe when you square up to the horrendous evil in the world, is it really so hard to believe that something like a force or a power exploits human sinfulness like a fan on the flame to make it all the more sinful and evil?

[13:50] How can we witness genocide or sex trafficking or how can we read the history of lynching in our own country and find it so hard to believe that evil is much deeper and greater and cosmic than the sum of its merely human parts?

It turns out the Bible isn't primitive or irrational in its account of evil, but actually more robust and more brutally honest than we moderns often ever dare to be.

But what Peter tells us here in our passage gives us courage. Gives us courage even in the face of evil spiritual forces. Why? Have courage, he says, because Christ has won the victory not just over sin, but over the spiritual forces of evil as well.

Let's pick up at the end of verse 18 and then read verse 19. Christ, Peter says, was 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.

Okay, now, verse 19 is perhaps one of the most difficult verses in the whole New Testament to interpret. The usually quite confident Martin Luther wrote when he was commenting on 1 Peter, he said, this is a strange text and certainly a more obscure passage than any other in the New Testament.

[15:17] I still don't know for sure what the apostle meant. There's Martin Luther on verse 19. Now, okay, we don't have time to dissect all the different interpretations of verse 19, but I want to briefly point out kind of the three most common approaches and then show you the one I think kind of makes the most sense within the context of the whole passage and we'll go from there.

But it is worth noting, you know, it's worth noting as we come to a tricky passage like this one that these hard-to-interpret passages in the New Testament are a good reminder to us to be humble before God's word and with one another.

I think sometimes God inspired passages like this to remind us that we don't know everything and there are some things that we simply won't figure out in this life. Ultimately, God is God and only He has perfect knowledge.

But, you know, I think these unclear passages also give us a richer appreciation of the fact that so much of the Bible is clear, that the main message of the Bible is something that all of us can hear and understand.

You know, so these handful of tricky passages like verse 19, they don't just keep us humble, they also remind us that God is so often so abundantly gracious to give us of a revelation of Himself that is much, much more often than not accessible and knowable.

[16:34] God isn't hiding from us. He wants us to know Him and love Him and trust Him through His word. So, anyway, so we're going to stay humble as we come to verse 19. And like I said, there are three main lines of interpretation.

None of them are without their difficulties. One, however, I think is pretty unlikely to be right. And the other two, I think, are more plausible. And I'll tell you which one of those two I think fits best with the details of the passage.

So, okay. So, the first interpretation of verse 19 that I think is pretty unlikely is that after Christ's death and before His resurrection, Jesus descends into hell and preaches to the spirits of those sinners who perished in the flood during the time of Noah.

Okay, that's kind of the first view. And that view was made popular by origin in the third century. Now, why do I think this view is the most unlikely one? Well, I think it's unlikely first because at the end of verse 18, Peter says that Jesus was put to death in the flesh and made alive in the Spirit. Or a better translation would be that He was made alive by the Spirit. Christ was made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit. And that verb, made alive, in the New Testament almost always refers to bodily resurrection.

[17:46] Okay? So, if verse 18 is talking about the bodily resurrection of Jesus, how after His death He was made alive by the Spirit, then verse 19 can't be talking about some activity that Jesus did between His death and resurrection, like descending to the dead.

Verse 19 is something Jesus does after His bodily resurrection, not before. Now, the other reason why I think verse 19 isn't talking about Jesus descending to sort of dead humans is because the phrase spirits in prison is a phrase that the New Testament never uses anywhere else to talk about deceased human souls in the afterlife or in hell.

Rather, the only spirits that are talked about as being bound in chains or thrown in prison are evil spirits awaiting God's judgment. Okay, so I think that first view that Jesus sort of descends to dead humans I think is pretty unlikely.

Two other views, though. And the second view I think is a bit more plausible. And this was put forward by Augustine, and then Aquinas kind of picked it up in the Middle Ages. And this view says that what Peter's talking about here is that Christ, through the Spirit, preached to the people who were alive in Noah's day, but who now, in Peter's day, are dead and in prison.

Right? So this view would take the end of verse 18 and 19 to say something essentially like Christ was made alive by the Spirit, and by that same Spirit, Christ went back in Noah's day to preach to the people who are now, in our day, spirits in prison.

[19:18] Okay? Now, like I said, that view's actually pretty plausible. After all, Peter says back in chapter 1, verse 11, that the Spirit of Christ was the one working through the prophets.

And in 2 Peter, Peter's second letter, chapter 2, verse 5, he calls Noah a preacher of righteousness. So it's not implausible to think that what Peter's doing here is saying Christ, through the Spirit, back in Noah's day, was preaching to those who are now dead.

Okay. That second view could work. But I think a third view is a bit simpler, and it makes a bit more sense of the overall flow of the passage. And this third view is the one that most New Testament scholars actually take today.

And that view says this, after Christ's bodily resurrection by the Spirit, as he ascended on high, he proclaimed his victory over the evil spirits that God had been restraining in judgment.

2 Peter 2, verse 4, and Jude 6 talk about fallen angels being kept in chains until the final judgment. And I think that's the sort of thing Peter has in mind here, that Christ, after his resurrection, ascending on high, proclaims his victory over even the cosmic forces in the world.

[20:28] Now, one question to ask of this view is that, is, is, in what way are these evil spirits that Jesus is apparently proclaiming his victory to connected to Noah's flood?

Peter makes that connection in verse 20. And what most commentators would point out is that, that many texts in Jewish, many Jewish texts in Peter's day would have read the Genesis account of the flood and the evil leading up to the flood as sort of involving the actions of evil spirits or fallen angels.

So that's why in Peter's mind there's this connection between Christ's triumph over the evil powers connecting that back to this particular episode of particular evil in human history in the flood. Now, like I said, none of these three readings is perfect.

You can be a member at Trinity and you can hold any of them if you want. That's totally fine, right? But, you know, no matter what we make of verse 19, when we look at the end of our passage at verse 22, we can be sure that no matter what verse 19 means, Peter's very sure that Christ in his ascension certainly triumphed over the evil forces of the world and put them in subjection.

Angels, authorities, powers, all of those things are describing that sort of cosmic rebellion that Christ has now put under his feet in his triumph, in his ascension. Now, do you see what this means for Christians who are facing suffering?

[ 21 : 56 ] It means that no matter what this world throws at Christians, no matter what the forces of evil might conspire against the church, they cannot and will not have the final word.

Christ has already proclaimed his victory over them when he ascended to the right hand of God. Yes, evil might still be active, evil might still be putting up a fight, but they're ultimately a defeated foe.

So this means that we need not shrink back from suffering when it comes. We can meet it with courage because we know that our enemy is a defeated foe.

I mean, isn't it our tendency to kind of avoid suffering at all costs? This is especially true for our culture and our time in history because our happiness so often is so wrapped up in the things of this life, right?

Our happiness is kind of wrapped up in material comforts or in physical or earthly pleasure. So suffering is something that we just try to avoid at all costs. But if we don't have the courage to face suffering, as Maya Angelou said, without courage, we can't do any of the other virtues consistently.

[ 23 : 07 ] We can't live with integrity or compassion or truthfulness or justice if we avoid suffering at all costs, right? I mean, look, if you're going to be someone who speaks the truth, if you're going to tell the truth, it's going to cost you at times in this world, isn't it?

If you're going to act with compassion, it's going to cost you at times in a fallen world. If you're going to do justice, it's going to cost you at times in a fallen world. Any virtue, any act of Christlikeness is going to bring on trial, suffering, hardship, so you have to be able to face it with courage and not just run away.

And if you see what Peter is saying here, that Christ has won the victory even over the evil powers in the universe, and through him we will share in that victory one day, well, then you've got it. Because if that's true of Christ, and if that's true of you in Christ, then ultimately suffering cannot take from you what is most important.

Whatever evil might befall you, Christ has conquered it and promised to make all things new, to restore 100-fold what you've lost. After all, what is loss of earthly reputation when the glory of heaven awaits?

[ 24 : 21 ] What is the loss of earthly wealth or comfort when the new creation beckons? What even is the loss of our life when God promises to raise us up again with Christ, imperishable, incorruptible in glory?

You see, even death has lost its sting in the victory of Christ's resurrection and ascension. You know the song we sing often at Trinity here, no guilt in life, no fear in death.

This is the power of Christ in me. From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny. No power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand till he returns or calls me home.

Here in the power of Christ I'll stand. That's what Peter is saying here. So we have courage. We have courage in Christ's victory, in his victory over sin and in his victory over evil.

But lastly, Peter is going to show us how we can have courage because of Christ's victory over judgment. Let's pick up where we left off in verse 20 and read through verse 21.

[ 25 : 28 ] 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.

Okay, so after Peter proclaims Christ's victory over evil forces, he remembers Noah saved through the waters of God's judgment. Now consider how similar Noah's story so often feels to the church's experience.

Think about it. Noah and his family were sort of a minority surrounded by a hostile world. Well man, that must have resonated a lot with Peter's audience. They felt like a minority in a hostile world.

Noah was righteous in the midst of a world that was kind of going its own way.

And Peter exhorts us to be righteous in the midst of unbelievers. Noah witnessed boldly to those around him by believing in God and building an ark, right?

And Peter's encouraging us to be bold witnesses for Christ. Noah realized that judgment was soon to come upon the world and Peter's been reminding us, right, that the day of the Lord is coming. God's judgment is also coming.

[ 26 : 41 ] At the time of Noah, God patiently waited for unbelievers to repent before his judgment came and so also now God patiently waits, holding out the forgiveness of sins to all who believe.

Noah was finally saved with a few others and Peter encourages us that though perhaps few, we too will certainly be saved. Now, what is it that assures us of this rescue, of this salvation?

Noah and his family entered the ark and God rescued them through the waters of judgment. But Peter says that was just a prefiguring. That was just a type of the greater rescue from judgment. Christ would go down into the judgment of death itself and would rise again victorious. But how do we participate in this great rescue from judgment?

How do we get into this even greater ark, as it were, of Christ's resurrection so that we might be carried safely through the waters of judgment? Peter says, here's how. Baptism.

[ 27 : 52 ] Now, what does Peter mean when he says baptism saves you? Is Peter denying that we're saved by faith alone? Well, no.

He's not denying that we're saved by faith alone. Clearly, in 1 Peter, we've read again and again and again that we are saved by obeying the gospel. That is, by repenting of our sins and by trusting in Christ alone as our Savior and as our Lord.

But, for Peter and for all the early Christians, conversion and baptism always went hand in hand. Let me give you an illustration.

In the church that I grew up in, there would be an invitation at the end of every service to receive Christ. Christ. So, anyone who wanted to become a Christian would be invited to walk down the aisle to the front of the sanctuary and the pastor would explain the gospel to them and they would be led through a prayer to receive Christ.

Now, this act of walking the aisle in some churches became so closely associated with conversion that when you ask someone if they had walked the aisle, right, what you were really asking them was had they come to faith in Christ?

[ 29 : 07 ] Were they converted? Were they born again? Right? So, walking the aisle became a way of talking about conversion because they were so closely associated, right? Walking the aisle was part of that conversion experience so the part was being used to refer to the whole.

Now, of course, walking the aisle in and of itself didn't literally save someone, right? But, if you had experienced conversion in that church and that church tradition, if you were indeed saved, you had most likely walked the aisle.

You see what I'm saying? Because the two went hand in hand. Now, I think something similar is going on in 1 Peter here. When Peter says baptism saves you, he's using baptism as a part to refer to the whole experience of conversion.

Because in the New Testament, conversion and baptism went hand in hand. If someone had placed their faith in Christ, they subsequently got baptized. A non-baptized Christian was practically an oxymoron, right?

It's a bit like a wedding ring if you think about it that way. In our culture, a couple says vows to each other, they exchange rings, the pastor pronounces them husband and wife. Now, do the rings make someone married?

[ 30 : 27 ] No, right? It's your public vows that make you married. But, wouldn't it be odd, in our culture anyway, if married people were walking around without wearing wedding rings?

Right? That would be kind of strange. Like, you're married, right? Yeah. Where's your ring? I left it at home. Why? Right? The two just always go together. That's my point. And it was the same for

conversion and baptism in the New Testament.

The two always went together. Now, I think we can know that we're on the right track here because of how Peter clarifies what he means in verse 21.

He says, baptism doesn't save you because it washes dirt off of your body. That is, baptism by its mere physical act isn't some magical thing that makes you a Christian.

Rather, baptism involves an appeal to God for a clean conscience. Baptism, in other words, is the outward symbol of the inward reality, the inward prayer of the heart to God asking God for the forgiveness of sins and a new heart, a clean conscience.

[ 31 : 38 ] In other words, baptism is the visible, physical expression of saving faith in the heart. And why is this faith expressed in baptism effective to save us?

because it is faith in the risen Lord Jesus. That's why. As Peter says, an appeal to God for a clean conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So then, baptism is the sort of visible, physical sign of our union with Christ through faith. And think about that. Just as through faith we have died and risen with Christ, so in baptism we go down into the water, symbolizing our death with Christ, and then we come up again, symbolizing our rising with Christ, out of judgment and death and into the new creation of his resurrection life.

So baptism then is for our comfort and strength and encouragement. It marks us as belonging to Christ visibly, publicly, It's like an ancient seal sort of stamping on us in a physical way saying all the promises that are ours through faith are true.

So friend, let me just say, if you've placed your faith in Christ and you've not been baptized, don't delay. Don't you see what comfort and what strength and what joy God holds out to you in this physical expression?

[ 33 : 14 ] Jesus commands you to be baptized, yes, but it's for your good so that you can experience this deep assurance that comes through having your union with Christ displayed in this beautiful way.

So if you'd like to be baptized, come talk to me right after the service and we'll discuss what the next steps are. You know, don't let the fear of getting up in front of people stop you. You know, that's what a lot of people think when they're like, I don't want to get baptized, I've got to get up there and give a speech, right?

But Jesus is going to be with you every step of the way. Now, if you have been baptized, what Peter's saying here is, look upon your baptism and all that it means and have courage.

Have courage even in suffering. Why? Because no matter what suffering comes our way, we've already been through the worst judgment and come out clean on the other side.

right? The world can throw its worst at us, but we've already died and come to life again in Christ. Just like Noah came through the flood and landed in a new creation.

[ 34 : 21 ] Our baptism proclaims that we've entered a new world, the new creation where Christ is king. Let the storms rage, Peter says. What can they do to us?

Can they take our lives? But our lives have already, our lives are already in the hands of another. We've already laid it down and Christ has taken it up again. The waters of baptism, the going down, and the coming up again have shown it to be true.

We are united to Christ, the victor. There's a great old Easter hymn that goes, Jesus lives and so shall I. Death thy sting is gone forever.

He who deigned for me to die lives the bands of death to sever. He shall raise me with the just. Jesus is my hope and trust. Jesus lives and reigns supreme and his kingdom still remaining.

I shall also be with him ever living, ever reigning. God has promised, be it must. Jesus is my hope and trust. Jesus lives and death is now, but my entrance into glory.

[ 35 : 28 ] Courage then, my soul, for thou hast a crown of life before thee. Thou shalt find thy hopes were just. Jesus is the Christian's trust.

Here's where we find courage, friends. Courage when sin and evil and judgment are looming.

Courage when trials and suffering mount. Jesus lives and so shall I.

God's word promises it. God's spirit seals it. Our baptism proclaims it. Jesus' suffering has led to victory. And so too shall ours.

Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we take a moment now to just pause and be quiet before you and pray that your spirit would come and impress again upon our minds and upon our hearts the great reality of Christ risen and reigning.

O Father, by your spirit, fill our hearts with the courage that comes from knowing that we are united to a risen Savior.

[ 36 : 40 ] We pray this in his name. Amen.