

**Date:** 30.08.2020

**Time:** 6pm

**Service taken by:** Rev Gavino Fioretti

**Psalm:** Psalm 45:6-9 (2nd version)

**Reading:** 1 Peter 3

**Text:** 1 Peter 3:18-22

**Outline: Four things about Christ**

a) Introduction

1. His sufferings

2. His proclamation

3. His ordinance

4. His glorification

### **Four things about Christ**

- **Introduction**

Martin Luther said this is the most difficult passage in the New Testament. We struggle to know the right interpretation of this passage. What does it mean that Jesus went and preached the gospel again to the spirits in prison? What does it mean when it says that baptism saves? Not all of our questions can be answered about this – we cannot fully understand. We don't want to be lost in the details, but we do want to see the importance of the teaching.

#### **1) His sufferings**

Christians suffer. Faithful believers may be oppressed by civil or working authorities, in their families. Often they suffer for righteousness' sake. Peter describes the sufferings of Jesus.

**Once and for all:** Jesus died once for sins. The high priest in the Old Testament had to keep offering sacrifices for sins, but with Jesus it's different – Christ suffered once for sins. He did all that was necessary to atone for our sins. His work is sufficient – once for sin. Jesus suffered once for sin and this is a great comfort for us – He did all that was necessary – we don't add anything to this; He's done everything.

**Vicarious:** He died on behalf of people. He was the substitute. The righteous died for the unrighteous. He was sinless, perfect and free from the curse of the law and sin, but He died on behalf of the unrighteous. He took our place. We deserve to suffer eternally and constantly for sin,

but Jesus took our place and He suffered for our sin. The only reason that we're going to Heaven is because Jesus died for us. The only grounds for us sitting at the Lord's table is because He took our place.

**Reconciling:** He died to bring us to God. We are brought together to God. The problem is that God is against us because of our sins. Because of Christ, God is not angry with us anymore. God is angry against those who reject Him and deny Him.

**Deadly:** The suffering of Christ was not just rejection, He experienced death. Jesus died. We've all experienced the damage and fear that death brings. Jesus experienced the meaning of death. He was One familiar with sorrow. He was the Holy One seeing the damage that sin had brought into the work of His hands. We all experience suffering, but none will suffer what Jesus suffered on our behalf because He has taken our place.

## **2) His proclamation**

Jesus was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Spirit, Jesus went and proclaimed to the spirits in the prison. There are 3 possible. Interpretations:

- Interpretation 1: As Jesus died, He went to Sheol and preached the gospel to those there, offering the way of salvation – This interpretation is unbiblical.
- Interpretation 2: This could be a reference to angels, especially those who follow Satan, turning against God. Why then is He referring to spirits in the days of Noah?
- Interpretation 3: The reformed interpretation is what happens here, happens in the Spirit. Behind the proclamation is Christ, through the Spirit proclaiming the gospel. It's a spiritual prison, a picture of the slavery that sin brings. Peter is saying that Christ in the Spirit, went and proclaimed to that generation in the days of Noah about salvation. It's Christ that anointed and equipped Noah to preach the way of salvation.

**Through God's servants:** Jesus proclaims His message through His servants. We see this through the prophets. Every preacher is preaching the will of God.

**Reveals God's patience:** Jesus' proclamation reveals the patience of God. There was 120 years before judgement came to the people in Noah's days. "In mercy's ground" is a beautiful expression. Every time the gospel is preached and people are called to turn to Him and find forgiveness, this is mercy. This world is not finished, Jesus has not returned because God is patient – all of His elect will be saved. God's patience is wonderful. God is long-suffering, slow to wrath, in mercy plenteous. He is patient. Christ's gospel reveals that patience to sinners.

## **3) His ordinance**

*Q. Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the water of rebirth and the washing away of sins?*

*A. God has good reason for these words. To begin with, God wants to teach us that the blood and Spirit of Christ take away our sins just as water removes dirt from the body. But more important, God*

*wants to assure us, by this divine pledge and sign, that we are as truly washed of our sins spiritually as our bodies are washed with water physically. (from the Heidelberg catechism).*

**Saves:** The Bible speaks of baptism as something that saves because it represents something that saves us. As water washes us and removes the dirt from us, the work of Christ and the Spirit's work in us removes sin. The water does not take away sin. The writer is speaking of what baptism represents saving us. We're not saved by baptism, but we are saved by what it represents.

**Appeal to God:** This could mean we pledge ourselves to be faithful to God and submit to His will. It could mean that it's not what we will do, but we're appealing to and trusting in God as the only One who can give us a good conscience. What baptism points to and represents is our dependence on God for a good conscience. It reminds us that we depend on God. We're appealing to God's grace and righteousness and trusting in Him. Baptism is not just a ritual, or an extended service – it's entering into the church of Jesus – it's the way that sinners are received into the kingdom of God. The grace of God is the only way to be accepted into the kingdom of God.

#### **4) His glorification**

**The resurrection:** The good conscience comes from the resurrection of Christ. He defeated sin and death once and for all. He is free from death, it could not hold Him. We are made alive with Him.

**The Ascension:** Jesus is in Heaven today. As the second Person in the trinity, He is omnipresent, everywhere. As the God-man, He is in Heaven. Imagine the joy in Heaven when the King returned home.

**The intercession:** He is at the right hand of God. The work is done. Death is defeated. The devil is defeated. Sin is defeated. He is interceding for us and pleading for us.

**The authority:** All other authorities, all angels, all powers are subjected to Him. Have we lost sight of who Jesus is? He is glorious. He is not in the manger, He is not on the cross. He is on the throne, King of kings and Lord of lords. He is all-glorious. He has the Name that is above all names – He has the Name of God. He is all-glorious and does whatsoever pleases Him. The days of humiliation are gone. Everyone obeys Him. We are serving a glorious Christ, not a defeated One. He has all things in His hands. Having Him on our side allows us to be more than conquerors in Him.