

SAVED BY CHRIST - 1 Peter 3:18-19

Feb. 21, 2021

As Christians we need to clearly understand the victory that God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit have given us. God has done so much for us, and He wants us to know we have this eternal victory, that we are saved and will be saved forever. And it's not just a victory over sin but a victory over death and all the spiritual enemies of God, over the devil and His demons. And 1 Pet. 3:18-22 explains this wonderful victory.

1 Peter 3:18. This is one of the best verses in the Bible about what Christ did for us. We talked about this last time, but because it's so important, I want to do a quick review.

1. This vs. connects us to vs. 17 which is about how we are to suffer for Christ. But vs. 18 tells us how Christ suffered for us by dying on the cross for our sins.
2. This talks about our sin and sin is our main problem, that which results in both physical and spiritual death. Ezek. 18:4. And this sin needs to be paid for, it needs to be punished.
3. Jesus Christ, as God and Man, could pay for our sins and did pay for our sins, when He suffered and died on the cross. And those who don't believe in Christ pay for their own sin by being eternally punished in hell.

4. A person's death results from his own sin, but Jesus died because He paid for our sins. His death was purposeful, meaningful, important, and necessary.

5. God predestined and planned in eternity past that His only begotten Son would come to this earth and die for us. Acts 2:23, Isaiah 53:10-12

6. Jesus knew that He would suffer and die for our sins, and He predicted this, and on numerous occasions He told this to His disciples. Matt. 16:21, 20:18-19

7. Jesus suffered and died for our sins. It says that Jesus was "*put to death in the flesh*" which means that He physically died for us. But it wasn't just that He physically died but that He also suffered for us and then physically died for us. And it was during that time when Jesus was on the cross that He was suffering and paying for our sins, for it was then that His Father poured out His wrath on Him and punished Him. Matt 27:46

8. Jesus Christ, the just, died for the unjust. Because Jesus was perfect, then He, and only He, could pay for our sins. And we were unjust meaning we were unrighteous, we were sinners, and we sinned a lot - in our thoughts, words and actions. And what Jesus did for us is called "*substitutionary atonement*" which means He took our place, and what He did was sufficient to pay for all our sins. 2 Cor. 5:21

- The result is that God declared us not guilty, He declared us righteous, and so now and forever we are perfectly holy in God's sight. Now that's a review from last week, but I want to share a few more things:

9. What Christ did on the cross, His suffering and death, was done because God is righteous, and He had to punish our sin that was placed on Christ, and it had to also be done to make us righteous, to make us holy, to enable us to have a relationship with Him, with One who is perfectly righteous. Rom. 3:21-26

- Christ's suffering and death than make us righteous, and it shows us that God is righteous, but it also shows His great love for us, and is the greatest demonstration of His love for us, which is why we have communion, for it reminds of His love for us. Rom. 5:8

- And we can say that Christ's justice and love met at the cross. The greatest act of justice was His greatest act of love, and it was for us, and for the glory of God. And the heart of the gospel then is what Christ did for us, in that He showed His love for us by dying for us.

10. Christ's work on the cross is complete. Right before Jesus physically died, He said, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30) which means that He completely finished paying for our sins, and there's nothing else He needs to do to pay for our sins, to atone for our sins, for He did it all on the cross. This also means there's nothing you need to do, for Christ did it all for us 2000 years ago when He died on the cross.

- This eliminates the idea, and really, the error, the false teaching, that says you need to do good works to be forgiven and get to heaven. Heb. 7:27; Heb. 9:11-12, 27-28; Heb. 10:11-12

11. The result of Christ's death is that we're now just, we're perfectly righteous, just like Christ is perfectly righteous. It also means that Christ could and did bring us to God, and presented us to Him as righteous. John 14:6, Eph. 2:18

- Now the result of Christ's death is more than just being righteous, it means we have eternal life, this wonderful and eternal relationship with God Himself. It means we're children of God, that we've been adopted into God's family, and that we are part of the church, that as Christians, we're all brothers and sisters. It also means we're reconciled, and redeemed, and that one day we'll be glorified. There is so much that happens when we are justified, when we're made righteous.

12. The result of Christ's death is that we have a meaningful and purposeful life, a reason for living. 1 Peter 1:18. It means that we have peace and joy. Rom. 5:1. It means we can be like Christ, in character that is. Gal. 5:22, Eph. 1:3

- Another result of Christ's death and resurrection is that the Lord is our Shepherd, and He is the Good Shepherd, the One who spiritually cares for us, feeds us, leads, guides us, and protects us as we go through life. Ps. 73:23-24

13. The suffering and death of Christ was the worst affliction, the greatest injustice ever on this earth, but it resulted in the greatest victory, the salvation of souls.

This is an example to us that our suffering, though it may be severe and unjust, usually results in a great victory, and great glory to God. 2 Cor. 4:17

14. Jesus Christ the just, died for you, the unjust. Jesus, the sinless, died for sinners, for you. More than anything else, what Christ did by dying and rising from the dead is the greatest way that God showed His love to you, and should motivate you to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. 1 John 4:19

Now we read that Christ was put to death, and that happened when He physically died. Then we read that He was made alive in the spirit, but it should say made alive in spirit. Now you have to understand that Jesus Christ is an eternal spirit, and His spirit never died. But when Christ was on the cross, He was temporarily separated from His Father in spirit, for they had no relationship at that time, for the Father was pouring out His wrath on His Son. But as soon as Christ finished paying for our sins, then Christ was made alive, not that His spirit came to life but that His spirit was reunited with His Father.

As soon as Jesus Christ physically died, He was reunited with His Father in His spirit. Jesus' spirit went straight to heaven to be with His Father. Can you imagine the reception Jesus received when He first arrived in heaven? That must've been quite the celebration with all the angels and saints. And Jesus had to have been glad and satisfied too. John 17:4 - Luke 23:42-43. There was this thief also dying on a cross, but he was spiritually saved before he physically died. But once this forgiven thief physically died, then his spirit went straight to heaven where he met up with Jesus.

1 Peter 3:19. Now we read about what Jesus did after He had been with His Father and other believers in heaven. We see that Jesus, in His spirit, went to an actual place, to this prison where He proclaimed, He heralded His victory to all these evil spirits. And this was before the resurrection, because He was in His spirit, and He had not yet received His new resurrected body. And Jesus had just defeated sin, and death, but He had also defeated the devil, and with that, all these evil spirits. And Jesus wanted them to know that He was the victor, the winner, the Lord and King over all, and over them as well. Col. 2:15

- And so Jesus, before the resurrection, went to this prison, and made this triumphant proclamation to all these evil spirits who were locked up there. 2 Peter 2:4, Rev. 9:1

1 Peter 3:20. Now what do we know about these evil spirits? From vs. 19, we know that these spirits, these evil spirits are in prison. When you read the gospels, you learn about these other spirits, these unbound spirits, and they were called demons, and they were "*freely*" roaming on this earth. And they're still roaming on this earth today. And no doubt they are helping promote all this increasing sin and evil going on. Job 1:7 - Mark 1:24. These demons knew they had nothing to do with Jesus, that they were on opposite sides. They also knew He was much more powerful, for Jesus had the power to destroy them. And they knew who He really was, that He was the Holy One of God. - Luke 4:41 expands on this, for it says these demons knew He was the Son of God, that He was the Christ, the One anointed and selected by God to be on the earth.

Luke 8:26-31. This tells us more about these unbound spirits, these demons who were on earth in Jesus' time, and as I said, are still on the earth today. We see that these demons seized and possessed people, and had power over these people, and made these people do many strange and evil things. We see that a person can be possessed by many demons at one time. And again, we see that these demons, these spirits recognize Jesus, and they know that He's the Son of God. And they know they have nothing in common with Him.

And they know Jesus can torment them, can torture them, can punish them, and they beg Jesus not to do this. And specifically, they're begging Jesus not to cast them into the abyss, which is this prison we're talking about in 1 Pet. 3:19-20. And so there are spirits who are bound, who are now in prison, and there are spirits who are unbound, who have freedom, who are free to roam on this earth, but it's limited, for God is sovereign over them. 1 Tim. 4:1

Eph. 6:10-13. As Christians we struggle, and our struggle is not just against flesh and blood, but against demonic forces, unbound spirit forces that work with Satan in controlling this world system, this world system that is opposed to us. And so these devilish and demonic forces are against us, are strongly opposed to us.

- And these forces are spiritual forces, and we cannot see them.
- They're ruling forces, for they have their territory they rule over, and other evil spirits they rule over. That is, there is an organized army of evil spirits. Dan. 10:10-21
- They are powerful forces, for they have much more power than any of us. Ps. 18:17
- They are world forces for they are all over the world, and influence the entire world.
- They are dark and wicked forces, for they are very evil and sinful beings, and they are intent on doing evil, are determined to carry out the devil's work on this earth.

But we are not to be afraid of them. We're to be strong in the Lord, and as we're strong in the Lord and the strength of His might, and as we put on the on the full armor of God, we can defeat them and get the victory over them. And it's not like we get up in the morning and think about what demons we are going to fight. That's not the way to think, and it's not the way I think. You just get up and think about living for the Lord and serving Him and fighting for Him, and along the way, and unbeknownst to you, you will be defeating the enemy spirits.

- You need to be filled up with God's word, and God's Spirit, and you need to pray, you need to put on the full armor of God, and you are to be obedient, and He will lead you in the way you should go, and give you the victory. 1 Cor. 15:58, 2 Cor. 2:14

But let me say again, these evil spirits I have been talking about are the unbound spirits, and are ones who are now actively working with the devil in this world. But 1 Peter 3 is talking about the bound spirits, the spirits now in prison, the spirits Jesus proclaimed His victory to, which we will talk more about next week. 1 John 4:1-6, 5:18-19