



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Peter 3: 18-22

Fall 2024

"Triumph in Suffering"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and that was a great text to introduce our passage this morning, which is 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 18 through 22. It is an interesting passage, a rather difficult passage in some ways, but one of the things that's very clear from verse 18, is that the work of atonement, the work on the cross, is a finished work. As the author of Hebrews pointed out, 'He sat down', and, 'He has finished the work of sacrifice and atonement for us'. Salvation is complete.

Well, that's one of the main points that we will consider this morning in our text. We'll begin with verse 18,

¹⁸ For Christ also died for sins once for all...(*underline those words, 'once for all!'*), *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; (*This is the way I take that verse: Some of you may have the New International Version which says, "in the Spirit," and 'Spirit' is capitalized, understanding that as 'the Holy Spirit'. Generally, in the New Testament it's God the Father who raised Him from the dead; and I think what Peter's referring to here is that the human spirit of Christ was raised; and in that capacity had the ministry that he then goes on to describe in verse 19), in the spirit;* ¹⁹ in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, ²⁰ who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were

brought safely through *the* water. ²¹ Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

1 Peter 3: 18-22

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Father, again what a great privilege it is to be with Your people on a Sunday morning reading the Word of God, the inerrant Word of God, Your revelation to us, and to read of what Your Son did for us and the effect that that should have upon us now that we have put our faith in Him and are Your children. —The encouragement that should give us as we live out our lives in a hostile world, hostile in so many different ways, the world that these ancient saints were living in, a world of persecution. Their life was much more difficult than ours is, but our lives may become difficult in the future; we don't know.

But our strength will be in what Christ has done for us, and we will strengthen our souls as we consider what He did for us, and live in light of it—and so may that be the effect of our time together. Apply this to our hearts, LORD; help us to understand the greatness of His work for us and live in light of that and rejoice in it with confidence and courage. So bless us spiritually, LORD, build us up on the faith.

And bless us materially, as well. We have needs. We face difficulties. Some have come out of difficult surgeries. We pray for them.

And now, LORD, prepare our hearts as we sing our next hymn, and then turn our attention to this great passage of Scripture. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) Something we find in the great cities and capitals of the world are monuments. Go to Washington DC and you see them everywhere. They honor a nation's heroes and remind us that we are capable of victories and inspire the courage to sacrifice for those victories.

In London, one of the great monuments is Trafalgar Square, a plaza that commemorates the 'Battle of Trafalgar' and the victory England won at sea during the Napoleonic wars. Admiral Horatio Nelson commanded the fleet from his ship, HMS Victory. And at the top of a tall Corinthian column in the square is a statue of the admiral, with his missing arm, looking out over London.

The church has its monument to history's greatest triumph,
"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering over the wrecks of time;"
as the hymn writer, (*Sir John Bowring*), put it. A reminder of God's victory over sin, death, and the devil; and a reminder of what the church is capable of in this world at war with us.

Our connection to Christ guarantees us victory, and the defeat of our enemies. Peter gave that reminder to a world weary group of saints when he wrote of the cross and explained Christ's sacrifice in our passage, 1 Peter 3, verses 18 through 22; a passage written to encourage and give courage to a people worn down by persecution.

Suffering is a major subject of this book. From beginning to end we read of their troubles, their various trials, and their "fiery ordeal". (2Pet 4:12). All through the book, Peter gives perspective and encouragement.

Suffering is not without purpose. It tests and it proves the reality of a person's faith. It is the *means* of producing maturity in us. God is in control of it, and can even use the saints' response to persecution, and to suffering of all kinds, in trials of all kind, to bring others to faith in Christ.

In the second century the North African apologist and theologian, Tertullian, wrote that, "When rulers try to destroy the church, it only causes the church to grow. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.", he said.

None of this suggests that persecution and suffering are desirable. No one courts it, no one seeks it—at least no one in his or her right mind. But when the church is active, when the church is alive and healthy, persecution and hardship will come. So Peter wrote to give weary saints understanding and encouragement.

There is purpose in suffering—and reward; and we also have an example to follow. That's what Peter gives us here in chapter 3, verses 18 through 22: The best example—the example of Christ. Peter had just explained in verse 17 that Christians can suffer justly, deservedly, (that's not good); and they can suffer unjustly, (for doing right), "for the sake of righteousness." (vs13). And that's how saints should suffer.

That's how Christ suffered, 'the just for the unjust'; and His suffering had a great benefit for others. It's how our passage begins in verse 18, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; ¹⁹ in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, ²⁰ who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water."

That is an important explanation of the death of Christ, and specifically important here because it shows, in the greatest way, the purpose of suffering: It's a *means* of bringing people to God. —It is the *means* of bringing them to God.

But also, as Edwin Blum wrote, "This section contains some of the most difficult exegetical problems in the New Testament." —And so I get to solve them all for you. *[Laughter]* Now that's the reality when you preach through the Bible, and when you go through it book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, you come to these kinds of passages that are difficult.

And yet they're for us to understand and we do our best to explain them. And so we read this and we wonder, 'Who in prison did Christ preach to?' And, 'Where and when did He preach?' Well, 'without getting into the weeds', so to speak, (and we could easily get into the weeds on this), I'll give a quick summary of various views, and then give my view.

One interpretation is that Christ preached in the time of Noah, either in a preexistent state, (He came and appeared and you have these Theophanies throughout the Old Testament), or He preached spiritually through Noah; and in 2 Peter chapter 2, verse 5, Noah is called "a preacher of righteousness".

A second interpretation is that, in-between His death and resurrection, those three days, Christ visited Sheol, the realm of the dead, and he preached to Noah's unbelieving contemporaries.

A third interpretation, (which I hold), is that after His death He made a declaration of victory to, 'the disobedient spirits', (the fallen angels), (*verses 19&20*), either before the resurrection or during His ascension.

The word, "spirit", here in verse 19, "the *spirits* now in prison", is used of angels, (good and bad angels), but here it's the bad angels. And this also has support from other passages of Scripture, in fact numerous ones. It's not just from this text that we come to this position, but in 2 Peter chapter 2, verse 4, for example, the apostle wrote of disobedient angels that God, "cast into hell...to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment." And there they are kept for the last judgment.

In Jude 6, Jude wrote of, "angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He, (*God*), has kept them in eternal bonds, under darkness, for the judgment of the great day."

There's reference here, in verse 20, to Noah; and that reference connects the angels to those who were disobedient in Genesis chapter 6, verses 1 through 4, and the incident of "the sons of God" and "the daughters of men"; that term, "sons of God", always refers to angelic beings. It's not used very often, but it is used in the Book of Job and it speaks of angels.

This was a satanic attempt to destroy God's plan of salvation by polluting the righteous line of Seth to prevent the Savior from coming into the world. And there were more attempts than that. The result of the intermarriage between angelic beings and women was a corruption of the human race—and a great outbreak of sin which resulted in the judgment of the flood. As a consequence, those specific fallen angels were put in “prison”, (vs19), or, “the pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.” (2 Pet 2:4).

Then, following the crucifixion Christ, “made proclamation to them”. (vs19). He didn't proclaim the Gospel to them; He didn't go ‘into this prison’, as it were, and preach the Gospel. The word, “*proclaim*”, here is used of that—but not exclusively, it's also used with a neutral meaning of, ‘making an announcement’, like a herald would come and announce a proclamation that the king had made. The announcement here, that Christ made to these fallen angels, was of the news of, ‘His victory on the cross, and their utter defeat.’ Christ's suffering on the cross was the fatal blow to Satan and his hosts.

So that's one of the difficulties of this passage. But the main meaning and purpose of it is clear: And that is, ‘The death Christ died, unjustly, but victoriously, saved the lost and brought them to God.’ And by application, Christ's example should give confidence to weary saints in persecution to endure unjust suffering for the salvation of others.

Of course, the correspondence between Christ's suffering and our suffering is not equal—it's not the same. Our example in persecution, (or difficulties of whatever kind they may be), can lead people to salvation. —But His death actually saves souls; and our difficulties and perseverance does not. He brought them to salvation when He was put up upon the cross, when He was set forth as a substitute for us. We can't do that; we can't bear God's wrath for another. That is the unique work of Christ as our Savior. And that's what Peter explains here so clearly in verse 18. He began, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust...”. And, “...once for all”, is not ‘once for all people’, but ‘once for all time’. In other words, ‘His death was the *final* sacrifice.’

Now see that in the context of history, the history of Israel for centuries: For a millennium and a half, Israel offered sacrifices; the goats, and lambs, and doves; morning and evening they offered sacrifices. And on the High Holy Days, the special days, Yom Kippur and Passover, sacrifices were offered on the altar...blood flowed daily. The altar was at the center of Israel's religion—but it was temporary. As Hebrews chapter 10, verse 4, states, "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin."

Only a man can represent mankind; only a human being can be substitute for humans. And we need a man who is more than a man, more than human—a man who is both God and man.

But animal sacrifices could picture what the Savior would do when He came. And that's what they were intended to do: To teach Israel the way of salvation, to teach Israel how salvation would come to them. So daily, weekly, year in, year out, the nation was taught that *the shedding of blood* is necessary, essential for forgiveness. (see Heb 9:22).

Then, as Paul wrote in Galatians chapter 4, verse 4, "When the fullness of the time came...", (that is, when the Law had served its function, its purpose of preparing the nation for the coming of the Savior), "... God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law...". Its purpose was, "...so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." (Gal 4:5).

He *bought* His people; He *redeemed* them from the Law's condemnation. That's what Peter meant by stating, "Christ died for sins." (vs18). He paid the penalty for our sins; He paid our debt to justice, to God's righteousness, because we could not pay it. That's made more obvious in his statement, "the just for the unjust". (vs18). The sinless Savior for sinners, dying in their place. And He could do that because He was sinless. And He did that because He loved us with an unspeakable, unimaginable love. —'The sinless One for the sinners!'

He had no guilt of His own to pay for. That's essential in the atonement; otherwise, He could not pay for anyone else's sins. But He had none of His own to pay for, so He could be our substitute, bearing our punishment so that we would escape that awful punishment. That was the Father's purpose in sending forth His eternal Son from heaven.

And it is accomplished; it is finished; nothing more can be done. His death was once for all, the last sacrifice of all sacrifices.

And the proof of that is the resurrection. That's Peter's meaning here where he wrote in verse 18, "...put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (in His human spirit). Physically and immaterially, the body and soul of our Lord was raised from the dead. He was raised, body and soul, made alive in His human body and His human nature. In 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16, Paul wrote that, He was "...vindicated in the spirit." Condemned as a criminal on the cross, but vindicated as innocent in the resurrection.

And it was the proof that God the Father, accepted His Son's sacrifice. That's the historical proof that the work of Christ is complete—and perfectly, completely, accepted by God. Therefore, it is the last sacrifice.

And so in that new life, resurrection life, Peter wrote in verse 19 that, "...He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison..." His victory was not only over sin, and death, and the grave, but over the spiritual realm as well—over Satan and his demons, the forces of evil in this world. And in His resurrection He went to them, (to the fallen angels), and He '*proclaimed*' His victory—and their doom.

The cross of Christ is the fulfillment of the oldest prophecy in the Bible, (in Genesis 3:15), that promised that He would 'crush the head' of the serpent. And He did that at Calvary; He delivered the death blow to the one who inspired that serpent, Satan himself.

These two verses give *crucial theology*. (verses 18&19). It's very important that we understand theology and the doctrines of the faith; and we have a clear explanation

of the work of Christ on the cross in the atonement. These verses, as I say, give *crucial theology*—not though, to teach us theology, but to encourage the saints by showing from Christ that through suffering, we too have victory over the enemy, and win souls.

And the fact that Christ has already won the victory for us is an incentive to weary saints to, 'keep on in the struggle, to persevere, knowing that we will prevail.' "We are more than conquerors", as Paul wrote in Romans 8, verse 37. Why? Because we're so strong and we're so brave and we're so valiant? No. That enters into it, I think, but only because of what Christ has done. He has made us victorious. That's what Peter encouraged here: 'Encouraging perseverance'—'courageing courage.'

Now, the fallen angels to whom Christ proclaimed victory, fell during the days of Noah according to verse 20. So again, this associated them with Genesis chapter 6, verses 1 through 4, and the flood. And that leads to another example of salvation: That of Noah's ark, which Peter saw as an illustration of the salvation Christ obtained for us on the cross, and from the last judgment that will come on this world.

'The ark that saved a few people, eight, "through the water", (vs20), of judgment', is a picture of, *salvation that is possible only in Christ*. Peter makes the connection in verse 21 by showing a correspondence between Noah's rescue and our salvation. Noah was, 'saved through water'; we are saved through baptism. That's what Peter said, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you..." (vs21). Baptism in the early church was clearly by immersion; not sprinkling, otherwise the analogy wouldn't hold up. That seems clear enough.

What isn't so clear is the meaning of, "baptism now saves you". (ibid.). Is Peter actually saying that a person is 'Saved by being baptized in water; that water baptism is necessary for salvation; that H₂O washes away our guilt and our sin?' Well there are churches that advocate that— advocate salvation by *faith plus ceremony*.

We know that's wrong from the preponderance of Scripture that clearly teaches that salvation is through faith alone—not *because* of faith. Salvation is *because* of the

work of Christ on the cross; but through faith we receive the blessings of it. Faith alone is how we receive it.

And that's the value of theology—it guards us from error. There are many texts of Scripture that seem, in isolation, to contradict some of the basic things that we believe. But we must bring theology to bear on all of it; and the idea of 'salvation by baptism', or any 'ceremony', (what is called '*sacerdotalism*', salvation by sacrament), is utterly contrary to Scripture.

Our whole passage demonstrated the error of it: Verse 18, "Christ also died for sins once for all." He finished the work of salvation on the cross. It is complete. It was complete when He said, "It is finished." (Jn 19:30). And God ratified that in the resurrection. Nothing can be added to what Christ did. And to think we can add something, or should add something to it, is absolute arrogance.

But even apart from that, and sound theology, Peter himself makes it clear that it did not mean, 'salvation is by water baptism' when he stated, "...not the removal of dirt from the flesh..." (vs21). In other words, he's not referring to the *ordinance* of baptism, but to what is '*pictured*' in baptism—the truth that is illustrated by going down under the water and coming up out of it. The eight persons in the ark, 'passed safely through the flood waters of judgment'—and baptism represents a person in Christ, 'passing safely through the judgment on sin.'

It's the idea Paul gave in Romans chapter 6, verse 4. I think you must understand baptism by immersion to understand his analogy, but he writes there, "...we have been buried with Him...", (with Christ), "...through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead...so we too might walk in newness of life."

Peter was explaining that, 'the water of baptism' is like, 'the waters of judgment', 'like the waters of the flood' —judgment that we all deserve because of our sin and our guilt. But just as those eight souls were kept safe in the ark as it passed through the flood, so too, we were kept safe in Christ, 'as He passed through God's judgment' on our sin. It fell on Him, not on us. As a result we pass from the old life of sin into a new life of

righteousness, much like Noah traveled from the corrupt old world into a new world that was washed clean by the flood. That's what Peter meant by, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you..." (vs21). It's not a *rite* 'of ordinance', 'of water baptism'—but what it *represents*, what it *pictures*.

Wayne Grudem paraphrased the verse, "Baptism now saves you, not the outward, physical ceremony of baptism, but the inward, spiritual reality which baptism represents. So", (as he says,) "Peter guards against any magical view of baptism, which would attribute saving power to the physical ceremony itself."

"...not the removal of dirt from the flesh..." (vs21), Peter said. It's 'not the ceremony of baptism.' Paul made it clear, in the Book of Galatians, that salvation is by faith alone. Not faith plus works, or some sacrament, or ceremony, (whether it is circumcision or baptism or the Lord's Supper). That is a complete confusion of the Gospel with error. That's mixing truth with error, which Paul calls a "...a different gospel—which is not a gospel at all". It's a false gospel. (Gal 1: 6-7).

That's made clear in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, where Paul recounted his ministry there and said that he, 'baptized only a few of the Corinthians'. Then he said in verse 17, "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..." Well obviously then, 'baptism' is not part of the Gospel and not necessary for salvation, or Paul would have preached it. He came to preach the Gospel—not baptize. So the two are not coexistent, not part of the same Gospel.

Now, having said that, don't misunderstand what I'm saying: Baptism is necessary; it's necessary as a public witness to God's grace in the cross of Christ. We are to be baptized—but it doesn't save us. The saved are to be baptized and *proclaim* through that ceremony, that ordinance, that they have identified with Christ and they are a new creature in Him. The act of baptism is a demonstration of the spiritual truth that we have been joined to Christ—joined to His death, burial, and resurrection; and like the ark, He has brought us through judgment to new life. And therefore, we are to live that new life. And that new life is expressed in faith and obedience in what Peter

here refers to as, "...an appeal to God for a good conscience..." (vs21b). That desire is what the saint expresses when being baptized.

Now that is what Christ accomplished when He suffered on the cross unjustly. He obtained salvation and righteousness for His people—for all believers. And we have that at the moment of faith—and we'll always have it. And because He is alive, because He is resurrected, He can grant our requests and give us a good conscience—give the believer power and victory over sin, and victory over all of the Lord's enemies, over the suffering and the trials that we may go through, the difficulties of life, or the opponents that we face. He's sufficient for all of that.

But He has not only just, 'left the grave.' Having defeated death, 'He has gone into heaven.' (vs22). Having conquered the angelic beings He is now at God's right hand, the place of power and authority, as the eternal Son of God—"the Logos", (as John describes Him in John chapter 1)—and He had, from all eternity, this power and this authority.

But He returned, (following the victory at Calvary and the resurrection), to receive glory as the God-man—glory as the Savior. He can only be the Savior by becoming a man to represent us. And so that victorious return to heaven is as the God-man—and He has been installed as the king to come.

As the eternal Son of God from all eternity, He had that authority; but now He is there enthroned as a man in heaven for us—One who is not only ruling, but is praying for us, and interceding as our priest who has experienced the things that we experience.

It's a fulfillment of Psalm 110, verse 1, "The LORD says to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.' " That's happening now: He's there in heaven, and the Triune God is defeating our enemies, now. And His power works for us because His victory is our victory. We are His people; we are connected to Him and to His sacrifice; and He's already gained the victory for us.

At the end of John 16, verse 33, He told His disciples, (gave them a forewarning of what was to come), He said, "...in the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." Therefore, as the psalmist said in Psalm 118, verse 6, "The LORD is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?" All the powers of the universe, of nature, of men and angels, are under His control.

What can man do to me? Well, the reality is, they can do a lot to me. They had done a lot of terrible things to God's people, but all of that is under the sovereign control of God. So, when trials come, and suffering and persecution for the truth and righteousness come, we are to trust in Him and respond as Jesus did; He's our example. 'We follow in His steps'; that's what Peter told us earlier in chapter 2, verse 21.

Noah is also an example for us. We are like him, God's representative on this earth. He lived in a wicked world, as the saints in Peter's day did, (and as we do). But in fact, the world in Noah's day was really worse than what we experience; so we can look at him and say, 'Well, if he did that, it's possible for us to persevere as well.'

Noah's world experienced an angelic invasion, producing the Nephilim, a race of giants. Moses called them, "the mighty men which were of old, men of renown." (Gen 6:4). They may have been warrior kings who caused corruption in the race, and filled the earth with violence. Moses wrote that, "...the wickedness of man was great on the earth, so much so, that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen 6:5).

That's fallen man. It was unprecedented evil. God saw it and He said that He, "...was sorry He had made man..." (Gen 6:6). The race was so polluted that the only solution was to wipe it out with the flood.

The only exception was Noah. He alone found favor with the LORD. He began building the ark at God's instruction; and while building, he preached to his generation. No one responded.

The population of the earth was large. What I've read, it was in the millions; some say perhaps billions of people. That's an estimate, and that's speculation, but the world was full of people at that time, and Noah preached righteousness to them for

120 years. But none believed in the coming judgment—and not one soul was saved. Maybe people mocked him, maybe people just ignored him. Probably both; that's the way they respond today.

Still, year after year Noah persevered as God's witness—and he was rewarded for that. He and his family entered the ark, and the LORD closed it up behind him. Then the flood came and the antediluvian world was washed away, while the eight souls floated safely on the sea. Our faith will be tested in this life, but rewarded for faithful service—and their reward is great, and the reward is eternal.

Here, in our text, it applies specifically to persecution—but saints suffer *various* trials. All are opportunities for a witness to others as they see our faithfulness—through the sickness we may have, or through the sorrow that we may experience and the grace of God in our lives; that's a witness, and it wins people to the Gospel. It's a *means* of God bringing people to the Gospel. That's the challenge, and that's how we're to live.

Admiral Nelson was famous for his boldness and courage in battle. He lost his right arm in the battle of Santa Cruz, and he lost his life in the battle of Trafalgar. When he died on the deck of his ship, HMS Victory, his last words were, "Thank God I did my duty." And England honored him as one of its greatest heroes.

Our lives are less dramatic, but the spiritual battles we fight every day and the suffering some of us must endure are just as real, and often just as physical—and in them, we have a duty to perform. Yet, more than a duty; perseverance and faithfulness is a *privilege* given to us: We are given the opportunity to suffer for righteousness and glorify God with our words and our conduct—and maybe, through all of that, lead some to Christ.

So, to cultivate the courage to suffer, and the willingness to sacrifice for Christ, and the truth to endure righteously, we need to reflect on Christ's suffering and sacrifice for us. Reflect on the lives of the saints who've gone before us as well, as Hebrews 11 invites us to do.

But most importantly: Think about, reflect deeply upon, the person and work of Christ and what He sacrificed for us: The righteous for the unrighteous, the sinless for the sinner, we who deserve nothing but judgment, He came and took it for us. That should encourage us to serve Him faithfully—as Peter has explained it here. And when we do that we do the greatest act of service that can be rendered in this world for the world.

When we do that, though, the world won't honor us. It won't give us a statue in a great city, or bury us in St. Paul's Cathedral. It won't even notice us. —But God will. We will have, 'followed in His Son's footsteps'. And when you enter heaven, heaven will ring with shouts of hallelujah and there will be crowns for you, glorious crowns.

Then, we will know what Paul knew, "...that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Rom 8:18). And may God help us to learn from Christ's example, to gain courage from it, and be as Christ to the world—to His glory and to man's benefit.

If you've not believed in Christ we invite you to come to Him, to trust in Him. It's urgent—the storm of judgment is coming. People today dismiss that as foolishness, as they did in Noah's day. But it came, and it swept them all away. And every generation is swept away, one way or another—swept away in death, which comes at any moment. There's no recovery from that.

Our hope is in Christ alone. Trust in Him; He will give you forgiveness, He will give you new life and carry you through the world, this difficult world, and into the glorious and pure world to come. May God help you to do that.

(Closing prayer) What a great truth, Father, to sing in praise of Your goodness and grace. You sent Your Son into this world to die for sinners, rebels, men and women who had no interest in You at all, who were running from You and fighting against You. That's

who You chose; that's who You saved at the cross; through no work of our own. And You hold on to us; no one can pluck us out of Your hand or Your Son's hand. We are secure.

Now that is a promise and a truth that should endear us to You, and not give us a sense of liberty to sin, (which there is none). We are to persevere in the faith and righteousness.

But we can only do that by Your help and by Your goodness—and You supply that to us. He bought it all for us at the cross, and You apply it to us; and thankfully we have the Spirit of God to strengthen us and guide us.

Well, we could go on, Father, with praise for You, and we give You praise and thanks, and pray that You would instill that in our heart—to know what a loving, and gracious, and good, and all powerful God You are; and that You have hold of us in this troubled world, this world at war with You and with us; and knowing that we're secure through Christ.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace, shalom. In Christ's name, Amen.

(End of Audio)