

Alderwood Community Church
September 10, 2017

Remember Jesus

Hope: Confidence When Facing Hostility

1 Peter 3:18-22

Intro: After my sermon this past Sunday, I was told about a pastor who belongs to a denomination that is changing its official beliefs regarding marriage, sexuality and gender. This pastor was told that he basically had to choose between signing a document affirming gay marriage, acceptance of homosexuality as a lifestyle and the affirmation that gender is a social construct and determined by the choice of the individual or he would be removed from his position and lose his pension with the denomination. This story is becoming all too common. This pressure, within a Christian denomination is a form of persecution.

Persecution is best defined as “the societal marginalization of believers with a view to eliminating their voice and influence.”

Christians around the world have been experiencing persecution since the church first began. In Acts 4, the apostles Peter and John were detained by the authorities and were “*commanded not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.*”

In America, we have not faced much persecution at all. But things are changing in our country and we need to be ready to stand firm in our convictions and be prepared ourselves for increasing hostility toward our beliefs in Jesus, His Word, marriage, sexuality and gender.

1 Peter was written to believers that were already facing persecution and the persecution was increasingly getting worse.

***Read Text: 1 Peter 3:13-22**

Last week, we covered verses 13-17. I stated that the big idea was:

Unjust treatment provides the perfect opportunity to trust Christ and carefully explain your faith.

Our text explains that when suffering unjustly, we should:

1. Remember God’s Promises
2. Not Give in to Fear
3. Trust Christ
4. Give a well thought out answer for your faith

Our text this morning, verses 18-22 essentially add a 5th point:

5. **When suffering unjustly remember Jesus**

Context: Christ is a perfect example/illustration of one who suffered unjustly and who was later exalted. He was perfect, and holy and without sin, yet he suffered a severe beating and was executed by means of crucifixion for our sins. Just as suffering was the pathway to victory for Jesus, so it is with us.

Verse 18 is “*one of the shortest and simplest, and yet one of the richest summaries given in the New Testament of the meaning of the Cross of Jesus*”

1. Remember Jesus' Crucifixion (3:18) *For Christ also suffered for sins* (ESV)

A. Sufficient

Once for all...

The righteous...

B. Substitute

For our sins...

The righteous for the unrighteous

C. Reconciles us to God

To bring you to God... Christ has given us immediate and permanent access to our heavenly Father.

Peter's digression (3:19-21a)

Martin Luther said that this is one of the most obscure passages in the entire NT and he was not certain what Peter meant. Chuck Swindoll refers to this section as a digression.

He went and preached to the spirits in prison (3:19-20)

There are two primary views of this passage:

1. It speaks of Christ ministering through Noah, as he spoke to the rebellious men during the flood. Noah was said to be a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). Support for this interpretation is seen in 1 Peter 1:10–12 as it says the Spirit of Christ ministered through the former prophets.

This would encourage the saints who were suffering for righteousness because Christ was rejected even through Noah. Only seven were saved by his preaching and that was Noah and his family. Therefore, what is happening to Peter's audience has happened since the beginning of time. God saved those who were righteous, Noah and his family, and judged the lost and rebellious. Though persecuted for righteousness, the Christians Peter wrote to would ultimately be saved and the unrighteous judged.

2. The second view is that Peter is talking about Christ visiting Hades during his three days in the grave. In the spirit, Christ went to Hades, the abode of the dead, while his body was in the grave. While there, he spoke to the spirits in Hades.

Evidence for this view is the word *spirit* is not typically used of humans but of demonic spirits or angels. It would seem that Christ is there declaring victory over those spirits who had worked in leading the world astray in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:2). Also, another evidence is the fact that Christ immediately went to Paradise, not Heaven, after his death (Luke 23:43). Paradise in the Old Testament was part of Sheol where all the dead were located, both the righteous and the unrighteous (Luke 16:22–26).

This would have encouraged the saints because even though evil permeated the early world through the work of demons, the ultimate victory was in Christ. He defeated all powers and principalities in his death and resurrection (Ephesians 4:8–10). Christ proclaimed his victory even to those who persecuted the righteous in the days of Noah.

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2:15)

Therefore, these believers could trust that even though they are suffering, the ultimate victory has already been won in Christ.

And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you (3:20-21a)

Peter is saying, as the waters in Noah's day lifted the ark and gave safety to those within, so the waters of baptism today symbolize salvation to those who are baptized. The act of baptism doesn't save us, it just symbolizes the salvation that has already taken place. Peter himself clearly states that those baptismal waters in no way cleanse the flesh – either literally or figuratively – but they do give us a clear conscience toward God.

2. Remember Jesus' Resurrection & Exaltation (3:21b-22)

Having personally seen Christ after he rose from the dead and then witnessing Christ's physical Ascension, Peter wrote that Christ had gone into heaven, and the reward for Christ's faithfulness is seen in His exaltation over all things. He is enthroned at God's right hand the seat of supreme honor, to rule and reign over all creation.

A. This emphasis on Christ's victory reminds believers that the troubles of the present time are temporary, that victory is sure because Christ has triumphed over evil powers.

B. Because Jesus is at the right hand of God and has universal authority:

(1) Jesus is able to deliver on his promises:

-He will greatly reward us in heaven if we suffer for him

-No one can ultimately harm us.

-He will set all things right. He will exact vengeance and Justice

(2) Jesus watches over us

(3) Jesus intercedes for us

(4) Jesus is worthy of our praise and sacrifice

Is Jesus worth it?

Illus: A missionary in Brazil discovered a tribe of Indians in a remote part of the jungle near a large river. There came a time when the tribe was in need of medical attention. A contagious disease was ravaging the population and people were dying daily. A hospital was not too terribly far away – across the river, but the Indians would not cross the river because they believed the river was inhabited by evil spirits. And to enter to water, for them, would mean certain death. The missionary explained how he had crossed the river and was unharmed. But they were not impressed. He then took them to the bank of the river and placed his hand in the water. They still wouldn't go in. He walked into the water up to his waist and splashed water on his face. It didn't matter. They were still afraid to enter the river. Finally he dove into the river, swam beneath the surface until he emerged on the other side. He raised a triumphant fist into the air. He had entered the water and escaped. It was then that the Indians broke into a cheer and followed him across. Isn't that what Jesus did? He entered the river of death and came out on the other side so that we might no longer fear death, but find eternal life in him.

Conclusion:

Remember Jesus' Crucifixion – think about it often, never forget the suffering he endured for you. He has completely forgiven you of all your sins and reconciled you to God. He has brought you into God's presence and into God's family.

Remember Jesus' Exaltation – He is worthy of your praise and allegiance. He is worth it, any suffering we may endure.

Remember Jesus' Mission – *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* Matthew 29:18-20

Is Jesus worth it?

Are we willing to suffer (Obey) for Jesus as he was willing to suffer for us?