

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



The Gospel and The Dark Powers

1 Peter 3:18-22

Sunday, November 16, 2025

18 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, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20 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. 21 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, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. ESV

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day. (Jude 6, ESV)

The cross looked like silence. Peter says it was not. Christ died for sins, rose in power, and then announced His victory to imprisoned spirits. The world heard jeers on the day Jesus was crucified. The unseen realm heard a royal proclamation that cannot be reversed.

In the ancient Near East, a king sent heralds to declare a final verdict after a battle. Peter shows Jesus acting as the royal herald of His own triumph. He speaks into the prison of rebel beings, and their chains remain while His rule advances.

SUFFERING AND ANNOUNCING VICTORY

Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh, made alive in the Spirit, and proclaimed to spirits in prison from Noah's days. His announcement declared victory over rebel powers forever.

"Proclaimed" is speaks to a finished fact; it is not a gospel invitation, as some have thought. In Jude 6, "has kept" shows ongoing custody. Their state remains fixed. The King has spoken, and His verdict stands.

Old Testament Jews spoke of the Watchers who sinned before the flood and were bound in gloom. Cities used town criers to announce decrees. Jesus enters that role after His crucifixion, not as a servant of another king, but as the sovereign who proclaims His own win.

A judge reads the verdict. The gavel falls. Appeals are over. Outside, people may still argue, but the ruling stands. Christ read the verdict in the prison. History is catching up to what He has already finished.

HOW BAPTISM SPEAKS OF WARFARE

Baptism now saves, not as washing dirt, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through Jesus' resurrection. Like the ark, baptism marks rescue through judgment waters. Jesus sits at God's right hand. Angels, authorities, and powers are already placed under Him completely.

In the ancient world, passing through water often marked a boundary of rule. Israel crossed the sea out of Pharaoh's hand. In baptism you cross a line of loyalty. It is not a bath. It is a pledge that says, I belong to the risen King.

1 Peter 3:21

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... ESV

The word "appeal" means a pledge or request. Early believers treated baptism as a sworn yes to God.

1 Peter 3:22

...who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. ESV

"Having been subjected" shows a complete subjection with lasting results. The powers are under Christ, and they stay under Him.

Jews used the mikveh, a chamber of water for ritual washing and purification before worship. Early Christians used living water (outside lakes or rivers) when possible. Candidates renounced the evil one and confessed Christ. Baptism functioned as a public oath, like signing a covenant before witnesses.

New citizens raise their hand and pledge loyalty to a nation. Their new passport that follows shows a new status. In the same way, baptism is the sign of your pledge to Jesus who reigns now.

What step will display your loyalty to Jesus before God's invisible enemies this week?

"In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross." (Colossians 2:15, NLT)

Conclusion

Peter lifts the veil for the church. Christ died for sins, rose in power, and declared victory to the imprisoned spirits. Our baptism is a pledge that we live under that verdict. Walk in courage. Live as if Jesus has already won, because He has.