Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Triumph of Christ's Suffering, Part 2
Scripture: 1 Peter 3:18-20
Code: 60-37

Let's open our Bibles now and we have a little time to share in the Word of God and what a rich, rich time it will be for us tonight, 1 Peter chapter 3. We're looking at the triumph of Christ's sufferings, the triumph of Christ's sufferings. The suffering of Jesus Christ, as you know, was the time of His greatest humiliation, a time of unjust treatment. But it was also the time of His greatest triumph, for when He suffered most He accomplished most. And this is really the great truth that is Peter's point in this passage. He is writing to somewhat discouraged Christians. They are under persecution, they are under duress, they are in a very difficult time of trials and testing and hostility. He wants to encourage them. He wants to encourage them that they can triumph in their suffering. They can be overcomers. They can be victorious even in the midst of unjust suffering and persecution. And the greatest illustration he knows of is Christ. Christ suffered unjustly. Christ suffered persecution, hostility like no person could ever imagine. And yet in the midst of His suffering He was absolutely triumphant. And He is the example that we too can triumph in our sufferings.

Let's look at verses 18 through 22 and read them again as we did last time.

“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison 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. And 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 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.”

Now Peter touches on a lot of things in this particular portion, but if I could just show you the beginning and the end, you might get the point. Verse 18 says, "For Christ also died," and verse 22 at the end says that "He subjected all the angels, authorities and powers unto Himself." So it was in His darkest hour of death that He experienced His greatest triumph, and that is what Peter wants to express. The simple point then is that you may suffer unjustly, you may suffer in the severest way, even to the point where you lose your life, but in it all God can provide victory, He can provide

triumph, He can provide the accomplishment of a holy purpose.

Now, as these verses unfold, Peter shows us four areas in which Christ triumphed in His death. First, it was a triumphant sin-bearing. Secondly, there was a triumphant sermon. Thirdly, He accomplished a triumphant salvation. And fourthly, a triumphant supremacy became His.

Now last week we looked at point number one, that in the death of Jesus Christ, as unjust as it was, as ignominious, as horrible, as tragic from a human viewpoint as it was, as painful, as much suffering as was involved, He still triumphed in the area of bearing sin. And we noted that in verse 18. He accomplished the bearing of sin. In fact, it had a number of elements. It says there, it was ultimate suffering. That is He died. It was suffering related to sin, He died for sins. It was unique, in that He died once. It was comprehensive, in that He died for all. It was vicarious, in that it was the just for the unjust. And it was purposeful in order that He might bring us to God. So it was a triumphant sin-bearing in spite of the tragedy of the cross.

Now the second thing that Peter wants to tell us, and what we'd like to focus on tonight, is that it was also at the cross in the moment of His greatest suffering that He accomplished a triumphant sermon, a triumphant sermon. In verse 18 it says, in the middle of the verse, "Having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit in which also He went and made proclamation," or as some Bibles say, He went and preached. This is a most fascinating element about our Lord's triumph.

The first point indicates to us that He triumphed over sin. This indicates to us another arena in which He triumphed even in His suffering. Now let me unfold it to you. Follow closely, verse 18. It says that He was having been put to death in the flesh. What does that mean? That simply means He died. He actually died. The flesh simply means His physical life ceased. He actually died. Here, by the way, is one verse among many that give us evidence that Jesus actually died on the cross. Some, in wanting to explain the resurrection and wanting to deny at the same time that it was miraculous, have offered the possibility that Jesus never really died on the cross, He just went into some kind of a semi-coma and in the coolness of the tomb was revived and got up and walked out. The text is very clear here, however, as it is in a number of places that He was dead. He was the victim of a judicial murder if also a...an illegal murder, nonetheless it went through some kind of due process. He died. And so this statement refers to His physical death.

The term that is used, *thanatothas*, is the term that basically means to die. Those of you who have been in English literature will remember the poem, "Thanatopsis," which is a study of death. But the term also implies a strong kind of violent implication into the dying. It emphasizes not only then His

death but the suffering that was associated with His dying. It points to the painful end of His earthly life. We know He died because when the soldiers came by, if He had not been dead what would they have done to Him? They would have broken His legs in order to speed the death because death occurred when the body slumped, hanging from the nails. And as long the feet could provide some kind of elevation, it could postpone the death. And if many hours had gone by and the victim was not yet dead, they just crushed the femurs and then the body could not support itself and death came rather rapidly. But by the time they came to Christ, the Bible says they did not break His legs because He was already dead. They pierced His side and it was proven as blood and water poured out.

Would you also notice verse 18 further says, that having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. There are numerous possible interpretations of the passage that I'm going to teach you tonight and I decided a couple of weeks ago that I'm not going to drag you through a myriad of options. I'm going to simply tell you what I believe is the best option. You have to understand that there are many, many scholars who struggle with this particular portion and there are a number of different viewpoints. It is very hard to land on one and be too dogmatic, but I'm not going to drag you through an endless process simply to express to you what I feel is the best understanding of the passage, and I think you'll see how it hangs together.

Physically He was dead, but in spirit He was what? Alive. That's what it is saying. Most likely then when it says He was made alive in the spirit, it's a small "s". There are no capitals in the Greek so we have to assume those and sometimes in some translations you might see a large "S" having a reference to the Holy Spirit, there's no way to know that here. In fact, if you look at flesh and spirit, together it would seem that he's contrasting just that, flesh and spirit. The human flesh, that is the physical body, with the human spirit, that is the spirit of a man. There is no definite article here identifying "the Holy Spirit," so it could really say and should say He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in spirit. His spirit was made alive.

Now some see this as a reference to the resurrection, and that is a possibility. But frankly, if it was a reference to His resurrection, it probably should say He was put to death in the flesh but He was raised again in the flesh, right? Because the resurrection was not just the resurrection of His spirit, was it? It was the resurrection of His body. It was a literal, physical, bodily resurrection. So it seems to me that the point here is not that He was resurrected, but that though dead in the flesh He was living in the spirit, and that makes sense to me. You could kill His body but you cannot kill the eternal Christ. So while His body was in the grave, His spirit was alive.

Now this is a mystery to understand but perhaps Peter has given it to us as simply as possible. How then are we to understand this? Well, notice that phrase says in verse 18, "made alive in spirit." Does

it assume that He had been dead in spirit? Does it assume that at some point in the death on the cross He had died spiritually? Well it could. And if He was made alive in the spirit, then at some point in some way He must have died in spirit. In other words, experiencing some kind of spiritual death and spiritual death is defined as separation from...from God. Was it not true on the cross that He said, "My God, My God, why have You (what?) forsaken Me?" I believe that there was a separation from God, not a cessation of existence. He didn't cease to exist because He was eternal. By the way, even when human beings die they don't cease to exist. They may experience spiritual death, they do in this life. They may experience eternal death, they will in the next life if they die without Christ, but they don't cease to exist. So Christ went through some kind of separation from God, not a cessation of His existence any more than men spiritually dead cease to exist. We don't know the mystery of that but somehow He was in a moment of time as all sin was poured out on Him and God had to turn His back forsaken by God. He did not cease to exist but there was a kind of spiritual death, separation from God, at the point in which He was made sin. But it's very clear that whatever spiritual separation He experienced at that moment was quickly gone because it wasn't long after that that He said these final words, "Father," and that's something important, isn't it? Because just a little before that He hadn't called Him Father, what had He called Him? "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" And now He says, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." So whatever experience of spiritual separation He had was only for a moment, when He was made sin. And then again His spirit was made alive and He committed it to God.

Now the point that Peter wants you to understand is this, that when Jesus was crucified on the cross His body died and His body went where? To the tomb. But when His body was dead, His spirit was what? Alive. Now the question is, where did He go, this living spirit? Well it tells us in verse 19. It says, "In which" that is in His spirit also "He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison." "In which also" means in that living spirit, apart from His body, which lay in the tomb, the living, eternal Christ went someplace. The verb here refers to a personal going. It's also used down in verse 22. It's translated "having gone." It's the same verb. It means literally to go somewhere else. So He went somewhere else. His spirit had been with His body on the cross and when His body died, His spirit went somewhere else. His spirit enjoyed the benefit of being alive. His spirit was not consigned to judgment. His spirit was not consigned to eternal death. His spirit did not experience the second death, like the unrighteous who feel the wrath of God. But His spirit was released into God's perfect purpose.

Where did He go? Well it says He went, very clearly here, and made proclamation. He went and made proclamation. He gave a sermon. He went somewhere to preach. He went and gave a triumphant sermon. So even before His resurrection now, even before His resurrection on Sunday morning, He was moving freely in the spiritual realm, okay? And He went to...to preach. Now the verb here "to preach," or to make a proclamation, is not *euaggeliz*, to preach the gospel. He didn't go

somewhere to preach salvation. It is the verb *kruss*, which means to make a proclamation or to announce a triumph. It is the word “to herald.” And military generals and kings would have a herald announce their victories. He went somewhere to announce His victory. No, He was not preaching the gospel to some people in the spiritual world, or some beings in the spiritual world. He was announcing, proclaiming, heralding a triumph. About what? It must be pretty obvious, about His triumph over sin, about His triumph over death, about His triumph over hell, about His triumph over demons, about His triumph over Satan. He went to proclaim His triumph. That's the implication of the verb here, to proclaim victory. That's what the passage is all about. That's what the context is all about. It's all about triumphing in the midst of unjust suffering.

Now to whom did He make this announcement? Verse 19 says, "He made it to the spirits." Spirits? Who are the spirits? Well, think it through. In verse 20 Peter uses the word “persons” or “souls.” You see it there in verse 20? Eight persons, it's actually the words souls, probably some of your Bibles say that. Peter calls people souls. It seems to me then that spirits must be different than people in this context. By the way, the New Testament always uses the term spirits to refer to, take a guess, angels, never to men without a qualifying genitive. Hebrews 12 says, “the spirits of just men made perfect.” Whenever it is qualified with a genitival phrase like that, the qualifying phrase will tell you to whom it refers. But every other use of spirits in the New Testament refers to angels.

Furthermore, we know that angels are in view here down in verse 22 because it says that He went into heaven after the angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. So at some point in this passage Peter wants us to understand that He had subjected the angels and the authorities and the powers, which are just different names for angels, to Himself.

I believe He went to declare His victory over demons and that the spirits refer to demons. You say, "Why do you...why do you say demons?" Because these spirits were in what? Prison. They were in prison. Now this could not be a message of salvation to demons. Why? Because demons can't be saved. The demons that fell are forever damned, forever, as it were, locked into their destiny. In Hebrews 2:16 it says, "He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham." He doesn't redeem spirits, He redeems people. So whatever He said to these demons was not a message of salvation, it was a *kruss*, it was a heralding of triumph.

You say, "Well why would He go and herald a triumph to a bunch of demons?" I'll tell you why; because since the beginning when Satan fell he has been at war with the purposes of God. There is cosmic conflict in this universe between God and Satan, witness Job chapter 1. There is conflict between the holy angels and the fallen angels, witness Daniel. And the tremendous conflict between

the great, mighty angel of God and the prince of Tyre, a demon. There has always been spiritual warfare on that supernatural level and Satan and the demons have done everything they possibly could to destroy the purposes of God in Christ. Is that not so? From the very beginning when Satan knew that his head would be bruised and that he would be ultimately defeated, he has fought the purposes of God and fought against Christ every way possible. Throughout the Old Testament he tries to destroy the Messianic line. He tries to destroy the people of God. In the New Testament He tries to get Christ in a temptation to capitulate to himself and thus thwart the purpose of God. He tries to destroy Him, to violate the plan of God by having the mobs kill Him. He tries when He's dead to keep Him in the tomb so He can't come forth. You see, the demons of hell and Satan himself have always sought to destroy the work of Christ. And now as He's on the cross and He is bearing all sin and His life is crushed out of Him, and He is physically dead, it would seem that the demons have won, right? And some writer said years ago that hell was in the midst of its carnival when He arrived. They were probably celebrating this great defeat.

And where was this? It says in prison. Where is this place that He went? By the way, nowhere in Scripture are the souls of men ever said to be imprisoned. But these spirits are imprisoned. *Phulak* is the term and it is not, now listen carefully, it is not a condition, it is a location. It refers to an actual location, not some condition of being imprisoned in sin. It is a place.

You say, "Well now wait a minute. If Jesus went to a place where demons are imprisoned, how come demons are running around all over now?" Different demons, different demons. Not all demons are in the prison. Can I give you a little diagram, a little angelology, short course? Just watch my hand and it will help you. The front...the first line angels, okay? Splits into two kind; holy, elect angels, fallen angels. Of the fallen angels there are two kinds, loose and bound. Of the bound there are two kinds, permanently bound, temporarily bound. What we're talking about here then are the angels fallen bound permanently. Got it? That's your course in angelology.

The loose ones, by the way, and there are a lot of them running around loose, we know that, we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against what? Demons. The lot of them running around loose. And you want to know something about the loose ones? Let me give you a characteristic of the loose ones. Luke chapter 8 verse 31, "And they were entreating Him," these loose demons and their name was Legion, you remember they were in the demoniac,

and many, many demons had entered this man, they were all over the place in him, legion, "they were entreating Jesus not to command them to depart into the" what? "*abussos*," the abyss. Please, Jesus, don't send us to the abyss, don't make us prisoners. They didn't want that.

In fact, in Matthew 8:29 they said to Jesus, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God, have You come here to torment us before the time?" Aren't You off schedule? What are You doing here now? Are you going to send us to that place now before the time?

They didn't want to go there. Please, don't send us there. It must be a very dreaded fate, by the way, for the fallen angels to go there because they're unable to move, they're incarcerated. They're captive. They cannot ply their wicked trade around the earth and the universe. They cannot fight the holy angels. They cannot make efforts to thwart the purposes of the God they hate. So they said, "Don't send us to the *abussos*," and Luke uses the word that basically means the prison of disobedient spirits, so says Kittel in his Greek word study of that term.

Now you say, "Wait a minute. OK, some are loose and some are bound. How did they get bound? What did they do to get permanently bound in this place?" Verse 20 tells you. Well, they once were disobedient. You say, "Wait a minute. Demons are always disobedient. But what in the world does that mean?" Once at some point in the past they overstepped even God's limitations. They went too far.

You say, "Well, when were they disobedient?" Well obviously they were free to roam around for a while but they were disobedient once. When was it? Verse 20, "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." Oh, now we know when it was, it was during the time of what? Of Noah. So there is a prison filled with bound demons who have been there since the time of Noah and they were sent there because they overstepped even the bounds that God has established on their own wickedness. And it was during the time when Noah spent 120 years building an ark.

You say, "Well, that ark was a boat, wasn't it?" Yeah, but that wasn't really its main purpose. Its main purpose wasn't to be a boat. First of all, its main purpose was to be an object lesson. It was 120 years' worth of preaching about the impending, coming judgment of God. It was only a boat for a year. It was a sermon for 120 years. Unfortunately nobody heard the sermon and they were all drowned except eight. It was a sermon about judgment.

Just in general, the wickedness of the time of Noah was total. In fact, it says back in Genesis that all the imagination of man's heart was only what? Evil continually. And you know what that means? That means that demon spirits were having a hey-day back in Noah's time. They were running riot through

the earth, doing their pleasure. They were filling up the world with all their wicked, vile, anti-God activity. And that's why God had to drown the whole earth. One commentator says, "Noah's contemporaries were notoriously wicked and served as agents for demonic spirits in their rebellion against God. There is no other time in history in which the conflict between faith and unbelief, obedience and disobedience was as pronounced as in the days of Noah. The rebellious spirits served to control the human race with the exception of Noah and his family." They literally had possessed, as it were, the whole earth. And even 120 years of preaching couldn't convince anybody beyond the eight people in Noah's family that God really ought to be listened to. Imagine that, that's how wicked the world was. By the way, when Jesus comes in the judgment of fire, to say nothing of the judgment of water, the Bible says it will be then as it was in the days of...of Noah. The earth will return to that extreme wickedness.

So, the time of Noah was apparently a hey-day for demonic activity. And they successfully corrupted and infiltrated the whole of the human race so that God literally had to drown His entire creation with the exception of eight people. And those demons who overstepped the bounds in the time of Noah were the ones put in prison. By the way, this must have been very familiar stuff to Peter's readers because he makes such a minimal explanation here. It must have been something with which they were very familiar or he would have gone into it in a greater amount of detail. Everybody must have known about the spirits imprisoned because of their overstepping the bounds that God had set even on their wicked behavior in the days of Noah.

Now, were all the demons put in prison? No, because some are still what? Loose. Which ones were? Turn to 2 Peter, chapter 2. Hold on to your seat here now. Second Peter chapter 2 verse 4, "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness reserved for judgment, and didn't spare the ancient world but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly." You can stop at that point.

Peter's talking about the same thing. In his second epistle he brings it up again. There was a time when God took fallen angels who overstepped their bounds and threw them into hell, into the pit of darkness and imprisoned them for judgment. And again he says it was at a time when Noah, the preacher of righteousness, preached and when God brought a flood on the world of the ungodly. And then he mentions two other illustrations of judgment, the condemnation of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, where God judged, and then the condemnation mentions Lot, who was rescued, noted in verse 7. Please notice, he refers to Lot. What book in the Bible tells that story? Genesis. He refers to Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis. It seems to me highly likely that whatever it is he's referring to with these angels who sinned and were cast into the pit of darkness reserved for judgment must have occurred at the same time of Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah and Noah. And not only that, it must have been such common knowledge to the readers that he doesn't need to make some large explanation

about it.

By the way, the word "hell" would you notice that word in verse 4 is the word *tartarsas* or literally we could call it in an English transliteration Tartarus. Now Tartarus was a...a name in classical Greek mythology and they used it to describe the subterranean abyss in which rebellious gods were punished. The word was taken over into Judaism and it was used to refer to the prison of fallen angels. It is so used, by the way, in the non-biblical but ancient book called “The Book of Enoch.” Now we know that the Jews were familiar with “The Book of Enoch,” Jude in his epistle even makes reference to “The Book of Enoch. “The Book of Enoch” discusses the Genesis account of the angels who overstepped their bounds. So, I believe that Peter in 1 Peter and 2 Peter in referring to this record is referring to something commonly known by the people because they read about it in “The Book of Enoch,” even though “The Book of Enoch” was not a biblical book, the people knew its contents. And “The Book of Enoch” covers the same story in the same way. So, Peter in 2 Peter 2:4 is saying God took these angels who sinned and He put them in the murky abyss of fallen angels, the prison of spirits.

Now, God didn't send all of them there. Which ones did He send? Go to Jude verse 6. Which ones, Jude, which ones were put in the prison? Well he says, verse 6, "And angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode He has kept in eternal chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day." You'll notice also in verse 7 he's talking about another story in Genesis again, Sodom and Gomorrah, which leads me to believe whatever he's referring to in verse 6 is also back in Genesis. Now, angels who didn't keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode are kept in eternal chains. These chains are eternal. There are some, remember, who are temporarily bound; these permanently bound, permanently bound.

What was their specific sin? Look at verse 7. They didn't keep their own domain. They abandoned their proper abode just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these, that is these demons in the same way as Sodom and Gomorrah, indulged in gross what? Immorality. *Porneia*, pornography, they indulged in gross immorality. What kind? They went after what? Strange flesh. Hmm. Do you remember the story of Sodom and Gomorrah? Do you remember Lot was living there? Do you remember that some angels came to visit Lot? And the angels, Genesis 19, came into Lot's house. Do you remember what kind of sin was rampant in Sodom and Gomorrah? What sin? Sodomy, homosexuality. And here were these two magnificent creatures, holy angels who had taken on human form, they came to Lot's house and the homosexual men of Sodom and Gomorrah went crazy. They saw what they wanted. They came to Lot's house. They tried to rape those angels. They were going after flesh, strange flesh, outside of their domain. They were going after angels in a gross, perverted, twisted, sick homosexual expression.

You remember what happened? The door was shut and God struck them all blind and instead of running in fear in their blindness, they kept beating on the door because their lust was so great that even though they had become stone blind they tried to break the door down to get to those angels. That's how lust had driven them. Now whatever these angels did to get sent to the permanent pit is something like what the men of Sodom did, that's what he's saying, in going after strange flesh, *heteros* flesh, a different kind of flesh. They literally lusted after angels.

What did these angels do? Let's go back to Genesis 6 and find out. By the way, I'm sure Jude along with Peter knew Enoch and his book. He refers to it in verse 14. And I'm sure Jude also knew Genesis 6 and knew that “The Book of Enoch” interpreted Genesis 6 this way. Follow this now, will you? Genesis 6:1, we're way back now in the time of Noah. "It came about when men began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them," listen carefully, "that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, they took wives for themselves whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with men forever because he is also flesh, nevertheless his days shall be 120 years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown."

You say, "What in the world is this?" I'll tell you what it is. “Sons of God” are demons, “sons of God” is a term used in the Old Testament to refer to angels. And what you have here is fallen angels who came down, took on human bodies in some kind of form, cohabitated with women and produced a generation of Rosemary's babies, if you remember that story, some kind of a demonic hybrid. It is possible that they are called the Nephilim, a term with interesting meaning. It can mean fallen ones, it can have reference from the verb *nephal*, to fall. It can have reference to violent ones. It suggests when used only one other time in Numbers 13 giant type people. Then you will notice the terms "mighty men," and "men of renown." Apparently what happened was these demons cohabitated with women and produced some kind of monsters, some kind of demon-possessed offspring that were very powerful, giants, very violent.

Now some people believe that the “sons of God” simply refers to people in the line of Seth. And it means simply that the line of Seth, which was the godly line, intermingled with the ungodly line. But I take it that what it says here is exactly what Peter and Jude are alluding to at the time of Noah that has to be something more than that.

You say, "Well, they attempted then to breed a sort of unredeemable race, didn't they?" Yes. And that's one of the reasons God had to drown the whole earth, to drown that race. They wanted to corrupt, now listen to this, the human stream. If you can create a demon man, then he's unredeemable, because Christ as the God-Man has come to redeem men, not demon men. They wanted to pollute the human stream to make it unredeemable.

There are a number of reasons why this interpretation is fitting in Genesis 6. One, it is the oldest and most widely held interpretation. Two, the sons of God, *benai Halohim*, always refers to angels in the Old Testament. In fact, some manuscripts translate it angels. “Sons of God” specifically is used, listen to this, to refer to those brought into existence directly by God, not to those procreated. So therefore it would refer to angels because men at this time would be procreated, they would be the sons of men, not the sons of God. The early church held this view until the fourth century. And by the way, if it simply means men, then all the sons of God must be male because it says the sons of God cohabitated with the daughters of men. And the sons of God would therefore have to be all male, which would be a strange way to interpret it. And I think if it was referring to men it would simply say the sons of men cohabitated with the daughters of men.

Furthermore, if this was the sons of God, called such because they were believers in the line of Seth, why did God drown them all? And we could go on and on with that kind of reasoning. I believe that these demons came down, left their natural estate, and went after strange flesh. Follow the analogy. In Sodom, men went after angels; here, angels went after women, both perversions. It's not just intermarriage between believers and unbelievers. There was no prohibition given for that yet, so why would God drown everybody for doing it, even the believers? No.

Now you got the picture? Genesis 6, some demons sinned, went outside the bounds that God would tolerate, put them in a permanent pit. They've been there a long time, folks. When Jesus came to the cross and hell thought, "We've won," and all those demons in the pit might have thought that somebody got the keys from Jesus, namely Satan; and they're down there hoping this might be the moment of their release, Jesus shows up.

Turn to Colossians chapter 2. I love this. What's the last word in verse 14? What is it? Last word in verse 14 of Colossians 2? “Cross,” OK, we're at the cross, that's what Paul's talking about. "At the cross when He” that is Christ “disarmed the rulers and authorities." Those are terms for demons. At the cross they thought they were triumphing, they were wrong. He disarmed them. And then it says, "He made a public” what? “display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

I believe Paul is referring to the same thing, that when Jesus body was dead, His spirit was alive and He went down where they were bound and He announced His triumph over them. So you have at the cross an unjust suffering; you have at the cross a terrible persecution, and in the midst of it all, a triumphant sin-bearing and a triumphant sermon. And Jesus in the midst of His suffering triumphs over sin and triumphs over Satan, hell, demons and death at the very same time. Isn't that a marvelous triumph? Peter wants us to understand that when we suffer, we may triumph as well. Will you bow with me in prayer?

Thank You, Father, for the great triumph of our Christ. Oh God, how we rejoice that angels and authorities are subject to Him, and that in the moment of what hell thought was its greatest triumph, it was foiled and the Son Himself, the living spirit, showed up alive to announce His glorious triumph, and then but a few hours later entered that lifeless body and it came alive from the grave. And because of that event, we too enter into His triumph. Amen, and amen.

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