



# **Message Transcript**

## **Live The Gospel**

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Well, thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. And before we get into God's word, let's pray and let's have our hearts ready for all that God has to share with us. Would you join me by praying?

Lord Jesus, we come before you right now. And Lord, as we've celebrated you in song, now, we want to celebrate your living and active word. Lord, we believe that every time your word is open and faithfully proclaimed, Lord, that you have a word for us. And so, Lord, we want to hear you. Lord, we want to become what you say that we are.

We want to put into practice the very things that you show us. We want to be used mightily for your kingdom service. And so, now all God's people who are ready to receive his word, hear him and put into practice the very things that he showed you. Agree with me by very loudly saying the word, amen, amen.

One of the most glorious truths of all scripture, one of the central tenants of the Bible is that God is most glorified when he saves sinners from death through the death burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when a sinner repents of his or her sin, trust in Jesus Christ as a personal Lord and savior, they are rescued from the dominion of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of God's beloved son in whom they have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

But wouldn't it be great if once we trusted in Jesus Christ, that everything in our life would just work just like it's supposed to? That we would always respond the way God wants us to respond. We'd always think the way God wants us to think. And we'd

always do the very thing God wants us to do. The reality is that our sin nature doesn't go away. And so, we're on this progressive road of holiness or sanctification. And so, this gospel that we believe, this good news that we believe, we need to learn to live it out. We need to learn to practice it.

And it's like anything else, whether it's learning to ride a bike for the first time or learning to ski when you move to Colorado or throwing a football or hitting a baseball or anything else that you do, you get better the more that you practice it. And when it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ, this is also true as well. The moment you trust Jesus, you are his forever. No one can snatch you out of his hand. You belong to almighty God, because Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life. But we get the rest of our life to put into practice the very things that God shows us.

As we've been in the Book of First Peter, we've been taking a look at specifically what it looks like to live this out when we're in crisis, when living for Jesus costs us something, when we're persecuted because we're living for the Lord. How in the world do we live out the gospel during difficult times? That's we're going to take a look at today.

So, if you open your Bible up to the book of First Peter chapter three, First Peter chapter three. We're going to begin in verse 13 and make our way through the chapter. And as we do, we're going to take a look at three ways that we can be resolved and what God calls us to be as we live the gospel. I'd like to read these aloud and then we'll unpack them together. First Peter chapter three verses 13 through 22. He says, who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should

suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed.

And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be in dread, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, but with gentleness and respect. And keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. For Christ also died for sins once for all time, 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. In which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits 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.

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.

And hearing God's word today, we're going to learn three ways that we can be resolved to live the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the first is this. God tells us to live the gospel by being resolute in your identity without fear, being resolute in your identity without fear. Notice how he starts with a rhetorical question. Who is there to harm you

if you prove zealous for what is good? In other words, who is there to harm you if you do the things that God wants you to do? Who can do anything to you?

I mean, Romans chapter eight and verse 31 says, "If God is for you, then who can be against you?" Now, I've heard many pastors and preachers say this. And I've said this from time to time, probably, that you plus God make a majority. But let me tell you something that's even more true than that. God by himself is a majority. God by himself is an authority. If you have confessed Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, and are eternally loved by God, you and God stand together in all truth.

So, who is there that can do anything to you if you prove zealous for doing what is good? In other words, if you're eager to do the things that God wants you to do, who is there that can do something to you? The answer rhetorically is nobody can. That's why he includes the next verse. Because notice what he says. He says, "But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled."

That last part of the verse is quoted from Isaiah chapter eight verses 12 and 13. He says, "Nobody can do anything to you. But even if you do suffer, if God would allow suffering to come into your life, here's the truth. Even if that happens, you are blessed."

Now, when we hear the word "blessed," here's what we think about in church. Just by show of hands, how many of you know that you're blessed because your relationship with Christ? We're afraid sometimes and put up our hands because we're like, "Oh, it's prosperity gospel. Here it comes. He's going to say that, if we're blessed,

it means we get whatever we want, whenever we want it, and God's obligated to give us stuff."

That's not what blessed means. Blessed means that you're highly favored or you're highly privileged by God because you belong to God through the person of Jesus Christ. And he's entrusted you with the gospel. And even if you suffer for living out the gospel, you're still highly privileged. And you're chosen and you're dearly loved by almighty God. That's what it means to be blessed.

Now, let me talk about suffering for a second because Second Timothy 3:12 says that anyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. If you go all in with Jesus and live for him the way God wants you to and speak on behalf of Jesus and live on behalf of Jesus, there will be some measure of persecution in your life. We just don't know the extent of what that's going to be. We don't get to choose how people choose to persecute us. But there will be some measure of persecution that mounts against you.

But here's three ways. These are only three things that can happen when you're persecuted or when you suffer. The first is this, God can keep you from suffering. Did you know that? God can keep you from suffering. Now you might ask, "Well, how has God ever kept me from suffering?" Look around the world and see all the evil that's happened in the world. If there's any of those things that haven't happened to you, God has kept you from suffering in that area. If you've seen people that have had cancer and you haven't had cancer, that is an area where God has kept you from suffering.

And oftentimes, God keeps us from things we don't even know how many times God's kept us from something. If you've ever woken up on any day and said, "Man, today was a pretty good day. I didn't suffer a whole lot." That was a day that God kept you from suffering. Praise God for that. And he does that more often than not. And that's one of the results that sometimes he says, don't fear their intimidation and don't live in worry, because here's the reality, God can keep you from any suffering that's coming. That's one of the things that God does.

Second thing God does is God can take you through the suffering. He can bring you to the other side. Some of you that have been in had cancer no longer have cancer anymore. Some of you that have lost a child have gone through the suffering of that and are now on the other side. Some of you that have lost your job have gone through that, and now we're on the other side. And oftentimes, God takes us through the suffering. And we get to the other side.

And we pray that prayer that we're so prone to pray as we're closer to Jesus and we see his hand in our life. And we say, "Thank You, Jesus, for bringing me through that trial, that suffering, that persecution. Please don't ever do that again."

I mean, that's when God's brought you through the suffering. Remember, in the Old Testament, the three Hebrew boys after Israel was in captivity, that were told about a King Nebuchadnezzar. And he told them that he had the power to throw them into the fiery furnace. And they said, "Oh, King, you can do whatever you want, but we will not stop serving our God." And he threw him into the fiery furnace. And all of a

sudden, Nebuchadnezzar not only saw three Hebrew boys, but they saw a fourth walking around that looked like the son of God.

And when he brought the boys out of the fire, not even one a hair on their head had been singed. They had been brought through the trial. Oftentimes, God chooses to do that. And so, he says, "Don't fear. I either won't give you any suffering or I'll take you through the trial."

Here's option three, God can take you home in the trial. God can often take you home in the trial. There's some people we know that our beloved saints that through their battle of a health issue have died and gone immediately to be with Jesus. And God can oftentimes take you through the trouble. Let me tell you something, Christian. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ and meeting him face to face should be the goal of your faith. And to meet Jesus, well, how you're going to die may not be the most pleasant. But when you die, if you know Jesus, it's the most glorious thing that will ever happen to you.

So, when it comes to suffering, you're either not going to suffer. God will bring you through the suffering. Or he'll take you to be with him in the suffering. All three as a Christian are good options. So, he says this, "Don't fear the intimidation of other people that tell you you can't keep living for Jesus. Be resolute in your identity." It means don't worry about what other people say.

Concern yourself with what God says about you that you are redeemed, that you are beloved, that you are chosen, that you are adopted, that you are holy, that you are



righteous because of the blood of Jesus Christ. That you're a coheir of Christ and all of his riches. That's who you are.

And when you're resolute about that, then you can live without fear because what is it anybody else can do to you? I mean, it's the same thing that Jesus told his disciples in Matthew chapter 18 verse 28. He says, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul, but rather fear him who was able to destroy both soul and body in hell." In other words, don't fear other human beings when they threaten you because of your faith. There's nothing they can do to you. You ultimately belong to Jesus Christ. Stop living in fear.

And don't we have examples of this biblically all throughout the New Testament? I mean, isn't this how Jesus lived? I mean, Jesus was standing before Pontius Pilate. And Pontius Pilate began to question Jesus in John chapter 19. In John chapter 19 starting in verse nine, Pilate asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So, Pilate said to him, "You do not speak to me? Do you not know that I have the authority to release you and have the authority to crucify you?"

Pilates is asking Jesus, "Who are you? Where are you from?" And Jesus stood there silently. And he said, "You're not going to talk to me? Hey, Jesus, dude, I have the ability to release you and let your life be good. I have the ability to crucify you. I can do whatever I want to you. You should be talking to me." Did that intimidate Jesus? No. Here's what Jesus' response was. He said, "You would have no authority over me unless it had been given to you from above."

Wow.

In other words, I'm not intimidated by you. The only reason you have the authority you have is because my father and I gave it to you. I'm not intimidated by you. And what did he do? He stood his ground and he went to the cross and he gave up his life. Why? Because he wasn't afraid. He entrusted himself to the one who judges justly, his heavenly father. He wasn't intimidated. What about the rest of his disciples that survived after he rose from the dead? I mean, church history tells us with the exception of John 10 of the 11 were martyred. Did they stand in fear? No. They continue to go to their death for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see it all throughout church history. I was doing some research this week and I want to share one. One of our church fathers, his name was Polycarp. He was the bishop of Smyrna. He lived from 69 AD to 155 AD, and he was brought before a council. And when Polycarp was promised to be released if he would blaspheme Christ, here's what he said, "For 86 years, I have served Christ and he has never done me wrong. How can I blaspheme my king and my savior?"

And so, when the pro council threatened to expose him to the wild beast, he replied, "It is well for me to be speedily released from this life of misery." Finally, the ruler threatened to burn him alive and Polycarp said, "I fear not the fire that burns for a moment. You do not know that which burns forever and ever." And so, they bound him and set him to be burned at the stake. But when the fire didn't touch him, then they stabbed him to death. And where was he when he was stabbed to death? He was

right in the presence of Jesus hearing the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant in glory." Amen.

I mean, why do we worry about what other people can do to us? There are Christians I know in our culture that are so afraid to speak up and persecution is coming and persecution is coming and we got to live in fear. Christian, you don't live in fear. You serve the almighty resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. You can live for him and there ain't nothing that anybody can do that won't bring God glory and advance his kingdom. Amen. So, be resolved in your identity and don't live in fear. Jesus Christ loves you enough that he came to this world to save you and you belong to him.

Then he says this, "Not only we be resolute in our identity without fear, but we're to do this, to be reverent and ready to share our hope." Be reverent and ready to share your hope. Notice what he says next, instead of living fearfully, he says in verse 15, "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always been ready to make a difference to everyone who ask you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts."

What's that mean? It means allow Jesus to be the Lord of every area of your life. I mean, the gospel is that the Lord Jesus Christ saves. The Gospel is that Jesus Christ died on the cross, according to scriptures that he was buried and that he was raised according to scriptures. And when we confess him as our Lord and savior, he personally saves each and every one of us and puts us in a relationship with him. That's what he does.

And here's what he says, "But sanctify Christ in your heart. Allow him to be the Lord that he is." I mean, here in our Inglewood campus, it says, Jesus Christ is Lord just off to my right. I mean, it's that simple. Jesus is the Lord. You don't make him Lord. You don't get saved and then one day decide, okay, well, now I'm saved and I'm growing in my faith. So, I'll make him the Lord now. He is the Lord. And he becomes our savior when we acknowledge that he is the Lord of our life. That's what it means to be born again, when Jesus Christ is the Lord.

Lord means this. He gets to dominate every area of my life. That's what it means to be Lord. He's the Lord. He can be many over every area of my life. He can dominate and he can do in and through me whatever he wants. In my marriage, in my family, with my finances, in my health, he is the Lord of all in my life and whatever he wants to do, he can do. And here's what he's encouraging us. Sanctify Christ as Lord. Allow him to be the Lord of your life that he is so that he can work in and through you in every sphere of influence that you have.

Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready. Now you know the word "always" means? Help me out. What's it mean?

Always.

It means always. I mean, so simple when you read the Bible. Always. It means at any given time, be ready to give an account for the hope that you have within you. Most of us are always ready at church to give an account, or we're always ready when we're going on a mission trip to give an account, or we're always ready when we're

helping a friend to give an account. Always means I'm always ready. I'm ready at any given moment, to give an account for the hope that I have within me, which means this.

It's assumed that all believers who are allowing Jesus to be the Lord of their life have incredible hope in their heart. I have incredible hope in my heart, because of who I am in Christ, because Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to save me, and he's going to deliver me into heaven one day for all eternity. I have incredible hope about that. He says, always be ready.

Can I tell you why we don't share the gospel nearly enough? Because we're really not ready to give an account for the hope that we have within us. And here's why. Because for many of us, when we believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross and was buried and rose from the dead, we believe that God delivered us from the penalty of sin, and that we know we belong to him, and no one can snatch us out of his hand. But we really haven't yet experienced the deliverance from the power of sin in our life. Which means this, listen to me.

After you were saved, there's still sin patterns in your life that continue on until you put them under the lordship of Jesus Christ. But when you do, there is no sin that you sin that you have to keep sinning. One person is excited about that. Let me tell you what I mean by that.

It means that when we come to Christ, we find ourselves having certain sin patterns. And sometimes we get frustrated with him. And we say, "We'll, always be like this. I'll never change. And my grandpa was always angry. My dad was always

angry. And I'm always going to be angry. And I come from those jeans of anger and that's just who ..." No, no, you've been delivered from the penalty of sin. And because Christ is in you, you no longer have to succumb to the anger that you once had. There is no sin in your life you have to continue in. Jesus Christ can deliver you from any sin. That's the power of the gospel.

And once you've been delivered from the power of sin, that's when you begin to have a testimony. Because then people begin to ask you, why are you living the way that you're living? You seem different than you used to seem. And they begin to ask questions. My own story goes something like this. About the time I was 21, it was, why are you not going out to the bars with us anymore? How come you're at home reading your Bible?

How come you move out of your fraternity? Why are you talking about Jesus all the time? Why do you do Bible studies? Why are you going to church? What's changed? Hey, how come you're not selling insurance anymore and going into ministry? Hey, how come you moved your family to Denver? Hey, why is it that you do this in your home? Why do you tithe? Why do you spend your money?

Because I'm always wanting to grow under the lordship of Christ, I still haven't come close to arriving. But from now until I meet him, I want to be growing so that I'm a living testimony of the power of Jesus in my life. Because I will tell you this, all the changes that have been made in my life, I didn't change myself. I tried for a long time. I can't change me. I know how thoroughly depraved I am on the inside.

Any good change that's come in my life has been through repentance that I'm wrong and can't do anything. And Jesus Christ, the righteous one, has slowly but steadily been releasing his power in my life and redeeming me moment by moment.

That's why he's saying, always be ready to give an account for the hope that is in you. As a pastor, I would never stand up here and say, "Look at me, I'm an awesome person. And if you continue to preach for a while, you'll be an awesome person too." Anybody that knows me knows I'm not an awesome person. Anything good about me is that Jesus is on the inside of my life. And he's growing me and redeeming me. And what I would tell you is if he can redeem me, he can redeem you. And the more you see the power of your sin, the power over your sin, the more you'll share your testimony.

Because you will say, "I used to struggle with this. I used to deal with this. I'm no longer doing that. And I didn't change me. Jesus did. Let me tell you about that." See sharing the gospel. I'm good with evangelism classes. I've taught them. We can do it. But here's the truth. The reality is, all of you who are saved know the gospel. The reason many of us don't share the gospel is because we're struggling under the power of sin in some area, and so we feel ashamed to share the gospel. We feel like "Well, who am? I mean, I'm not really living right now."

So, we'll have guys that really love Jesus that had been born again that have been delivered from the penalty of sin that know that they're going to heaven. But they struggle with porn every single day or every single week. And when it comes to sharing

Jesus, like, I can't really talk about that. Because I mean, if they really knew my life, I'm not really living the gospel.

Or gals that truly love Jesus that have been born again. But their identity is still in this world. And so, they look in the mirror and like, "I'll never be like the gals on Cosmo. I'll never be this. And my identity is so [inaudible 00:20:24]. Who am I to share about Jesus when I'm not experiencing the life that he wants me to have?"

I mean, we could build the list of all these different sins. And here's what I'm here to tell you. Jesus Christ is powerful over any sin that you're sinning if you'll repent of it and confess it and tell the Lord you can't change it. He's the one that can make the change. That's the good news. Going to church is not about how to become a better person. You can do that in a lot of realms. Going to churches, how to be living completely holy not because of anything you do, but because of what the holy spirit does on the inside.

And when that happens, you can't but help talk about it. I mean, when somebody does something, when they're so in love with somebody else, they talk about it. Do you know that we do not offer classes at BRAVE Church for newly engaged couples on how to share your love for your newly engaged person, your newly engaged fiancé? Do you know we do not offer classes here for mothers that give birth to their first child, how to share the love for your first child with people? I mean, we don't have to share that.

Why? Because any new mother when she delivers a healthy baby and she's



healthy, we'll tell everybody. I'll make cards about it and send them out in the mail and tell the whole world. And everybody that gets engaged, they tell everybody why? Because they're so in love.

When you see God not only save you, but you see the power of his hand in your life from where you used to struggle, and say, "I no longer struggle with this. And I don't even know what happened because I'm the same person. But God has gotten a hold of my life." You can't help but tell other people that the good news is not who you are. The good news is who's on the inside of you doing the work right now. Amen.

And that's what he's saying, always be ready. That's why we do silly things in church all the time. I mean, we get all this legalism stuff and we ask questions like, "Can I drink or not? Can I celebrate Halloween or not? Can I wear this kind of clothes or not?" I mean, we ask these questions because what we want to do is what is the religious requirement for me to keep God happy with me? It's a bad question. Here's the better question. Ready?

God, at this given moment in my life, will this decision help me to better share you or not? If the answer is yes, this will help bring me more glory to share me, then engage in that activity. If it doesn't and you're not ready to share Jesus with all the hope you have, then don't do it. That's all it means.

So, always be ready to give an answer for the hope that you have within you, yet notice how it says to do it with gentleness and reverence. Gentleness is the idea of meekness. Meekness means I have the power of God on the inside, but I'm not going

to dominate you with it. It means I don't chase people around and shout at them and beat them over the head and yell at them and hit them with a Bible and tell them that they're going to hell because they're awful people.

It means I do it with meekness. Meekness means I know the power of God. He's in my life. And I want to let you know you can experience the power of God, too. Do a gentleness. And I do it with what? I do it with reverence. I do it with reverence to the Lord Jesus Christ because I care more about him than I care what other people think. And the reality is, for many of us, as I read this week, we fear God so little because we fear man so much. And fear of man can prove to be a snare.

If you're worried about, "Hey, if I live out the Gospel here, here's what people at work are going to think. Here's what people on my team are going to think. Here's what people in my sphere of influence and my neighborhood are going to think." You can't live it out. When you begin to care more about what Jesus thinks than your sphere of influence, then you can always be ready to give an answer for the hope that you have within you, with gentleness and with reverence for the Lord.

And notice what he says, "And keep a good conscience, so that in the things in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame." This is what we've been talking about. A good conscience won't save you. Being a good person won't save you. What it will do is when you live with a good conscience, if you're doing things right and people accuse you that you're doing them wrong, God sees and he knows.

If people say you cheated on your taxes, but you didn't cheat on your taxes, you have nothing to be ashamed of. If people said you cheated on your wife, but you didn't cheat on your wife, you have nothing to be ashamed of. If people say you lied, but you didn't lie, you have nothing to be ashamed of. When you have a clean conscience, it allows you to share the gospel in a more powerful way because you know you've been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. You know you're not perfect, but you know you have a clean conscience and a right standing before the Lord.

And that's why he's encouraging us, especially in times of crisis, especially in times of persecution, have a clean conscience and say, "Well, how do I get that?" Simple. Confess your sin to the Lord and repent of it, he who confesses and forsakes his sin. That's what the Bible teaches. And so, this is what he's teaching us to do. Sanctify the Lord, have a good conscience. And then he says this in verse 17, "For it is better if God should will it so that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong."

It's better if God should will it. Like when suffering comes, it's all part of God's will, just know that. It wasn't part of your will or you wouldn't be going through the suffering. None of us will suffering. And it doesn't mean that everybody's going to suffer or what kind of suffering you're going to have. But if God wills it, that you would go through a time of suffering, in that time of suffering, there's a blessing if you do the things that God wants you to do.

If you're living with a clean conscience, if you're doing the things God wants you

to do, there's a blessing in that. And we've seen testimonies biblically. We've seen testimonies in our own life of people that are living for the Lord, who are being accused of doing things wrong when they've actually done nothing wrong, whatsoever. And so, this is what he tells us. God's entrusted you and the reason that you're blessed, the reason that you're highly privileged is because you're God's plan A of sharing the gospel with the world.

And he's wanting you to have a clean conscience and you can have it not because of who you are, but who Christ is in you, so that you can share the gospel with everything you have, which leads you to the third point. The third way of living the gospel. We live the gospel by reveling in Christ's triumphant victory. We live the gospel by reveling in Christ's triumphant victory. To revel means to be excited about that Jesus Christ has triumphed over death and he is victorious.

Notice what he says, verse 18, "For Christ's also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God." Package in that half of verse is the entire gospel. For Christ also died for sins. Why did Jesus come? To die for sins. That's why he came. He knew that you couldn't make yourself better because Jesus demands perfection. You're not perfect, nobody's perfect. All of us have sinned and gone our own way. Make no mistake about it. Jesus' number one reason was to come and seek and save that which was lost. He came for sinners. He came for you. He died on the cross for sinners.

For Christ also died, now how did he do it? Once for all, once for all. Jesus didn't die on the cross more than once. He died once for all what? He died for all sin and he

died for all people. That's the gospel. Christ died once for all. Christ died for all sin.

Well, which sin did he die for? All of them. Now, considering that you weren't even born at the time that Jesus Christ died, which sins did he die for? All of them. Which sins in your life? All of them. The ones that you committed this week, the ones you committed on the way to church, the ones you'll commit this afternoon, tonight, tomorrow, three years from now, if you're still alive, all of them were paid for.

For who? For all sinners. There was a divine pardon issued on the cross as God the father poured his wrath out on the son. And Jesus went to the grave and defeated sin once for all. There's no more battle with sin. You're not called to battle your sin. You're called to confess your sin and forsake it. Jesus did all the work on the cross for all your sin. Problem with many Christians is when they feel convicted of sin and they feel I'm going to work on it. I'm going to work on this sin. I know that I swear a lot, darn it, and then I'm going to work on that.

You can't fix it. If you could fix your sin, then Christ Jesus died for nothing. He died so that because you couldn't fix your sin and you wouldn't fix your sin. And so, here's what he's saying. Christ died for sins once for all, once for all sins, once for all people, the just for the unjust, or the righteous for the unrighteous.

It means Jesus Christ has always been God. Jesus Christ has always been perfect. There's never been a time that he sinned. That's why he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. That's why he was born of the Virgin Mary. He couldn't be conceived by a man and a woman, by Joseph and Mary, or they would have passed down the sin virus

to him.

He didn't have that. He was perfect. He was the righteous one or the just one that died for the unrighteous or the unjust. Who's that? That's us. All of us, like sheep have gone astray. All of us have gone our own way. Every single person here has a testimony of sin that's myriad. And if you're here today say, "Mine's not that bad," you have the sin of pride, which is worse than any other kind of sin you could possibly have. I mean, all of us have sinned. Jesus Christ died for sins, once for all, once for all people, once for all sins, the righteous for the unrighteous to do what? To bring you to God.

You don't go looking for God. You can't get your way into heaven. You can't do anything. Jesus Christ came looking for you, the cross bridge the gap of hell to heaven. The cross bridge the gap from sinners to saved. It's Jesus Christ job to bring you to his father.

And Jude 24 and 25 said that he's going to present us before his father with exceedingly great joy one day when we get to heaven. Amen. That's who we are. That in a nutshell is the gospel. And we need to revel in that. I mean, if that doesn't excite you, then you don't understand the gospel. I mean, this is the most exciting news on the entire planet. There's nothing greater.

Now, I hear people tell you and it's fine. I'm all about vacations. I like vacations. I'm taking one soon. But when people come back from vacation, like "Where were you?" "We spent 10 days in Hawaii," or "We were in the Bahamas," or "We went

here."

I mean, that's great. That's good. It's refreshing. But if that's all you got going for you, I got something better. You got 10 days. Let me tell you what I got. I'm guaranteed eternity and bliss. And what you I think Hawaii is, is fallen. And it pales in comparison to everything that the Lord Jesus Christ has for me. And he's taking me there. And not only is he taking me there, he's with me every day of my life.

And when I get there, I'm going to be totally redeemed with a resurrection body that's killer for all eternity to worship and honor him with everything. That's what I got going for me. I'm pretty excited about. Amen. That's who we are in Christ.

And so, he goes on to say, this last part of the section I'll tell you, more heresy has come out of these next verses than about anything else. Let's just walk through this word by word, verse by verse and unpack it. He says, "Have you been put to death in flesh, but made alive in the spirit." Now, that could refer to the death and resurrection of Jesus, but I don't think so. Because Jesus was not only put to death in the flesh, but he was also made alive in the flesh. When Jesus Christ came back from the dead, he was fully God and fully man when he came back too.

But here's what he's talking about. When Jesus Christ was on the cross, God the father didn't die. God the Holy Spirit didn't die. God, the son in his flesh died because God the father poured all the sin of humanity on his son. And Jesus Christ, who had no sin, took our sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God and he died. But who didn't die? The second person of the trinity didn't die. Jesus Christ didn't die.

His flesh died, but he remained alive in his spirit.

Meaning at the moment that Jesus breathed his last and yielded a spirit to his father, he didn't just go into the abyss. His spirit remained alive. He died in his flesh, but he remained alive in his spirit. And notice what he did during that time, during those three days he was in the grave, in which also he went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who were once disobedient when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark in which a few that his eight persons were brought safely through the water. So, he went and made proclamation.

Now let's be really clear on this. This word "proclamation" in the original language means preach. It's the Greek word *kerusso*. It means to herald that the king has come or is coming. That's what it means to proclaim. The word that's not being used is evangelize. That would have been *euangelizesthai*. Jesus, in nowhere in scripture, does it say that Jesus went to hell. You will not find any place in the Bible including this text that Jesus went to hell. And when he went, wherever he went to proclaim to the spirits that were imprisoned, he wasn't evangelizing them.

Meaning this, there's no such thing as purgatory. There's no place you go after you die that you work off your sins. Let me tell you what happened on the cross. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and he said it is finished. It meant it is paid in full. Sin was atoned for in that moment. It was over. Jesus did not go to hell and fight the devil. I mean, how silly would that be? I mean, the devil is dependent upon. He didn't go fight him. He displayed it at the cross that he beat him. He didn't go to hell and fight him.



When Jesus said it is finished and he yielded his spirit and breathed his last, sin was defeated once and for all. Okay? So, there's no purgatory where people are working off their sins. And Jesus didn't go to hell and share the good news for those who maybe didn't get it the first time that they'll get it the second time. Because the Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, "For it's appointed and demanded die once, and after that face judgment." There is no coming back from the grave to trust Jesus the next time. You get time and space to trust Jesus now.

So, here's what he's saying. Sometime between the time that he died and rose from the dead, he made some sort of long or circuitous route, where he went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison. Now the spirits represent wicked dead, which I don't think it does, because the word "spirit" is never used of human beings. I believe he's talking about demonic spirits that he went and proclaimed that he indeed conquered death, and he indeed is the Lord and that they would indeed bow and serve him is what he did.

So, picture this. Jesus was on the cross. You remember he had two thieves next to him? What did he tell the one thief that came to know him before he died? Truly, truly, I tell you win today. You will be with me, where? In paradise. Where did Jesus go that day? Oh, he went to paradise that day. He didn't go spend three days in hell. He went to paradise. Somewhere along the way, he went and proclaimed to some demonic spirits, who in the time of Noah had disobeyed God, that, "Hey, I'm the king. I'm the Lord and you will bow and serve me."

And it fits perfectly with the rest of the tenor of scripture which says this, that Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. So therefore, God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name. So, the name of Jesus Christ, every knee should bow where? In heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father.

So, right before Jesus entered back into heaven, what was he doing? He was proclaiming to these demonic spirits back in the days of Noah, that, "Hey, you will submit to me now. I had submitted myself to my father and humbled myself and came to the earth. But I want you to know I am the king of kings. I am the Lord of lords. I have always been and you will be subjected to me from now and for all eternity." And to give some more scriptural support for this, for those of you saying, "Where did you get this?"

In Jude chapter one and six, we read about angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode he has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. So, there were some demonic spirits, some demons that God has kept in a place of prison for future judgment.

Obviously, some are still roaming around. They still have some free rein. But some have been put there. We don't have time to unpack this today. But if you go back and read Genesis chapter six verses one, two, three and four, you will see a picture of what this looked like when the sons of God cohabitated with the daughters of men.

And what you have that the world had become so corrupted the time that angels

left their place of authority, inhabited unspiritual men, and then they had offspring and they had this Nephilim or this great group of people. And what God did was Noah preach.

You know how long Noah preached? One hundred twenty years Noah preached. Do you know how many people got saved under the preaching of Noah after 120 years? Eight. You know who they were? His family. God refers to Noah in his word as a preacher of righteousness. Which means this, God looks at Noah and says one of the best preachers of all time. He's in the preaching hall of fame in heaven.

Only eight people came to Christ in 120 years. Please don't tell me that you can tell how good a preacher is by how many people come to Christ under his ministry. It's faithfulness to the word of God. And that's exactly what Noah did. He preached faithfully, and those who were with him were saved, which means there's no purgatory, there's no eternal salvation. I mean, the only other picture we really get is in Ephesians 4:8. That it says therefore it says, "When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

Now in the Bible, we think hell and hades and all those are the same place. Hades was often referred to as just a place of the dead. It wasn't a place of punishment. So, there was a righteous hades and an unrighteous hades. It may be what Abraham's bosom was, where all the Old Testament saints the righteous dead were.

Here's what I believe happened according to the word of God, that Jesus

breathed his last dead father into your hands that commit my spirit after he said, it is finished. All sin was atoned for. Jesus went, took all of the Old Testament saints who had Abraham's bosom, carried him to heaven, while making a proclamation to all the demon spirits from the days of Noah.

I'm the king of kings and the Lord of lords, and you will submit to me for the rest of eternity. And then that day, went to heaven. He was met by the thief on the cross and has been sitting at the right hand of God, the father almighty ruling ever since. Amen. That's what the scripture is teaching.

And so, here's what he's saying. He's saying back in First Peter three, now we get verse 21, which causes some problems. Corresponding to that, what he's done, 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. So, many people see that and say, "Okay, baptism now saves." So, it means that you have to get baptized or you're really not saved. That's not what he's saying. I mean, he actually gives clear testimony in the word of God that that's not what he's saying.

Now, we hear the word "baptism." As soon as we hear the word "baptism," we think water, water, water, baptism is water. But there's two understandings of this text that I think you can still hold true to the word of God and believe. One is corresponding to that, let me give you a type. In the same way that Noah had eight people in his family that entered the ark when the waters of judgment fell over the whole world, in the same way that those who are baptized into Christ, baptism means to be immersed into something, and you become like the one you're immersed into.

Those who have trusted Christ, those who are immersed in Christ will escape the judgment that God has for the entire world in the same way that Noah and his family escaped the judgment God had in the world when he flooded the whole world. That's what it means.

Or if he's really talking about physical baptism and he's saying baptism now saves you, in context, what's he been talking about? He's been talking about having a clean conscience so we can share the gospel. He's talking to a group of people that know that if they get baptized, they're going public with what they said they believed on the inside. If you know anything about the persecuted church, you'll know this. There are plenty of people that can come to Christ and Muslim communities, and it's not that big of a deal until they get baptized. Once they get baptized, they're either ostracized by their family or killed.

If you live in a society where you can trust Jesus by raising your hand, and it was no big deal, and nothing changed, that's different than what you and I experienced here. But if you live in a culture, whereby trusting Jesus Christ and going public with your baptism, you knew that you were going to die or you knew you're going to get kicked out of your family, there will be part of you is like, "Do I really want to do this?"

And he said, in corresponding to the fact that God is good, and the God is a righteous judge, and that God has you and no one can intimidate you, baptism now saves you. It doesn't mean saves you like eternally saves you.

It means saves you from what? Not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an

appeal to God for a good conscience. It saves you from not having a good conscience. Because if you are living in a day where you're persecuted for your faith. You're like, "I love Jesus, but I don't want to go public with it." Your conscience would be seared, saying, "I'm not walking out what I say that I believe." And what baptism saves you from is having that unclean conscience.

So, by going forward in the water of baptism and testifying the fact that, yeah, I'm not saved because I got baptized, I'm not saved eternally, but I'm saved from my conscience being cleansed. I'm saved from having a dirty conscience. And not the removal of dirt from my flesh, but internally, I know that I know that I'm standing for Jesus, and I'll take whatever comes. That also could be what it means. Either way, 100% that it's not teaching is what is referred to sometimes as baptismal regeneration. Baptism regeneration stage, you think you're saved, but until you're baptized, you're not saved.

There is no teaching on that. Otherwise, Jesus would have asked God to provide a rain cloud for the thief on the cross and doused him with water before he died. The thief on the cross died without being baptized. You do not have to be baptized to be saved.

But let me tell you something. Listen to me, church, if you are saved and by saved I mean that you've confessed Jesus as the Lord of your life, not that you believe facts about him, and that you want to go to heaven. I'm talking about he's the Lord of your life, than to save you from your own conscience, the next step of obedience, get baptized publicly in water. That's what it means.

And many people that know Jesus, "I'm afraid of water, I'm afraid of standing in front of people, I'm afraid to give my testimony," you don't need to be. You want to be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ and reverence him more than you care about what other people think. That's what he's saying.

And then, in the very last part of this passage, we see exactly what he did where we've already talked about, where Jesus is now after his resurrection from the dead, he's at the right hand of God having gone into heaven, after what? Angels and authorities and powers have been subjected to him. If you want other scripture for that, you can write down the book of Colossians. I believe it's chapter two verse 15. When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them having triumphed over them through him. What did he do? He triumphed over him. He's victorious.

Now, you think about a sporting event that you go to, where your team wins the championship, what do people do? I mean, they cheer, they go crazy. Let me tell you what heaven's going to be like. It is going to be a time of reveling and celebrated in the fact that out of the entire world that God chose you to be with him for all eternity, and he's worthy of being celebrated today.

He's worthy of being celebrated now. That's why today what we're going to do as we end our service is we have about six people today that are going to be baptized. One of them is actually my oldest child. I get to baptize my daughter today. I'm pretty excited about that.

But this is what it means, for you to live the gospel, you're going to be resolute in who Jesus says, you are going to live without fear. And you're going to walk the walk that he wants you to go. Always been ready to reverence him and give an answer for the hope that you have within you while reveling in and being excited in who you are in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

And by practicing these things and by putting these things together, God will stir your heart in such a way that he will do an incredible work in and through you. If you've never trusted in Jesus, we're going to pray here in just a moment. You can trust him now. You can trust him while you're hearing the testimonies here. I'm going to ask you to remain seated as I pray. And then you're going to get to hear testimonies from these six before we baptize them with our final song. So, will you pray with me right now?

Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor and praise for who you are. And Lord, we ask you today, we've never trusted in you. If there's someone here that hasn't trusted in Jesus, here's how you can pray. Jesus, I believe that you're the Lord of the universe. I know that I'm a sinner. But I believe you died on the cross and you rose from the dead for my sin. And right now, I confess you as my personal Lord and savior. Come into my life and change me.

And Lord, for those of us who know you, Lord, we know that we belong to you. But Lord, we just pray for your Holy Spirit to be powerful over sin in our life for you to do what you only can do. And Lord, I pray for all those getting baptized today that as



they share their story, Lord, they would sense your presence with them as they testify to your goodness. We give you all the praise, glory and honor, in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.