

As Peter continues his exhortation to the pilgrims of the dispersion, he has reminded them of many foundational truths of their faith. Time does not permit us to go over all of them – we might be here until tomorrow if I did that. So, I would encourage you to go online to see the past messages, of if you need a particular one, see me, and I will see that you get a copy.

The bottom line is that we have been chosen by God. I again remind you of 1 Peter 2:9-10: *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”* This is who we are.

Also, along the way he has reminded them that they might suffer for their faith in Christ. This is what he again tells them in the passage that is before us today in 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 (READ). So I ask you to turn with me there. (READ).

In this passage there are a number of important truths for us to consider, but we will only be able to consider what we see in the first part of the passage. We see an important truth in the first part of verse 18: *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust...”* What we see here is the important truth concerning the sacrifice of Jesus Christ – that is, his suffering and death on the cross – it was once for all.

If you remember under the Old Covenant – that is, in the Old Testament, God had required a series of sacrifices for his people in order that they might have forgiveness of their sins. We know a couple of things about these sacrifices. First, that they needed to be repeated continually – some were daily, some weekly and some yearly. We also know, as we compare scripture with scripture that all of these sacrifices that God had ordained looked forward to the one final and perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary. This is the clear teaching of Scripture.

In Hebrews 9:11-14 we read: *“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*

And in Hebrews 10:4 we read: *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”* So, while the sacrifices were ordained by God, we know that they looked to once and for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

We also read in Hebrews 9:26-28 we read: *“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.... He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”*

So clearly, our Savior made one final and perfect sacrifice for the sins of those who believe in him as Savior – that is, that he died for their sins. His sacrifice was sufficient for the sins of all who believe – those that looked forward to what he would do on the cross and for us, those who look back at what he has done.

This is the main reason the churches of the Reformation, of which we are one, do not celebrate the Mass – because the Mass is a sacrifice – and that is exactly what they call it. Those churches that have Mass are in essence sacrificing Christ again and again. But we believe in the one final and perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross at calvary – once for all – and as we read: *the just for the unjust*.

Christ was just – he was without sin. We – every human being that has ever lived and will live, is unjust. There is none without sin. The Psalmist says in Psalm 51:5 “*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.*” From the moment of conception we are sinners – and in the terms of our verse we are unjust.

In the next part of the verse we see the reason why Christ suffered: “*that He might bring us to God,*” The truth of the matter is that sin separated man from God. We were separated from God because of our sin. In fact, the scriptures say that without Christ we are at war with God.

But for those who have trusted in Christ as Savior and Lord ... those who have accepted his sacrifice on our behalf, we have now be brought to God. We are no longer at war with God. As we read in Ephesians 2:13-18: “*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.*”

And the rest of the verse tells us how we who were once dead in our sins, have been made alive: “*being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,*”

It is the Spirit of the resurrected Christ that gives us life — eternal life. Yes, we will still suffer physical death, but we are alive in Christ. In Romans 1:1-4, in Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome, he says: “*Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*” And later in Romans 8:11 we read: “*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*”

The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead gives us new life ... new life in Christ. Jesus had promised that it was important for him to go away, but when he did, he would send another comforter – the Holy Spirit – which he did on the day of Pentecost. The same Spirit that came into the Apostles on the day of Pentecost is the same Spirit that comes into are hearts and enables us to call on Christ as Savior and Lord.

How important is this? Well my friends, it is the whole ball of wax, as it were. If Christ had not died once for our sins, then we are still in our sins and open to the wrath and judgement of God. If Christ had not payed for

our sins on the cross at calvary, we would have to, just as those who have not trusted in him as Savior have to. Read through the Scriptures to see God's judgement on those who refused to repent.

As we read in our verse: *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,”*

We think of all that is happening in the world ... the unrest ... the political climate ... the economic climate and we must realize that it is all temporary. We know that this world will eventually pass away. But for those who believe in the one final and perfect sacrifice of Christ for their sins, we have nothing to fear, because we have been brought to God ... we are no longer at war with Him.

We have all the blessings of our salvation. We have forgiveness of sins ... we have the privilege of prayer ... we have the Holy Spirit living within us ... and we have a place reserved in heaven for us. Let us take great comfort in these things, knowing that Christ died for our sins to bring us to God and that we have new life in Christ.