

Roy's Sermon for November 21, 2021

1 Peter 3:22-4:1 'Done With Sin, We Live for Christ!'

Last week in 1 Peter we looked at Peter chapter 3 v20b-22 'The Flood; and Baptism In The Flood'. 20b-21: "In it only a few people, eight in all were saved through water and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also." I explained that it is called The Flood by most biblical teachers and preachers because there will only ever be one Flood of such magnitude and such complete destruction of everything that "has the breath of life in it" by God. And He sealed this promise by placing His rainbow in the sky!

I explained also that this was not just a Flood, but a worldwide cataclysmic event that changed the earth forever. Bringing about the four seasons, according to the Creation scientists. And such a Flood, being held by most cultures around the world, as part of their history. Through it we learn that God is Holy and He will not tolerate sin forever. He "will not be mocked" the scripture says. And also that God keeps His Word. Judgement foretold, and that judgement came! Peter writes, "not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God."

No, physical baptism is not what saves us. The outward act must be a reflection of God the Holy Spirit washing us clean! The flood symbolises baptism this: Amidst God's judgement on humanity for sin, His mercy is found! As Noah and his family were lifted up above those waters of judgement and carried into new life, even a new world! And this pointed to what Jesus would do upon the Cross. Because in the same way that Noah was lifted up above those waters of wrath, Jesus lives lifts us up, upon the Cross with Him, carrying us through God's judgement which He paid for with His Own Body and Blood, into new life, even life eternal!

Jesus' baptism was a baptism of death. We are symbolically buried with Christ and also symbolically resurrected with Him. 21b "It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The Greek word for baptism is *baptidso*. It means to be cleansed to be purified. That happens to us through Jesus at the Cross which the Flood points us to. As God cleansed the whole world of humanity's sin! Salvation for Noah pointing to the Cross. Yes the Flood and the Ark, pointing to Baptism, the Cross and Jesus!

Which is where we pick up the text this morning: 1 Peter 3:22-4:3: 'Done With Sin, we live for Christ!' Chapter 3:22 "Who has gone into heaven and is seated at God's right hand, with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him." Brothers and sisters, as chapter three comes to a close, we have this exalted victorious picture of Jesus reigning and ruling now, as I explained last week. That such is the assurance of our deliverance from this world of trials, difficulties and tribulation, into our home that awaits us, because the stone was rolled away, that tomb was empty and Jesus is on the throne now! He is "at God's right hand." Where all the power and authority of the universe sits. Yes we have the victory in Jesus! Notice that it says, "with angels powers and authorities in submission to him." Not that "angels, authorities and powers" will at some later date be "in submission to him", but that they are "in submission to him" now!

Friends, some would have us believe that we need to be looking for some future time when Jesus shall rule and reign over the earth. But clearly, through these things that were breathed into him by God the Holy Spirit, Peter is declaring, that Jesus reigns and rules now! In Revelation 1:12-18 we read: "I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a Son of Man, dressed in a robe

reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said, "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last. And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

Yes Christ Jesus reigns, and rules *now* dear friends. And in the context of the rule and reign of the murderous Caesar Nero, it is something that the early church, no doubt, needed to be reminded of. As they sought to stand firm in their faith in the face of such horror and tyranny. And Beloved, I feel that this is something which we need also to be constantly reminded of ourselves because our beautiful country is spinning out of control, upon that road of depravity and evil, which the powers that be, have set us speeding headlong toward!

Well similarly, (and yet with physical dangers all too real) Peter would encourage his original readers that Jesus had gone before them and that He Rules and Reigns now! Chapter 4:1: "Therefore." One commentator explains that v19-22 of chapter three should almost be read in parentheses. As Peter explains that world of sin with its consequences which we have been delivered from. And that it is the baptism of Jesus' death which actually saves us. And the following verses are actually linked with and refer back to ch.3:17-18. "It is better if it is God's will to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit." Ch.4:1: "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who suffered in his body is done with sin."

Yes, Peter is calling us to mortify the flesh. To cut off that old man or woman and the life that we used to live, when we still dwelled in the darkness of an unawakened soul! And he again uses Jesus' life as our example to do so. "He suffered in his body" was literally put to torture and death, v18 "the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God." You need to consider this, Peter is saying. It was not without cost that you found mercy. Do not let yourselves ever forget that there has been a price, indeed an infinite price, which has brought you from death to life. Jesus the son of God was put to death for you. And now you must put to death, (you must mortify, you must cut off) what remains of the former person. The old man who did not know God! "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body," v18 "to bring you to God," "arm yourselves with the same attitude, (and notice the words) because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin."

Friends, when Peter says this, he is not saying that Jesus "is done with sin" He had no sin to be done with. Although it is true that yes Jesus has dealt "with sin once and for all" (v18), what he is actually saying here is that the person who has, by God's grace, suffered the death of the old man spiritually, that person now "is done with sin." This means that, in effect, they have washed their hands of their old life! I'm done with that, they say. Having set the Cross of Jesus before them, they have died to sin through Jesus, as it were. So they now seek to live for righteousness sake, and are prepared if needs be, to suffer for their Lord in their body, in this life. Even as He did for them!

Peter gives us one of our main weapons to do so here! "Arm yourselves with the same attitude." Ch.4:1 "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body," again v18 "to bring you to God," "arm yourselves with the same attitude." Being prepared to lay it all on the line for our faith in Him who died for us, yes for the Name of our Saviour, because "he who suffered in his body is done with sin." Again, he has washed his hands of the old life and left it at the Cross. v2 "as a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God."

But is he saying that once we are done with sin all that lays ahead of us is holiness and godly living? So that is the reality of what our life will look like from now on? Brothers and sisters, if only that were true! But sadly, the reality is far different. As we have seen many times from Paul in his words in Romans 7: “the very things I want to do, I do not do. No, the things that I hate. This is what I do.” V24-25 “Wretched man that I am who will save me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

No, a life of perfection is not what is implied here. It is only through Christ are we saved and kept for glory. It is more that as those who claim to be walking in, (or at least in our heart of hearts to be desirous of) walking in the steps of the Lord. So we have turned our back on those things which put Him on that cross. Yes, we acknowledge that the old person with their ways is not acceptable in the sight of God. So we are seeking to live as new people who had been given a new heart! We are seeking to live, not for self and only for the here and now, but seeking and to do and to live always, in “the will of God” by the Holy Spirit! Just as it is said of Abraham in Hebrews 11:10 “For he was looking forward to the city whose foundations, and whose architect and builder is God.”

John Calvin points to the words the “rest of our life” as being significant. I'm sure, that sadly, we all know many people who have claimed Christ for a time, even for decades, and yet for whatever reason they have cast all that they have said and confessed of Him aside. I even know of a man who went to more theological college to train to go into full-time Christian work. Then after years of study came out a Pagan. Coming to the conclusion that evolution and science was the key to all things.

Dear friends, heaven awaits for only those who will persevere to the end. But returning to that life and those ways that we have been delivered out of, points to a contempt and a disdain, (not only of the suffering and price which has been paid by Jesus in His body for us) but also of Him who sent Him! We are even as “dogs returning to our vomit.” It's a graphic image isn't it. Have you ever seen a dog vomit up its food and then go back and lick it up? It is vile. Well that is the way that those who have tasted of the mercy of Jesus and turned away from Him and gone back to their old life are described in the Bible as “dogs returning to their vomit.”

No, it must be for the “rest of our earthly life.” We are not saved for a season. Nor will a season near to the door of the Kingdom see us in glory! Matthew 10:22 “all men will hate you because of me but he who perseveres to the end will be saved.” Beloved, Peter encourage us to live until God's will till the end of our life. And he does so by reminding us of our past, as a warning! Look at what he says v3 “For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do.”

Brethren, what we need to remember is that Peter is writing predominantly to Jewish Christians who have been spread through the Roman empire due to the murderous persecution under Nero, and it was going to get worse. But for him to write to Jews, saying “you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do” were sobering words of warning for them and for us. Because since most Christians today have been delivered out of that Pagan world, how much more do these words of warning, to not turn back to that lost world with its ways, apply to us! He now goes on to give a list from among the worst of the depravity in the sight of God, which marked those days. And may I point out that these things could easily be recorded in the age in which we live. V3 “for you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do, living in debauchery, last, drunkenness, orgies carousing and detestable idolatry.”

But friends, when we read this list, (as the commentator points out), we may think to ourselves, ‘I have never participated in any of this evil stuff. It has nothing to do with me’. Although, if you have

never at any time looked at anyone with lust in your heart to any degree, you are indeed a rare person. Yet Beloved, while sincerely not wanting to offend any of you may I respectfully suggest, that the root of these things to different degrees, lies hidden deeply within us all!

So Peter is writing to each one of us! And if we remember that he is writing chiefly to Jews, who now professed Christ, this warning against those behaviours which will betray our profession, is then clearly universal.

But before I continue, let me remind you of the words in v1: "arm yourselves with the same attitude." Remember, Christ suffered in the body for our sakes, so that old life would be dead to us, and we must live to the new life unto "the will of God." "For you have spent enough time doing what pagans choose to do, living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry." But Brethren, if Peter is warning about those things, then clearly, there still must have been a problem. And let's remember, he is writing to the churches!

Brothers and sisters, if we took this out of the context of it being one of God's letters to His churches through his servant Peter, it could be written as a warning to any major city or even town in just about any place around the world today, couldn't it? To what extent, these things of people returning to their old ways was a problem, we don't know. And he has obviously used some of the worst examples of sin and depravity to make a point.

But friends, these sins might not be the particular problems that confront you each day and make war against your walk with the Lord. It might be jealousy. It might be anger and resentment of something from your past. Perhaps a critical spirit. Or a lying tongue, or a vengeful heart. Dear friends whatever it be, we are warned by Peter of returning to any of these things for which Jesus suffered and died in His flesh, so that we could live a new life in the spirit in "the will of God." But again, what we see when we read these things is just a picture of the world isn't it. We could even add to this list today with things that are on a par, or even surpass them in depravity! The obscuring and even the doing away with those God ordained lines between male and female sexuality. The teaching in schools to even five, six and seven year old children of the ways, and the availability of that sexual depravity that abounds today, within literature and film, it is so evil. If you look on YouTube at Martin Isles, and his talk on Daniel Andrews the Victorian premier, it will blow your mind. It is so evil. His goal is to cut Christianity out of that society!

Friends, what we see before us is this picture of a perverse world, as Peter speaks words of warning to the Church of Christ to not go back there. Don't let that from which you were delivered become part of who you are again. "You have already spent enough time" there in this life, don't go back. Remember Christ's suffering in the Body.

Remember His Cross! Brothers and sisters, the crux of the matter is this: If such things are not confronted within the church, then it ceases to be different from the world it must witness to. It ceases to be the Church of God. The church for whom Christ died! In Malachi, when the world was in the church, so much so that it was indistinguishable from that world verses 17 to 18 of Malachi 3 say: "They will be mine says the Lord Almighty in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not."

Brothers and sisters can you see? In Malachi's day there was no "distinction" between the people of God and the world. They appeared as part of one another. And in many places today where Jesus is supposedly worshipped, it is no different. I heard a profound statement by a preacher named Bodie

Baucom some weeks ago. He made the observation that before the Reformation under the tyranny of Roman Catholicism, the focus of the church building was all about the altar up the front, where Christ is supposedly sacrificed each week. But when the Reformation came the altar was done away with and the pulpit elevated. They were even built overly large because it was all about the Word of God. Not what we do but what Jesus has done for us. Yes God's Word was all important!

Well today, many have done away with the altar and the pulpit, because it is all about the stage and the performance that matters! You watch some of these things that are supposedly worshipping God and it's horrifying. It is nothing more than a rock concert glorifying man, not God. The scriptures say, "Christ must increase and I must decrease." Well I can tell you, that there is nothing of Christ in such things. Yes it is all about the stage and the performance. And there are tens of thousands of lost souls in some of these places.

But there is someone who is absent. The Father the Son and the Holy Spirit! Yes it is Ichabod you see. In 1 Samuel 4, Eli's wicked two sons Hophni and Phineas had been killed in battle, and he had fallen off backwards from a chair and broken his neck killing him. The news was taken to his daughter-in-law while she was giving birth. And while she too was in the throes of death, she called out that the child be named "Ichabod." V21 and 22: "saying; that the glory of the Lord has departed from Israel for the ark of God has been captured."

Beloved, what is the glory of the Lord on earth if it is not the people of Christ when they meet together? But friends, as in Romans 1, God has given much today over to Satan. Much of what is preached and what happens in these evil places has nothing to do Jesus. Yes it is "Ichabod", you see. "The glory of the Lord has departed."

No, these things have nothing to do with Jesus, because the world is in the church. It is indistinguishable from the world. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot take behaviour that is acceptable in the world and then offer it up to God. That is what Peter is saying here. God's call to His church has always been, "come out from them and be separate." Be different. Be Holy. Yes "be in the world but not of the world" Jesus said. Peter writes, dear friends, that we are done with our old life. So we must live not for self anymore, rather "for the will of God." We have had the old life taken off by Jesus' death, and through Him and the Holy Spirit we have put on the new. So now we must walk in it! Yes we are "Done with sin" Philippians 1:21 "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Let's Pray!