

A STUDY THROUGH THE BOOK OF 1 PETER

BIBLE TEXT | 1 PETER 3:18-22

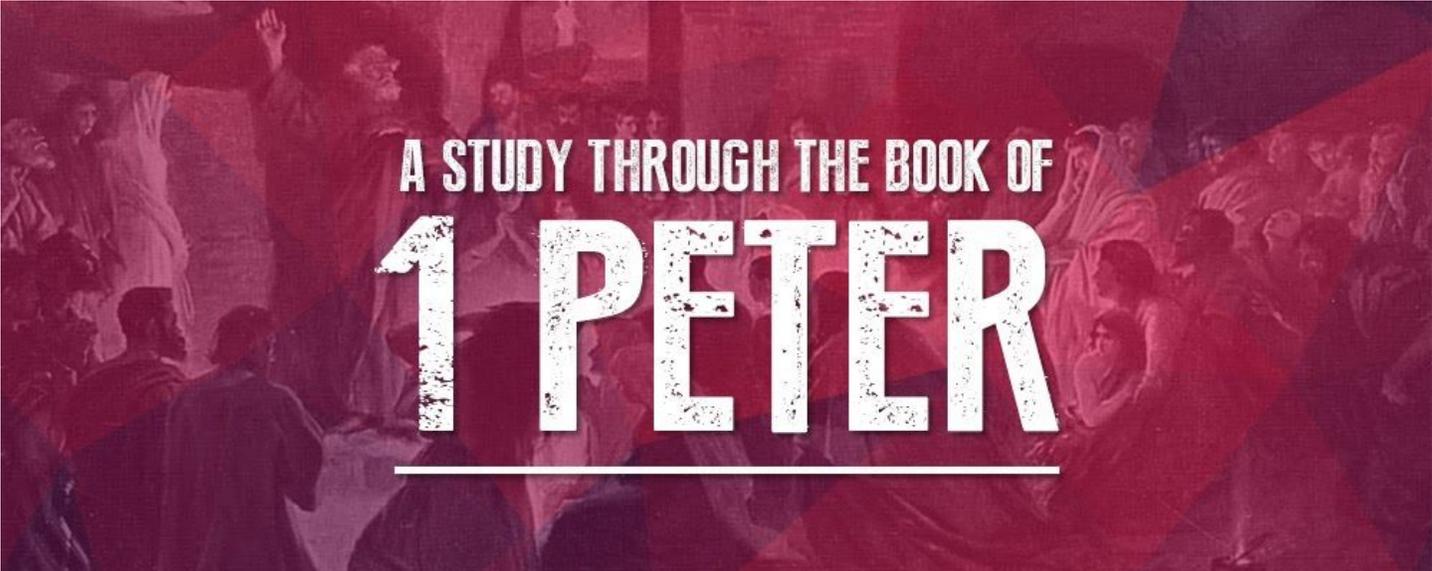
¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

DEVOTIONAL FOR 1 PETER 3:18-22

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When I think of the phrase or the place of "death row", I immediately think of someone that has been accused of doing something so bad that the only means of punishment that would justify their actions would be for them to be put to death. What's interesting is that Scripture says "death row" is what all of us deserve because of our sin (Romans 6:23). All of our sin is an offense against a perfect, holy and just God (Psalm 51:4). Because He is just, sin must be punished.

Now step back in time with me for a few moments. When I think of the process that the Romans used to crucify criminals, and when I read and study what Jesus suffered on the way to the cross, I can't help but think of a type of "death row". However, for the first and only time, a sinless man was on "death row". Why? Peter tells us here in verse 18, that Christ suffered for our sins in order to bring us to God. The sins that separated us from God, Jesus took upon Himself, died the death we deserve, so that we could be made righteous (Romans 3:22-26; 6:23) and have access to



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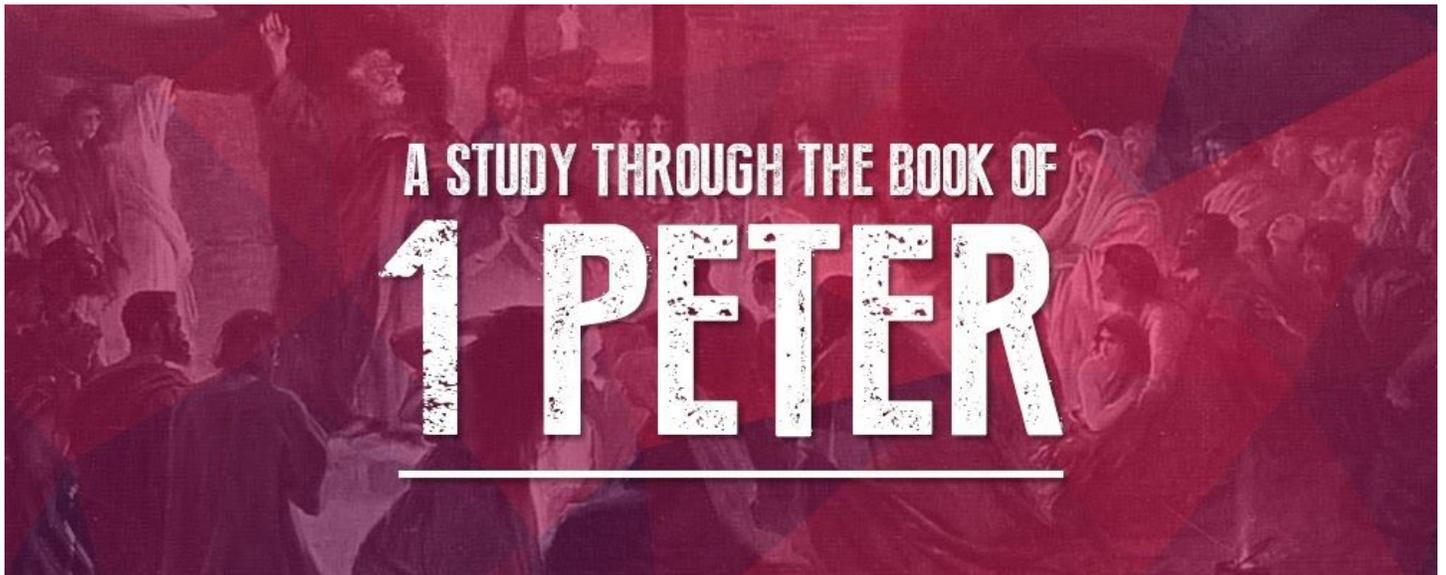
the Father (Romans 5:1-2). It's like Jesus said "I love you so much that I want to take your place on "death row". I'm going to place every sin that has, and will ever be committed by all mankind, on myself. I know you deserve punishment for your sin but this is grace." (Ephesians 2:8-9) When we acknowledge our sin, accept and believe in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10), our sins are covered by Jesus' blood. This is the transfer that takes place. Jesus died in our place. The righteous one died for the unrighteous.

But we can't stop with "death row". Christ not only died, He was resurrected from the dead (verse 18; 1 Corinthians 15:4). If the resurrection had not happened, ongoing suffering, sin and eternal death would still have its hold on us. Because of the resurrection, Christ's death is sufficient as a single sacrifice, once for all (Hebrews 10:10). And those who believe have the hope that Peter discussed in chapter 1, an eternity with Christ forever.

In verses 20 and 21 Peter addresses baptism. He tells us that the symbolism of the water that flooded the earth to wash the sin away in the time of Noah during the great flood, is a picture of salvation for Noah and his family because of their faithfulness. Verse 21 tells us that it's not baptism that saves us (1 Corinthians 1:17) as salvation only comes by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For believers, baptism by submersion in water is an outward picture (symbol) of an inward confession of faith. It symbolizes our old life, as a sinner, being washed away and our new life, in Christ as a believer, beginning (Luke 3:13-17).

Peter concluded chapter 3 by reminding us that Christ sits at the right hand of God interceding on our behalf. He is our ultimate and final high priest (Hebrews 7:25). Jesus is overseeing all things, and all things are under his authority. The old sacrificial system is no more. Jesus was the final and last sacrifice for all mankind. The suffering that Peter's audience was experiencing, and the suffering that we experience as believers in this life, is to be expected. But just as Peter was writing in Chapter 1, may our faith be shown and known in our suffering so that our Lord God will get the praise and honor.

If you do not know Christ as your personal Savior, I pray that this allows you to really feel and see what Jesus has done for you and me. Going back to my beginning illustration, we see how Jesus takes our place on "death row." He loved us enough that, while we were sinners, He died for us (Romans 5:8). But without believing in our heart that Jesus is Lord, and confessing with our mouth that He was raised from the dead (Romans 10:9-10) each of us is just a "criminal on death row".



Questions:

1. Have you trusted in Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? Or are you a criminal on "death row"? (If you would like to talk to someone about salvation in Jesus Christ, please email us.)
2. In this season of social distancing, how are you loving those near you and around you that seem to be unlovable or that are far from the Lord?
3. If others will know the Lord by our conduct (1 Peter 3:15-17), how are you doing in the following areas: finances, marriage, parenting, purity, attitude, language? Which area are you struggling the most in currently? (Please share that with your Journey Group (or another believer) this week so they can be praying for and encouraging you.)