

To Bring us to God – I Peter 3:18

I. Introduction:

- A. Elizabeth Barrett's parents disapproved so strongly of her marriage to Robert Browning that they disowned her.
1. Almost every week for years Elizabeth wrote letters to her parents begging for reconciliation.
 2. Not once did they ever reply.
 - a. Then after 10 years of letter writing, Elizabeth received a large box.
 - b. She opened it, and her heart broke.
 - c. The carton contained all the letters that she had been writing to her parents.
 - d. Hundreds of them, and not one of them had been opened.
 3. Today, those filial love letters are considered to be among the most beautiful in English literature.
 4. If Elizabeth Barrett Browning's parents had only opened and read a few of them, they probably would have been moved to receive their daughter back again.
- B. That is a sad story, but not nearly as sad as humanity's reaction to the steps taken by **Jehovah** to reconcile a world of sinners back to himself.
1. This morning I tried very hard not to address very far one of Peter's thoughts within this verse.
 2. He said that **Christ suffered** for the **purpose of bringing us to God**.
 3. Please forgive me if you think that another message on this subject is too much or too soon.
 4. But this is without a doubt one of the great texts of God's Word.
 5. It should be preached over, and over, and over again, and sometimes in rapid succession.
 6. And as should be our approach to every great Bible passage, let's keep our thoughts as simple as possible.
 7. Let's notice our **condition**, the **solution** and the **conclusion**, with emphasis on the conclusion.
 8. Christ Jesus died on the cross of Calvary **"to bring us to God."**

II. The subject in these words could be described as **RECONCILIATION**.

- A. There is a great need for reconciliation when it comes to sinful human beings and the holy God.
1. Before **Heaven** there must be a **Hell**; before **reconciliation** there must be **repentance**.
 2. And before reconciliation and restoration of fellowship with God there must be a change of condition.
 3. We'll get to details in moment, but as we saw earlier Christ **died for sin** and for the **unjust**.
 4. More specifically, Christ died to accomplish a **reconciliation** between the sinner and God.
- B. I will try not to belabor the point tonight, because we speak of it often, but we are all sinners.
1. We are not merely **diseased** of heart.
 - a. It is not that we have been brought up spiritually **deprived**. The word is **depraved**.
 - b. We are not just morally uneducated.
 - c. It is not that we are ignorant of God's will. We are natural rebels against that will.
 2. We are sinners before God, with blackened hearts and corruption which runs into our very bones.
 3. Our **spirits** are **dead**... our **souls** are **depraved**... and our **bodies** are **dying** as a result.
 4. It cannot be uttered too often, **"You are a sinner, you are a sinner, you are sinner."** We all are sinners.
 5. Your finest righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the eyes of the Lord.
 6. And your worst sins are not any worse than those of anyone else, in the eyes of God.
- C. As many of you know, Judy and I lived for several years in Calgary, Alberta.
1. Calgary has one of the finest zoological complexes in Canada.
 2. But as you can probably guess, Calgary is a city with a very cold winter climate.
 3. So the animals in that zoo have both indoor and outdoor compounds.
 4. If you visit the zoo in the winter, you'll be ushered indoors to see the animals.
 5. But that just might be a shock to your nose if you're not prepared.
 6. Most wild animals stink, and they reek on purpose; they **try** to stink.

7. But to them, there is no stink and stench at all. They think that their smells are delightful.
- D. And so it is with stinking men – reeking of sin, they are an abomination to God.
 1. But to their own noses and minds, there isn't the slightest idea that they are repulsive.
- E. As we saw, this verse declares that sinners are **unjust**, when compared to **the just** Saviour.
 1. And just what does "**unjust**" mean?
 2. It **doesn't** mean that you and I are unfit to sit on the bench of the Supreme Court.
 3. If you would look up the Greek word "**adikos**," you'd find it translated three ways.
 - a. For example you'd find it as it is here, or rendered with the word "**wrongfully**."
 - b. But more importantly, you'd also find it translated "**unrighteous**."
 4. Man lacks the moral character necessary for admission into the presence of God.
 5. We are **aliens**, we have no passports permitting us into the presence of God's.
- F. Would you recommend bringing a pack of weasels into chicken coop?
 1. Are open and unrepentant whores and transvestites good candidates to teach kindergarten?
 2. Would garbage men, fresh from the dumpster, make good surgical nurses?
 3. Neither is an unjust, unrighteous man fit to enter the throne-room of Jehovah.
 4. **But** – Christ died for those unjust sinners – the just for the unjust.
- G. And why did He die? To **reconcile** the **alienated** – "**to bring us to God**."
 1. As long as unrighteous sinners live without Christ, according to **Ephesians 2**, they are aliens, strangers, without hope and without God.
 - a. "**The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born.**"
 - b. And we are **all** wicked "**for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.**"
 - c. We may pretend to draw nigh unto God with our mouths, and honor Him with our lips, but our hearts remain farther from God as Spokane is from Sao Paulo.
 2. Here is our condition: we are sinners, unjust and alienated from God.
 3. And it doesn't matter what our most obvious sin appears to be in the sight of our neighbors.
 4. All of us, including those neighbor are sinners.

III. But there is a solution: Christ hath once suffered for sins.

- A. Notice that according to this verse, technically, Jesus didn't die for those sinners.
 1. That would be like taking aspirin to soothe the pain caused by 1st degree burns, or a from a knife to the chest.
 2. Yes, there is a sense that Jesus died for us, but to correct our condition, Jesus died for our sin and our sins.
- B. You might wonder what the word "**also**" is doing in this verse.
 1. "**For Christ also hath once suffered for sin...**"
 - a. That word is tying the sufferings of Christ to the suffering which saints endure for living like Christians.
 - b. Be patient in your suffering, says Peter, God will make all things right.
 2. You might also wonder about the word "**once**."
 - a. That means exactly what you'd expect the word to mean.
 - b. The one-time death of Christ on the cross, is the only sacrifice which can meet the demands of our sinful condition. A constant re-sacrifice, re-sacrifice, re-sacrifice of Christ is an abomination to God.
 - c. Read **Hebrews 10 & 12**, where Jesus' single offering is thoroughly emphasized.
- C. Now, look again at the word "**suffered**" which we considered this morning.
 1. It is the Greek word "**pascho**" which is from where the English word "**passion**" originated.
 2. Have you ever visited a Passion Play? I have been to a couple of them.
 - a. There is one performed in South Dakota's Black Hills every Summer, and that's where I saw them.
 - b. A Passion Play is a depiction of the **suffering** of Christ, portrayed by a number of actors.
 - c. It depicts the suffering of the Lord Jesus, pointing specifically to His **death**.

3. Christ **died** for our sins, according to the scriptures.
 - a. He didn't just hurt over them; He wasn't simply ashamed of them.
 - b. He didn't unjustly lose his job or friends because He was charged with our sins.
 4. He **suffered** for our sins, and in the course of those sufferings He died a very cruel death.
 - a. His blood was poured out on the ground under that cross on top of the hill called Golgotha.
 - b. As I said this morning, He suffered inexpressible pain and grief **for** our sins.
- D. A man was describing to his young daughter the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb.
1. The little girl had recently been to a petting zoo and had come face to face with a lamb.
 - a. As she listened to her father, she began to bristle and fume.
 - b. She angrily declared, *"I don't like killing lambs!"*
 2. Later that evening, Dad had time to reflect on what his daughter had said.
 3. He thought, if my little girl was repulsed by the thought of the slaughter of an innocent lamb, how must the Father of Lights be repulsed by the grisly death of His absolutely innocent Son?
 4. And how God must be repulsed by our sins which necessitated that innocent death?
 5. There was no other way to reconciliation but by way of Christ's sufferings.
 6. But why would the Lord even be interested in our reconciliation? There is no answer but *"divine grace."*
- E. But then Peter tells us that Christ was **quickened** by the Spirit. That speaks of life; of Jesus' resurrection.
1. I hope that it is sufficient to say, *"if Christ be not raised from the dead, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."*
 2. If Christ be not raised, those who are asleep in Christ will have perished for ever.
 3. Christ *"died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and he was buried and he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."*

IV. And for what Purpose? To bring us to God.

- A. There are a lot perfectly correct things, which this verse does **not** say.
1. It doesn't say, for example, Christ died so that we might be **forgiven** of our sins – although that is true.
 2. This doesn't say: That we might become the **sons** of God, **adopted** by the Lord into His family.
 3. This doesn't say: So that we might go to Heaven and escape Hell.
 4. This verse says: Christ died for our sins that He might bring us to God,
- B. If you took my wife away from me, I would be half a man, a shell, an empty pupa.
1. But that is only looking at David Oldfield from a human point of view.
 2. My spirit and soul were created to fellowship with their Creator.
 - a. And so was yours, and yours, and yours.
 - b. As long as we live without Christ, we live without God.
 - c. And if we live without Jehovah God, we live outside the purpose of our Creation.
 - d. Without the Lord we are half men and half women – shells, husks, hulls and empty pupae.
- C. By nature, we are aliens and strangers from the Lord and from the promises of God.
1. That is because of our sin, our unjustness, and our spiritual death.
 2. But Christ suffered for sins that He might bring us back to God.
 3. He died that we might be reconciled to Jehovah.
 4. Paul wrote to the church in Colosse and reminded them of their return to Lord. *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."*
 5. And how did that occur?
 6. Christ made that peace through the blood of his cross.
- D. Now this is the point that I'd like you to remember.
1. I hinted this morning at this mistake in the emphasis of modern evangelism.
 2. We put too much of salvation in the context of heaven, escaping hell and forgiveness of sin.

3. Too little do we talk about the prodigal coming back to the homestead and to his father.
 4. Too little do we talk about the father, in the light of the prodigal son.
 5. The Christian life is ***not just justification***, a accountant's declaration of balanced account.
 6. It is ***not just regeneration***: a new life and a new mansion in glory.
 7. What man needs is reconciliation and communion with the most holy Jehovah.
 - a. We need to be like Adam in the garden in the cool of the evening with his God.
 - b. We need to be like David in the Psalms enjoying the Lord in the fullness of fellowship.
 - c. We need to be like the loved one in the Song of Solomon
 8. That is the place where God wants His Creation.
- E. Peter is not preaching in this verse a gospel message to a congregation of unsaved heathen.
1. This is a letter to God's saints in Asia, Galatia and Bithynia.
 2. Peter is simply sharing something about salvation which some of those people might have forgotten.
 3. Today's preacher has two responsibilities: preach the gospel to the lost and teach the blessings of the gospel to the saved.
 4. Peter gives us an avenue to do exactly that: ***"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just of the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."***