**August 1, 2021**

**“Getting Out of Prison”**

**Going deeper in 1 Peter 3:18-22**

**INTRODUCTION**

Prior to this passage Peter has shared that you are called to the “good life” which means living in harmony with others, sympathy, familial type of love, tender-heartedness, and humility. This life calls for not returning evil for evil or insult for insult. He has reminded you to be prepared to share the hope you have in Jesus and to do this only when asked and with gentleness and respect. Finally, he has shared that this good life is not exempt from suffering, but that the Lord promises blessings even in the hard things of life.

**READ** – *Read (passage) aloud. Read it several times. Listen for what the Spirit of God is saying, don’t just think about it.* 18 For Jesus Christ suffered for all our sins, the just for the unjust so that He might bring us to God. He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit. 19 through whom Jesus went and proclaimed God’s salvation to the spirits in prison, 20 who disobeyed like long ago when God waited patiently in days of Noah while the ark was being built in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the body, but a clear conscience because you have been saved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 22 Jesus has the final word on everything and everyone including angels and all powers and authorities. He stands at the right hand of God the Father and what Jesus says goes.

**ENGAGE** – *Questions for going deeper. God is speaking… to you.*

1. Who does Jesus suffer for? How was the suffering of Jesus similar to the suffering that Christians experience for doing good? If Jesus suffered, should we expect to be exempt from suffering? Why or why not?

2. In what ways might have Noah’s situation been similar to those Peter was writing to? Do you think they could have related to what Noah went through? Can you?

3. What does the fact that salvation was proclaimed to the prisoners say about the mercy of God?

4. How do you think those eight felt about being set free? Is there a prison the Lord needs to set you free from today? Will you ask Him to do that?

4. What is it like for you to live with a clear conscience? Are there things that you need to ask the Lord to forgive you for so you can live with a clear conscience? Will you?

5. How might the symbol of baptism be more than just being cleansed from sin?

6. Do you think the situation Noah was in looked hopeless? What have you experienced that seemed hopeless and the Lord brought you hope?

**PRAY** – *God has spoken. So, reply.*

\*Praise the Lord for His sacrificial love that propelled Him to suffer for your sins. Ask Jesus to forgive you for those occasions when you have taken His sacrifice too lightly.

\*After asking for forgiveness thank the Lord for a clear conscience.

\*Ask the Lord to give you the faith and perseverance of Noah.

**LIVE** – *This is where the rubber hits the road.*

The life and actions of the Lord Jesus Christ showed us the necessity of living with a costly love. He has set you free to live this type of life. This week what will costly love and mercy for others look like for you? Will you trust that in the end the Lord, not your circumstances, will have the final word?