

This reading offers guidance for all Christians, counseling a readiness to suffer patiently for doing what is right. The First Letter of Peter was written at a time when Christians in Asia Minor were experiencing persecution. The author has given advice to particular groups of people and now urges all disciples to live together in love and humility, always being willing to speak in defense of their Christian hope. They should keep their consciences clear, and, if they do suffer, they are to remember how Christ, the just one, died for the unjust.

Please listen now to this reading from First Peter

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.

“Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits - to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Acts 9:36-42

In this reading from the story of the early church Peter is summoned to Joppa and raises up a disciple named Tabitha. Tabitha was known for her many good works and her restoration to life led to numerous new converts.

Hear now these words from the Book of Acts

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

Liturgist: This is the word of the Lord

All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.