

## CHRIST IS YOUR SUBSTITUTE

1 Peter 3:18 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.”

There are many times in life when a substitute is needed. That person is not always called a substitute, but that is what they are. A substitute serves in the place of or takes over when someone is unable to continue. We are most familiar with substitutes in sports. They come into the game when a player is injured. Or, they come into the game when the original player is simply not getting the job done.

Now reread 1 Peter 3:18. Can you see the word “substitute” in this passage? Jesus went to Calvary’s cross in your place. He was put to death on the cross substituting Himself for you. Romans 6:23 says the “wages of your sin is death.” It goes on to say, “. . . but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus (y)our Lord.” Christ was cursed (sentenced to death) in your place – Galatians 3:13; Jesus gave Himself as a sacrifice for your sins – 1 Corinthians 15:3; Christ gave His life for your life, that is you live by His having died in your place – Galatians 2:20. By God raising His Son back to life on Easter morning, He pronounced absolution upon you for whom Christ died -Romans 5:6. Jesus did for you what you could not do for yourself.

“He (Jesus) has now reconciled you by his death, in order to present you holy, blameless, and above reproach before Him (your Heavenly Father.)” (Colossians 1:22) This passage, as well as the others quoted above, describe the blessing you receive as the result of Jesus serving as your substitute. Peter said it in these words, Jesus substituted Himself, “the righteous for the unrighteous:” and St. Paul in Colossians 1 says Jesus, as your substitute “presents you holy and blameless and above reproach” to your heavenly Father.

Jesus, your substitute, works differently than in the sports world. In sports, the substitute gets all the credit while playing in your place. What happens with Jesus as your substitute? You receive His status before God. You receive His merits (holiness -sinlessness) through God’s gift of faith in Jesus. Using the sports analogy, even though Jesus is playing in your place, God does not see Jesus, He sees you. You obtain the holiness, the sinlessness of Jesus. Thus, through Jesus

your communion with God is restored. The end result is you receive God's gift of eternal life because of what Jesus, as your substitute, did for you.

Prayer: Thank You Jesus for Your life, death and resurrection in my place. Thank You for giving me Your righteousness, holiness, sinlessness that I can stand before God with full assurance He no longer counts my sins against me but credits Your merits as my own. Thank you for taking my place as my substitute on the cross and in the grave. Amen.

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day, Cleansed and redeemed, no debt to pay;  
Fully absolved through these I am From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood, Which at the mercy seat of God  
Pleads for the captives' liberty, Was also shed in love for me.

Lord, I believe, were sinners more Than sands upon the ocean shore,  
Though has for all a ransom paid, For all a full atonement made.

When from the dust of death I rise To claim my mansion in the skies,  
This then shall be my only plea; Jesus hath lived and died for me.

Jesus, be endless praise to Thee, Whose boundless mercy hath for me,  
For me, and all Thy hands have made, An everlasting ransom paid.  
(LSB 563)