

The Sufferings of Christ on the Cross

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, we do once again want to thank You for Your precious table. Thank You that we can come and worship You, adore You together. Lord, it is a wonderful thing to be with the saints, worshipping our God. Lord, we bless You for it. And now, Lord, I pray that You would just anoint this time, anoint our ears that we might hear You, anoint our eyes that we might see You afresh this morning, and anoint the speaking, I pray, anoint Your Word. In Your name I pray. Amen.

Introduction

For the last several months I have been meditating on Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and the crucifixion in Mark and Luke, and we will be reading those sections. It has really been in my heart to share this, but I share it with much intrepidation because it is such a huge, huge thing. And I was thinking about this hymn that keeps coming up in my heart, and I would like for us to sing, “When I survey the Wondrous Cross 124.” I remember this from childhood; it was one of my favorite hymns to sing. I was raised Baptist, and they used to have an altar call at the end of every service, and we would sing this a lot. It was one of my favorite hymns to sing at the altar call.

Hebrews 12:2a-3a: “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, ... For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, ...”

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus” means “looking away from everything else and gazing at Him.” This “consider Him” is “pondering, meditating, thinking about the Lord, considering Him.”

This morning, I feel the Lord would have us to ponder, to consider the suffering Christ on the cross. There is something I read from the Clarion, and I do not know when he wrote it, but if he wrote it in 1960 that would be ancient to us and not modern day, but the same thing applies now.

He said, “Modern day Christians do not like to consider the suffering of the Lord Jesus.” That is true. It goes against us somehow; it rubs the wrong way. But I have been meditating on it for quite a while, and there are just three lessons. Because it is so big, I have just narrowed it down to three things. The suffering, more is our example. His humility on the cross is our example, and forgiveness on the cross is our example.

His Suffering, Our Example

So, we will start by reading Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, and as we read it, I want you to be thinking, “Lord, you suffered for me.” The Scriptures say that He suffered for you. That is an amazing thing; not only did He die for you, but He suffered for you.

Psalm 22:1 “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.” This groaning here is roaring; it has a very intense wording in Hebrew. It is not just a little murmuring; it is deep from within Him. There is this groaning, roaring within His Spirit: “Why have You forsaken Me?”

Verse 6-8: "But I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people. (He was despised.) All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

Oh, how our Lord was mocked on the cross, cruelly mocked! Before I continue, Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 almost gives us a better picture of what our Lord Jesus suffered on the cross, and even the accounts of the gospel. It is an absolute and amazing thing.

Verses 9-10 is the Lord's reasoning within Himself to that mocking that He received.

"Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb." As He was suffering, He was considering, "You brought Me into this world. You gave Me My mother."

Verse 11: "Be not far from me, for trouble is near; For there is none to help."

There is none to help the Lord on the cross. There was great suffering of being alone, bearing what He did alone.

Our brother Stephen Kaung said, "On the cross there was great spiritual suffering; there was great mental suffering, and great physical suffering." The Lord suffered on the cross in every way possible; with His whole being He suffered.

Verse 12-13: "Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. They open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion."

Our Lord was oppressed terribly by demonic powers on the cross. The roaring lion, our enemy, had its mouth gaped wide open, and the picture is the feeding frenzy that the lion made. They are feasting on their prey; they are roaring with their gaping wide mouth. The Bulls of Bashan are fierce bulls, and the fierceness of the attack upon our Lord was just as bad in His physical suffering.

Verse 14-15: "I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death. (Speaking of the soldiers.) For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones, they look at me, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." Oh, how our Lord Jesus suffered!

Isaiah 53:1-5: "Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was

crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.”

He was despised, forsaken, full of sorrow and grief, crushed and afflicted.

Verse 6-7: “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.”

Verse 10a: “But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief;”

Verse 11a: “As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied;”

I read all of that just for us to get some of the impact of the suffering of our Lord at Calvary. It was a great suffering that He went through, great pain and agony, not only physically but in every way.

I Peter was written to a group of believers that had been spread abroad by suffering. They had been dispersed, and they were under great stress and great suffering. Peter tends to emphasize suffering worse than Paul who emphasizes the death of Christ. Peter will emphasize the suffering of Christ.

I Peter 2:21-24: “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, (Think about what we just read, “Christ suffered for you.”) leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, ...”

And before we talk about Christ as our example, I want to let you know we are not talking about the suffering of Christ in this way. We do not have an exemplary atonement which means we follow His example and that is our salvation, by being good and just doing what He did. There are some folks that believe that, and it is false. He bore our sin in His own body on the tree. That is our atonement. So, we are not talking about the atoning suffering of our Lord; our sins were laid upon Him on the cross. If you are here and do not know the Lord, that is your salvation. Your sins were laid upon the Lord on the cross and He bore your sin. But today we are talking about His suffering for us.

Verse 21: “..., since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example ...”

And this word “example” is a special word in the Greek. It means “a writing copy.” I remember distinctly it was first grade, or it might have been kindergarten. When you had to learn to write, you had a little booklet, and the letters were up here, and it had little arrows showing which way to go to make the letter. Then you had to do the same thing underneath, and to fill in you had to copy that letter. This is an academic term for just that. You have this copy and this pattern, and you are to copy it. It also has the idea of a painter who has a sketch, then he comes in later and paints on that sketch, filling it in.

So, Christ suffering is a pattern, an imitation for us to follow. And we have been called to follow that example. You have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for us, we are to follow in His steps. Now follow means “to tread” or “He is tried.” Your footsteps follow His footsteps in suffering. How did our Lord go through suffering?

Verses 22-23 tell us. “He committed no sin.” When our Lord was suffering, He committed no sin. There was no sin in Him that He would have to suffer for, and there was no sin that He committed while He was suffering. There was no bitterness, no wrath within Him, no self-absorbed sin in suffering. Our Lord was sinless. Remember, He is our pattern.

“There was no deceit found in His mouth.” He was never deceitful. His words that He spoke, if He spoke at all, were not in self-defense, not in anger. Our Lord’s reaction to suffering is quite amazing.

Verse 23: “While being reviled, He did not revile in return.”

Consider what these people were saying about Him and doing to Him; He did not revile in return. “While suffering, He uttered no threats.” He did not threaten, and we will look at some terrible humiliating things our Lord went through. He never uttered a word of threat to anyone.

“And He kept on entrusting Himself to His Father who judges righteously.”

Brothers and sisters, this is the way we are to go through trials and suffering. It is by the Spirit that we can go through trials and suffering this way.

I Peter 4:12: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange things were happening to you;”

He was telling these saints that were in a foreign land and pagan society: “Do not be surprised when suffering comes, when trials come.” Do you think America, our nation, is a Christian nation anymore? It is not; it is a pagan nation. It is as bad, I believe, as where these saints were that we read. Do not be surprised at trials that are going to come and are here now.

Verse 13: “But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that you also at the revelation of His glory may rejoice with exultation.”

I would say, “Lord, I really do not want to share this because it is a downer. The saints are not going to like this, that we are going to face suffering, that we will have suffering in our lives, and that we are to follow the Lord’s pattern for suffering.” I think after we consider it, we are glad that the Lord showed us the way of suffering. But verse thirteen is very amazing. “To the degree that we suffer and share in the sufferings of Christ, we are to have hearts of rejoicing. So, when we suffer, we suffer with rejoicing.

Verse 14: “If you are reviled (just like the Lord was) for the name of Christ, you are blessed, ...” How many of us would consider being reviled a blessing? It gets even better. “Because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.” Do you want the Spirit of glory and of God to rest on you? Well brothers and sisters, if you come under suffering, persecution, being reviled, despised or rejected, the glory of the Holy Spirit will rest upon you. That is an amazing thing! Peter said, “Make

sure that none of you suffer as a murderer, thief, evildoer, a troublesome meddler” or as a grouchy old man. But if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed.

Verse 19b: “entrust your souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

Philippians 1:29: “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,”

We love to believe, to walk in life, but do you know that we are also called to suffer for His sake?

II Timothy 3:12: “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. Suffering goes hand in hand with reigning, doesn't it? We love to reign, but do we love to suffer? I do not. I was so convicted all the way through preparing for this. I was asking myself, “Roger, will you tread in His footsteps of suffering?” Do you consider suffering for Christ a gift, a blessing, something to be rejoiced in? How do we pray for those who are suffering? Do we really believe the Scriptures? Often when we pray for those in great suffering, we pray: “Lord, get them out of it quick. Deliver them quickly.” To be harsh, which I should not be, so I will be harsh to myself, “You are depriving someone of going through something with his Lord Jesus, following in the steps of His suffering, depriving him of a great blessing.”

Final note on this: brothers and sisters, are you willing to experience the suffering of the Lord in your life? You might say, “Well, when there becomes great persecution, yes, Lord, I will be willing to be a martyr for You. If we become a Muslim country and we are a church like in Pakistan to draw a ministry to. Yes, Lord, I will stand for You when everything is totally against us.”

In I Peter 2 the context of what we first read was that a guy was having trouble with his boss, and his boss was treating him unjustly. And Peter says in I Peter 2:19, “For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.” Then he goes into, “Because you are walking in the sufferings of Christ.” The sufferings of Christ are not just societal sufferings; persecution is your day to day walk. In so many areas in your day to day walk, you have the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the Lord's sufferings. Isn't that an amazing thing? Keep your eyes open.

When I was considering this, in my business we had someone that was treating us very unjustly in my mind and heart. Of course, I am reading and studying this, and I said, “Okay, Lord. I am being treated unjustly; how do I walk in Your footsteps?” I just read these, and I said, “Lord, I do not want to sin with anger and bitterness. I do not want to revile that company.” I just went through the whole thing. And I said, “Spirit of God, allow me to walk through that situation in Your footsteps of suffering.” It turned out to be a great blessing. I ended up praying for that company, praying for the owners of that company. And you know the Lord just redeemed that whole thing. I do not how far down the list of little things this goes, but I consider a boss being unfair is pretty small considering what it could be. How many things in your life can you just commit to the Lord to suffer through with Him, to walk through with Him?

The big example is Christ suffering on the cross. Next, we will be looking at is the humility of Christ on the cross.

His Humility on the Cross, Our Example

Isaiah 53:7: "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth."

Twice it said in this verse, "He did not open His mouth." He was silently obedient to His Father. That word "afflicted" is called a passive verb. It means that He allowed Himself to be afflicted. Not only that He was afflicted, but He allowed Himself to be afflicted. He humbled Himself. *He humbled Himself*. What section of Scripture does that remind you of? Philippians 2 which we will be going to.

Then it says, "Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers." He was stripped of all His clothing, and He was silent about it.

Mark 15:15-24: "Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

The soldiers took Him away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium), and they called together the whole Roman cohort. (This comes up to the most humiliating part of the whole trial.) They dressed Him up in purple, (purple, the color of royalty) and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; and they began to acclaim Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him. After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him. They pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross. Then they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. They tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it. And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man should take."

He was sheared like that lamb. He said not a word. Brothers and sisters, consider this mocking here.

In Philippians 2:6 it says, "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,"

The Lord Jesus laid down voluntarily all the implements and authority.

Isaiah 6:1b-3a: "... the train of His robe filling the temple. The seraphim called out to one another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts." His robe was the symbol of His power and His majesty and royalty.

The scepter in Hebrews is the scepter of righteousness in which He will rule His kingdom. Our Lord had a scepter, a symbol of His power, and He is crowned with many crowns.

In Philippians 2 it says that He laid all this aside and became a Man and wore the garments of a Man. And in Mark, they dressed Him up in purple; they were mocking Him in the throne room, but they did not know how serious this mocking was. They were mocking His kingship, His crown, His scepter. They made a little scepter out of a reed and began beating Him on the head. How terrible this is! How shameful this is!

Then on the cross they stripped off His garments and hung Him naked there. All of that to say in Philippians chapter 2:8b: "... He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death."

How far down did our Lord go? All His glory taken from Him, He laid it down willingly. But this mocking, this humiliation that the Lord went through was something we will never understand.

Philippians 2:5 says something very amazing. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." He humbled Himself to the point of death on the cross.

We are to have a mind of humility, just like our Lord exhibited on the cross. All through His life He exhibited great humility, obeying His Father, doing everything His Father told Him, even to that terrible point of death on the cross.

The commanding Scripture is that all of us are to clothe ourselves with humility; humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. We are to have the humility of the cross, always clothed as our garment, whenever we are together. We are to have that garment of humility, each one of us from top to bottom, from side to side, all of us are to be clothed in that kind of humility one with another. Can you imagine, saints, if we were all clothed in that kind of humility, the humility that Christ demonstrated on the cross? What a wonderful thing!

His Forgiveness on the Cross, Our Example

Luke 23:33-34a: "When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

Verse 35a: "And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him."

Even the two criminals were sneering at Him, mocking Him, and yet the Lord was saying, "Father, forgive them." That cry rang out from our Lord Jesus. Nobody asked for forgiveness yet. Nobody was saying, "I am sorry for what I have done." Our Lord Jesus' heart was so tender, so full of compassion for us, and for these souls that were around Him, He cried to His Father, "Forgive them, they do not know what they are doing." Doesn't that show the tender compassion of our Lord?

One pastor that I listen to said, "He thought that that prayer of our Lord unleashed the Holy Spirit and softened that criminal's heart. So that the criminal could confess sin to the Lord, the one that just moments before had been mocking the Lord. He heard the Lord Jesus' cry, "Father, forgive them." And imagine that he would say, "Me? forgive me?" And then he spoke to the Lord.

In the Lord's suffering in Psalm 22, the Lord is dealing with this man in Psalm 23: "Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death (which they were) and the Lord was telling this criminal

not to fear any evil, I am with you. My goodness and My mercy are going to follow you all your days. Just a few more hours and we are going to be walking in Paradise together.”

This reminds me of Ephesians 4:32 that says, “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

We have a great example of the Lord’s heart here on the cross of forgiving before He was asked to forgive. He had a heart of compassion and tenderheartedness for this criminal. And our hearts are to be the same. We are to have a heart of tenderness and compassion one to another that our Lord demonstrated on the cross.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, when we see You suffering on the cross, I pray that we would come to a greater appreciation for what You have done, for the price You paid. Lord, teach us to walk, to follow the pattern of Your suffering. Lord, we are not used to thinking this way, but change our thoughts, I pray. When we are under small and great persecution, difficulty, and trouble, may we walk as You walked. Give us the humility of Christ on the cross who obeyed His Father to the very end, and may we clothe ourselves in humility with each other. Grant us a tender compassion in our heart one to another, even as You were so tender and compassionate, and had great love for that criminal and for all of those who heard. Lord, we bless Your name this morning. Amen.

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