

Lesson 17 – 1 Peter:

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Submission and respect toward others: 2:11 – 3:12

4) Example of Christ our Redeemer, 2:21b – 25:

“...even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.

He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone,

He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered.

He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.

He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right.

By his wounds you are healed.

Once you were like sheep who wandered away.

But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.”

While there is no explicit change of address here, the general character of these verses makes them applicable to all believers. These verses might incorporate an early Christian hymn or confession about Christ (22-25). Its focus is on the redemptive sufferings of Christ in language drawn largely from Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12.

It is a surprising truth that God has appointed that the innocent should sometimes have to suffer here on the earth as though they had done wrong, and the proper submissive attitude (spirit) in which such suffering must be endured, are both supremely illustrated in the passion of Christ. He has provided an example to be followed. For He was completely sinless both in deed and in word. He endured unjust reproach and ill-treatment in silence, satisfied to commit Himself to God, the righteous Judge. In His case, too, it

was the penalty due to our sins that He bore, right up to the extreme limit of public execution as though He were the worst of criminals. By His suffering He brought to us (wandering and lost sinners) deliverance and healing, restoration and the possibility of a new life dominated by new standards of living, and above all by a new connection and devotion to Him.

v. 21b - "...even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps."

Christ Himself taught His disciples three things about suffering:

I. That He must suffer because He was the Christ, Luke 24:25-27, 44-47;

24:25-27 – "Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory? Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

24:44-47 – "Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: "There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent."

II. That His suffering was for others, to provide a ransom and remission of sins, Matthew 20:28, 26:28;

20:28 – "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

26:28 – "for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many."

III. That all who would follow Him must similarly be prepared to suffer, Matthew 8:34, 10:38-39.

8:34 – "Then the entire town came out to meet Jesus, but they begged him to go away and leave them alone."

10:38-39 – “If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.”

At first Peter did not welcome or understand this teaching but here in 1 Peter, he shows how completely he had come to accept and to continue to promote this teaching as the very essentials of Christianity. Peter sums up these three points in this verse:

First, the implication of the phrase “just as Christ suffered for you” is that suffering is part of our calling only because it was first part of His. Suffering was divinely appointed for the Christ, just as the spirit inspired prophets had foretold – 1:10-12 – “This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ’s suffering and his great glory afterward.

They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.”

Second, His suffering was not on His own account, but for “us” – meaning that it was on our behalf, and for our benefit, to secure our redemption from sin – see v. 24 of this chapter – “He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right.”

Third, He thus provided in principle a precedent and an example for His followers. Suffering is something in which all who would in this present world be associated with God’s Christ, and be called ‘Christians,’ must expect to share. It is a prospect to be deliberately faced; and an experience to be regarded not with shame and resentment, but with joy and thanksgiving to God – see 4:13, 16 – v. 13 - “Instead, be very glad – for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.” & v. 16 – “But it

is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name!”

The phrase “you must follow in his steps” in the Greek indicates that we should follow His example – literally “to be traced or copied over. And the verb for “you must follow” suggests that we must ‘follow closely upon’ or to ‘tread in His steps. Look at the following verses from John’s Gospel:

13:7 – “Jesus replied, “You don’t understand now what I am doing, but someday you will.”

13:15 – “I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”

13:36 – “Simon Peter asked, “Lord, where are you going? And Jesus replied, “You can’t go with me now, but you will follow me later.”

21:18 & 19 – “I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go. Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “Follow me.”

21:22 – “Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me.”

In verses 22 through 25 there is a remarkable use by Peter of Old Testament language. There are no less than five quotations or echoes of the statements and phraseology of Isaiah 53:

Verse 22 follows Is. 53:9 - “because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”

Verse 23 is parallel to Is. 53:7 – “he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.”

Verse 24 has phraseology from Is. 53:12 – “he bares the sin of many,” and from Is. 53:5 – “with his stripes we are healed.”

Verse 25 echoes Is. 53:6 – “All we like sheep have gone astray.”

Even Peter, who had been an eyewitness of the sufferings of Jesus, our Lord, knew no better language than this with which to describe some of the features and significance of Christ’s passion (suffering). This

powerful example confirms Christians in the conviction that Old Testament prophecies and types were divinely inspired and provided and are divinely intended to help us to understand and appreciate the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

v. 22 – “**He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone.**” This verse provides noteworthy testimony to the complete sinlessness of Jesus by one who had been on the closest terms with Him. Peter asserts that Jesus never failed in word or action. He was not guilty of either error or deceit. This means, in a way which is true of no one else, that Jesus did not deserve to suffer. He was a lamb without blemish and without spot – 1:19 – “**It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.**” And so, having no sin of His own for which to answer, He could bear the sin of others.

v. 23 – “**He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.**” The stress here is on the surprising silence of Jesus, on His un-protesting to treatment which He did not personally deserve, because of His confidence in the righteousness and vindication of God. When He was unjustly accused and reproached, He did not answer back. When unfairly treated He did not condemn His oppressors nor call down judgment on them. (See Acts 23:2-3) His patient submission is remarkable. This corresponds to another point in the prophetic depiction of the suffering servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53. In verse 7, two times it is stressed that He kept His mouth shut: first, “**He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not His mouth**” & “**he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.**” It is important to note that the Greek present participles and imperfect tense emphasize that under sustained and repeated provocation, not one time did He break the silence. All the time during which He was the victim of abuse – He did not revile back. All the time during which He was suffering, He was not resorting to threats. The Greek verb ‘paradidomi’ means “to hand over” and it is used in the New Testament when Jesus was betrayed into the hands of wicked men – Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:41-42. Matthew 26:14-16 – “**Then Judas Iscariot, one the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests and asked, “How much will you pay me to**

betray Jesus to you? And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.” Mark 14:41-42 – “When he returned to them the third time he said, “Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But no – the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Up, let’s be going. Look, my betrayer is here!”

It is also used of John the Baptist when he was being “delivered up” or “cast into prison” – Matthew 4:12.

Matthew 4:12 – “When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee.”

It is used of our Lord when He was being “delivered” to Pilate by the Jews, and of Pilate’s “delivering” Him to the soldiers. In each of these cases it was for punishment, as if He was a wrongdoer – John 19:11, 16.

John 19:11, 16 – “Then Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

“The Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.”

Here is this verse “He left his case in the hands of God.” the verb is used to describe our Lord’s own surrender of Himself to bear the penalty of sin – not His own sin but ours – Romans 4:25, and not at the hands of men, but at the hands of God, the righteous Judge.

Romans 4:25 – “He was handed over to die, because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.”

We see the true character and the inspiring confidence of Christ’s willing, uncomplaining submission to unjust suffering. He acknowledged above His earthly circumstances and oppressors the sovereignty and the righteous judgment of God, and He committed Himself and His cause/purpose into God’s hands. By doing so, He provided in principle and in spirit an example to be followed by all who, in following Him, find that they too will suffer unjustly.

Also in this verse, we see that because of the uniqueness of His passion/suffering when the sinless One suffered as if He were the worst of sinners, and bore the extreme penalty of sin, there is a two-fold way that He acknowledged God as the righteous Judge. First, He voluntarily, in fulfillment of God’s will, He was taking the sinners

place and bearing sin, He did not protest at what He had to suffer. Rather, He consciously recognized that it was the penalty righteously due to sin. So, He handed Himself over to be punished. He recognized that in letting such shame, pain, and curse fall on Him, the righteous God was judging righteously. Second, because He Himself was sinless, He also believed that in due time God, the righteous Judge, would vindicate Him as righteous and exalt Him from the grave, and reward Him for what He willingly endured for others' sake by giving Him the right completely to save them from the penalty and power of their own wrongdoing.

v. 24 – “He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.” The first phrase of this verse explicitly confirms the two ideas that the suffering He endured was the penalty due to sin but that the sins whose penalty He bore were not His own but ours! He took the place of sinners, and in their stead bore the punishment due to their sin. He suffered for our sin, so His suffering and death was substitutionary.

Peter here spectacularly describes the suffering of Jesus. Peter is giving firsthand testimony – he was an eyewitness to this amazing event in history. Jesus intentionally suffered and carried our sin in His body and submitted to bear its penalty. He went through with His appointed and chosen task of suffering for us, or bearing our sins, right up to the climax of bearing the extreme penalty of capital punishment and public execution by crucifixion.

Notice that Peter changes the reference from the second person to first person plural (“our sins”) in order to include himself among the sinners in whose place Christ endured sin’s full and extreme penalty.

The purpose of Christ’s passion is to bring to those for whom He suffered, complete separation from their sins, and the possibility of a new life of righteousness. It is paradoxical that through the hurt done to Him that they (we) receive healing. His action provides release from the guilt and penalty of our sins and redirects our lives back toward God and His righteousness.

The Greek verb ‘apoginesthai’ = ‘being dead or ‘can be dead to sin’ occurs nowhere else in the Greek Bible. It means literally ‘to be away’ or ‘removed from,’ ‘to depart’ and with the participle used here,

the word describes what sinners are to become in relation to their sins, because Christ bore these sins for them, Christ is their proxy or substitute. We can stand before God as having no connection with our old sins, or with life of sinning. Thus, we are free to live unto righteousness.

The phrase “**By his wounds you are healed**” is taken from Isaiah 53:5. The word ‘molops’ = stripes, means a bruise, scar, or weal, left by a lash. It describes a physical condition with which slaves were all too familiar. It recalls the scourging of Jesus. The use of this phrase confirms that Peter’s thought here, however paradoxical, is deliberately that of benefit to be gained by sinners from our Lord’s suffering in their place.

v. 25 – “**Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.**” The opening phraseology of this verse follows Isaiah 53:6 – “**All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.**” This verse describes the general condition of humanity. We are all prone to wander and go astray, like silly sheep. This describes the readers condition before their conversion to Christ. Now things are different. Previously, life lacked a guide, a guardian, and a goal. In Christ we are redirected toward dependence and devotion to the One who cares for us and our well-being. We, who were once aimlessly wandering around, are redirected by our new relationship with the Shepherd.

In the phrase “turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls” the word “Guardian” is not a second title so much as a description of the function of the Shepherd – to be an overseer, to exercise oversight or pastoral care over the flock.

Peter’s statement here implies (what was explicitly taught by Jesus – John 10:16) that what unites those previously scattered abroad into one united flock is the attachment (relationship) with the one true Shepherd. It also implies that in the Church the only ‘chief Shepherd’ is Christ Himself!