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The Suffering Jesus 1 Peter 2:21-25 Part 3

When we think of Jesus we can think of Him in many different ways. Those different ways of thinking of Him are manifold. We may think of Him as a baby in a manger. We may think of him as a young boy confounding religious leaders. We may think of Him as a gentle loving teacher or compassionate healer. We may think of Him as a fiery orator. But the image that hopefully would be more consistently at the forefront of our thinking would be that of the suffering Jesus.

Certainly, the suffering Jesus, was clearly on Peter's mind in 1 Pet. 2. Hopefully we will remember that Peter had commanded that Christian slaves in **V. 18** to be submissive to their masters. He told them that this submission should be with all respect even if their masters were unreasonable. They were not to fight for their rights, stand up for their rights or defend their rights. The reason Peter gives for this is that this finds favor with God when we endure suffering patiently.

As our thoughts are being directed to patient endurance in the midst of suffering Peter's mind immediately focuses on the suffering Jesus. Let us read **1 Pet. 2:21-25**, "**For you have been called for this purpose** (to patiently endure in the midst of suffering). **Since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps. (22) Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; (23) 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; (24) and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.**"

As we consider Peter's statements related to Christ's sufferings in 1 Pet. 2:21-25 we have begun to consider three different ways that Christ suffered, three different ways that Christ had to patiently endure.

First of all we saw how Christ suffered as our STANDARD. Jesus was sent by the father into this world to suffer and to suffer unjustly. His patient endurance in suffering has become the standard by which every other child of God would be measured. Look at **V. 21** "**For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.**"

When he was being treated unjustly **V. 22** tells us that he "**committed no sin.**"

When he was being treated unjustly **V. 22** tells us that "**no deceit was found in his mouth.**"

When he was being treated unjustly **V. 23** tells us that "**while being reviled, He did not revile in return.**"

When he was being treated unjustly **V. 23** tells us that "**while suffering he uttered no threats.**"

This is the standard and as our standard or example we are to follow in his steps.

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Obviously we will not be able to match his steps perfectly but if we will simply be faithful to entrust ourselves to the righteous judge even Jesus did we will ultimately arrive where he is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God to forever find rest and peace free from injustice and persecution. How else did Christ suffer?

HE SUFFERED AS OUR SUBSTITUTE

Look at **V. 24** “**And He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, for by His wounds you were healed.**”

Jesus is far more than our example; He is our sin-bearer. He is our substitute. This is the heart of the Christian gospel.

We could not deal with sin. He could and did. As our sin drew the wrath of God down from heaven it was Christ who bore it. To put it simply, “If Christ is not my substitute then I still occupy the place of a condemned sinner. If my sins and my guilt are not transferred to Him and He does not take them then they remain with me. If He did not deal with my sins then I must deal with them. If he did not bear my penalty then I must bear it. There is no other possibility. It is either Him or me.

But let us praise the Lord the Scriptures are clear Jesus in fact did bear our sins in His body on the cross.

The verb “**bore**” (ANENEGKEN) means “to carry up” it is a ritual term. In the Septuagint it is used for bringing a sacrifice and laying it upon the altar (**Gen. 8:20; Lev. 14:20; 17:5; 2 Chron. 35:16**) In **James 2:21** it is used of Abraham bringing his son Isaac to the altar.

Let us then look again at the verse and see exactly what Christ in fact bore up to altar of the cross. It says, “**and He Himself bore our sins.**” He bore or in other words carried up our sins to the cross. How in fact could He do this? How could sins be offered as a sacrifice for sins? They couldn’t. Christ did carry up our sins to the altar of the cross but they were not the sacrifice, He was.

Look at the very next phrase “**in His body on the cross.**” Christ willingly embraced our sin and became so closely identified with it that Peter tells us that He bore our sins up to the altar not “**on His body**” but “**in His own body on the cross.**” Whatever punishment our sin righteously deserved would now fall upon Christ and would be suffered by Christ in His body.

Every evil thought that you or I might have had or ever will have was carried up to the cross by Christ where he received the punishment that we in fact deserved. Every evil word that you or I might have spoken or ever will speak was carried up to the cross by Christ where he received the punishment that we in fact deserved. Every evil action that you or I might have ever done or will do was carried up to the cross by Jesus and the punishment for that action in fact fell on Him. He did not suffer and die because of His sin but because of our sin.

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Is the “our” referred to here simply referring to the readers, to Christians or to the world as a whole? Certainly the “our” includes the readers, and certainly it includes all Christians who might be reading this epistle. But biblically we can include more than simply believers but in the “our.” We need to appreciate the extent of Christ’s sacrificial substitutionary work on the cross.

What does **John 3:16** tell us “**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.**” How extensive was his atoning work? It was extensive as his love. How extensive was his love? It was as extensive as the world.” **2 Cor. 5:19** tells us “**that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.**” Not just Christians but the entire world. I know that there are many who want to limit the atonement only to the elect but the scriptures tell us that God loved the world and to the extent he loved he provided an atonement. In **2 Tim. 2:6** it says, “**He gave Himself a ransom for all.**” In **2 Tim. 4:10** it says, “**He is the Savior of all men**” There is a sense he has shown Himself as the Savior of all men. And that becomes reality on a spiritual level to those who believe.”

In the word “our” is provision for the sins of all Jesus paid the penalty for the sins of the whole world but it is only applied to those who believe. Turn to **Lev. 16** and let us read **VV. 15-17** “**then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. (16) And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel, and because of his transgressions, in regard to all their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abide with them in the midst of their impurities. (17) When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel.**” The provision on the Day of Atonement was for all. And yet even though the provision was for all let us now look at **23:27-29** “**On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the Lord. (28) Neither shall you do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement on your behalf before the Lord your God. (29) If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people.**” The day of atonement would act as a covering for sin for the entire nation of Israel but if individuals were going to benefit from that provision made possible through that atoning sacrifice they were to be obedient in respect to certain things associated that particular day. They could not ignore the what they were called to do on the day of atonement and think that would be OK. They could dishonor the provision through acts of disobedience and think they would be OK.

The same is true for Christ’s atoning substitutionary work on the cross. His sacrifice of Himself on the cross was not only for our sins but for the sins of the entire world as we see in **1 John 2:2**. But if we choose to dishonor to provision by being disobedient to God’s call for us to exercise faith in Christ as our Lord and Savior we should not think we can be saved. **WHEN IT SAYS THAT CHRIST BORE OUR SIN IT IS THE SIN OF THE WORLD, BUT IT DOES THE WORLD NO GOOD UNLESS IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE OBEDIENCE OF BELIEF.**

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Spurgeon loved the doctrine of substitution. He knew that it was a the core of Christianity. He said, “In one word the great fact on which the Christian hope rests is substitution. The vicarious sacrifice of Christ for the sinner. Christ being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

He also said, “that there is no doctrine that fires my soul with such delight as that of substitution. Substitution is the very marrow of the whole of the Bible. It is the soul of salvation. It is the essence of the gospel. We should saturate all our sermons with it for it is the lifeblood of a gospel ministry. I am incapable of moving away one inch from the old faith. The gospel of substitution and the one thing that I do is preach it.”

He also said, “If you put away the doctrine of substitutionary death of Christ you have disemboweled the gospel and torn from it’s very heart.”

He also said, “I Pray God that every stone of this tabernacle may tumble to its ruin and every timber be shivered to atoms before there should stand on this platform to preach a man who denies the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ or even keeps it in the background for this is our watchword.”

I am concerned for the church in desiring to appeal to the masses of humanity. In order to grow their churches larger it appears that less and less time is being given to this glorious theme. But someone might say but all this theology is not very practical. My response to this would be “It is only when I realize that my sins caused Christ to die and that He willingly bore them for me, that I can bask in knowing the good news of God’s love. It is only this certain reality that I can truly enjoy abundant living. However no matter how important this might be to me personally this is not the reason given us in this passage for his death. What does this passage tell us? **“that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.”** The purpose of the substitutionary death of Christ was not just forgiveness of sin, the removal of guilt, not just a change of standing or position or even a better understanding of the love of God. IT IS A REAL CHANGE.

That we might **“die to sin.”** The word **“die”** is unique it means, “to be missing or to depart or cease existing.” He is saying that the purpose of Christ’s substitutionary death is that we might depart from sin.

Christ died for us that we might die to sin and to live to righteousness. To move from sinner to saint. Then he alludes to **Is. 53:5 “for by His wounds you were healed.”** The word for “wounds” is a word used to refer to scars from whipping. By his bearing our punishment we were healed. This clearly is speaking primarily talking of a spiritual healing our death to sin and being able to live our lives to righteousness.

Though this is certainly its clear application in this passage we need to understand that there is more than just a spiritual healing in the atonement. There is also a physical healing. **Mt. 8:16** says that Jesus was casting out demons and healing all that were brought to him in order to that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, **“He himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases” (Is. 53:4).**

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Though Jesus was at that time showing the world what would be theirs through him certainly he did not intent for them or for us to come to the conclusion that healing was for them in the atonement then or even now. If that were true then would not be sick and certainly would not die. Christ was only showing them what would be theirs through him in the future when we receive our glorified eternal bodies. Certainly this is clear from **Romans 8:23**.

Jesus suffered as our standard and He suffered as our substitute. but He also suffered as our shepherd.

HE SUFFERED AS OUR SHEPHERD

Look at **V. 25** “**For you were continually straying like sheep , but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.**”

Peter now speaks of us as sheep helpless, exposed to wild beasts and destruction a wretched picture of the needy state of the lost. But into this miserable human condition the Shepherd is seen interjecting Himself.

Notice the next phrase, “**But now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.**” The word “returned” is the word “EPESTRAPHETE.” It is the passive voice of EPISTREPHOO which means to “turn about” or “towards.” Because it is passive we cannot see it as something we have done, but rather what Christ has done. As the Good Shepherd who laid His life down for the sheep He came after us and turned us about to Him the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls.

What Peter is saying I believe very clearly is the fact genuine turning or a turning about away from sin to righteousness is also a turning to Christ and a submission to his leadership as Shepherd and Guardian.

For slaves this was good news. They might be suffering; indeed, they might be suffering because of their faith. But they were not lost, Christ was with them, and they were under his care even if their present physical experiences were unpleasant.

CONCLUSION

There are may different images of Christ that we may choose to think on but there is no more important image than that of the suffering Christ.

If we are going to righteously respond to the injustices of this world we must have a clear understanding of that suffering. As we have examined this passage that Peter had been addressing to slaves in order to encourage them in the midst of their suffering we have seen that Christ had suffered in the following ways.

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HE SUFFERED AS OUR STANDARD.

HE SUFFERED AS OUR SUBSTITUTE.

HE SUFFERED AS OUR SHEPHERD.

We have not been placed in this world to fight for our rights but rather to patiently endure even in the midst of injustice. May the image of the suffering Jesus help us in this pursuit.