

The Cross-A Model for Christian Discipleship

Introduction: The great theme of 1st Peter is that of suffering

- A. His readers are plagued by it
 - 1. Accused of wrong doing
 - 2. Insulted, maliciously slandered, considered deviant
 - 3. They are on the receiving end of evil

Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:12 NKJV

Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil." 13 Suffering for Right and Wrong and who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 1 Peter 3:9-17 NKJV

In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. 1 Peter 4:4-5 NKJV

- 4. Their faith had cost them deeply
 - B. Begins with slaves (18)-treated as property with no rights of their own
 - C. Moves to others-all followers of Christ who suffer for their faith by false accusation, unwarranted criticism
 - D. Christ-especially the crucified Christ-becomes the model for Christian discipleship

I. The Pattern of Christ's Suffering

NOTE: Peter is discussing suffering and taking for granted wrongful suffering-not what we deserve.

For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 1 Peter 2:19-20 NKJV

IMPORTANT: True disciples, followers of Jesus, people living, where God is directing will suffer wrongly.

HOW DO WE HANDLE IT?

A. We have a calling to fulfill

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 1 Peter 2:21 NKJV

1. The calling is NOT to suffer
 2. When we suffer-calling is to follow in Christ's footsteps
 3. Howard Marshall-"called to the patient-endurance of suffering"
 - a. Not responding as others might
 - b. Not anger or retaliation
 - c. Not political action or stoic resignation
 - d. Accepting it as Christ did
- B. Christ's suffering, provides both a model and an incentive to bear suffering in an extraordinary way without retaliation
1. Earlier Christ is seen as the unblemished Passover Lamb

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 1 Peter 1:19 NKJV

2. Now seen as the suffering servant (Isaiah 53 in filter)-Christ-the flawless and faultless lamb who goes on His way to death
 - a. ***"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 1 Peter 2:22NKJV***(Quote Isaiah 53:9)
 - b. ***Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; Peter 2:23 NKJV***(Quote Isaiah 53:7)
 - c. ***Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed. 1 Peter 2:24-25NKJV***(Quote ???/ for Isaiah 53:4, 5, 12)

- d. *For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. 1 Peter 2:25 NKJV* (Echoes Isaiah 53:6)

3. Example of Christ

- a. Uncomplaining
- b. Non-retaliatory acceptance of injustice
- c. When insulted-silent
- d. When accused-accepted it
- e. When threatened-he submitted
- f. Perfect model of active submission and trust (v. 23 “He committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.”)

C. Jesus is our example (v. 21)

1. Example-hypogrammon-only here in the New Testament
2. Elsewhere-way children copy letters when learning to write the alphabet

NOTE: They carefully copy the writing set before them, so disciples of Jesus must exercise the same care in imitating the example of Christ. Not easy but trust that God will ultimately avenge wrong.

II. The Purpose of Christ’s Death

NOTE: It is right to view Christ’s passion as our example but Peter was not content to leave it there. So, while he unfolds the exemplifying model of Christ’s passion-he simultaneously unfolds its saving and redemptive significance as well.

James Denney-“It is as though the apostle could not turn his eyes to the cross for a moment without being fascinated and held by it. He saw more in it habitually, and he saw far more in it now than was needed to point his exhortation to wronged slaves. It is not their interest in it, as the supreme example of suffering innocence and patience, but the interest of all sinners in it as the only source of redemption by which he is ultimately inspired.”

As Peter contemplates the cross- he sees four further aspects of its purpose!

A. Christ died to bear our sins (v. 24)

“Who Himself bore our sins.”

1. This phrase was a common way to say that those who sinned must pay the price for it.
2. Israel sentenced 40 years in the wilderness for their grumbling...

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. Ezekiel 18:20 NKJV

(Old Testament understanding)

3. But in the New Covenant-Christ bore our responsibility for us (Mercy of God)
4. Bore it on a tree! Why tree? (xylon) not usual word for cross (Stauros)

NOTE: Calculated by Peter

"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God. Deuteronomy 21:22-23NKJV

Jesus in His passion was not just exemplary but redemptive

- B. Christ died to renew our lives (24)

“That we having died to sins might live for righteousness.”

1. More than forgiveness of wrongs
2. Now joined with Christ and are obligated to bear the fruits of righteousness
3. Move away from sin-live a way that is right before God
4. Not cheap grace that allows us to live on as we please

James Denney-“If we have understood the cost of His substitution for us, we shall see it involves an immeasurable obligation to Christ and therefore His incalculable motivating power.”

- C. Christ died for our healing

“By whose stripes you were healed.”

1. Sin brings a multitude of ills
2. His death brings a comprehensive cure

One writer-“A new and strange method of theology; the doctor suffered the cost and the sick received the healing.”

- D. Christ died to restore our relationship with God

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. 1 Peter 2:25 NKJV

1. Sheep have a tendency to stray-wander-are oblivious to the dangers they face
2. Human beings are the same with God

3. Through the cross, Christ seeks out the wanderer

IMPORTANT TRUTH:

Is the cross exemplary or redemptive? Both!

- ✓ We can put sin behind and follow in His footsteps
- ✓ BECAUSE we have been redeemed by His death

Therefore-Discipleship demands MORE than a passive acceptance of the saving benefits of Calvary. We must actively participate in that death to the old life.

III. The Appeal of Christ's Death

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 1 Peter 2:21NKJV

NOTE: Christ's death and passion is a model for believers

- A. Not merely to be envied
- B. Not to be noted only
- C. It is to be imitated-we are to walk in His footsteps
- D. We are to respond as did He it injustice we suffer for His sake

Conclusion: A disciples or follower-true follower of a master

1. Share the master's destiny-must have complete trust in the master (destiny and future placed on the master's hand)
2. We follow where He leads-may arrive at a cross
3. Embrace it-with willing submission
4. Through suffering-freedom comes
5. By embracing injustice-evil will be defeated and grace will one day triumph