

Jesus' Suffering, Our Pattern

A. Paul wrote early in his ministry, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

1. That is the outcome of obeying the gospel.
2. That is salvation!!!
3. To become so much like Christ that it can be said, "Christ is living in us!"
4. Thus far we've talked about Jesus' purpose in doing the Father's will, Jesus' love for the lost (invitation), His compassionate nature, and His power to resist temptation.

B. But if Christ truly lives in us, then we must also share in His suffering.

1 Peter 2:21

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,

1. The Greek word for "example" means: *a writing-copy; the letters of the alphabet given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw them* (Thayer's).

2. The Lord gave us a copy or a "pattern" of suffering that we must follow – to follow Him.

3. And that suffering started the moment we decided to follow Him.

Mark 8:34

34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "***If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me***"

4. In other words, Christ cannot live in us until we are crucified with Him, and that begins when we were baptized into His death (Rom 6:3-4).

5. Outwardly, suffering has no appeal to us, but we cannot "know" Jesus Christ unless we suffer like He did.

Philippians 3:10

10 that ***I may know Him*** and the power of His resurrection and ***the fellowship of His sufferings***, being conformed to His death;

C. Before we go any further we need to define what we mean by "suffering." Everyone suffers pain; that's just part of living "in this old sinful world" (hardly a comfort can afford).

1. No, we're talking about **suffering for Christ**, for His sake, because we follow Him.
 - a. A kind of suffering that couldn't happen any other way; not even if you were following a false prophet.
 - b. And since someone might suffer for doing something Christ-like, and yet not be fully committed to Him., there is a second aspect to this suffering.

2. We're talking about **suffering that proves our faithfulness to Christ, and proves** that we are **confident in His promises**.

[Now we are familiar with the suffering of our Lord and Savior; that's what we gather here to remember.]

I. SUFFERING: REMINDERS OF JESUS

A. Predicted by God's prophets.

1. Isaiah 53 is about the Suffering Servant of God.

Isaiah 53:3-5

3 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.
4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
5 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.

2. Psalm 22 focuses on His suffering at the cross.

Psalms 22:14-18

14 I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And You lay me in the dust of death.
16 For dogs have surrounded me;
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
17 I can count all my bones.
They look, they stare at me;
18 They divide my garments among them,
And for my clothing they cast lots.

3. When the eternal, sinless God entered this temporary, wicked world it was an experience of intense suffering.

B. Jesus experienced suffering on a personal level.

1. He knew emotional suffering:

- a. He was grieved over the sins of people all around Him and the suffering it caused.
- b. He could see people making fun of Him and telling lies about Him.
- c. He could see that His own family was struggling to accept Him.
- d. When He healed the sick, people accused Him of blasphemy.
- e. He lived His life knowing that He would be arrested, brought to trial and put Him to death.
- f. He knew that men would strike Him, spit on Him and mock Him just before He went to die for them.
- g. Oh yes, He knew emotional suffering!!!

2. He also knew spiritual suffering.

a. Spiritual suffering is what you feel when you crave to sin, but resist it.

b. Jesus never gave-in to Satan's tempting offers; in fact, I think they sickened Him.

3. He also knew physical suffering.

a. He fasted and slept on the ground with a stone under His head.

b. He was beaten, slapped, and a crown of thorns pushed down into His scalp.

c. He was nailed to a beam and left to hang until He could bear the pain no longer.

[Jesus knew a vast spectrum of suffering. What does that mean for us? Afraid to go on?]

C. Experienced by His followers.

1. Jesus didn't try to deceive His followers with propaganda about becoming healthy, wealthy and satisfied in life.

2. Right from the beginning He told them that to follow Him and to be a part of God's kingdom involves some suffering.

Matthew 5:10-12

10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 **Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.** 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

John 15:18-19

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but **because you are not of the world**, but I chose you out of the world, because of this **the world hates you.** (2 Tim 3:12)

3. The world sees no need to defer to Jesus Christ on anything, much less everything.

D. Experience shared.

1. Now the upside of all this suffering is that when we do suffer, in these ways, we can know that Jesus is right there at our side going through it with us.

2 Timothy 4:17-18

17 But **the Lord stood with me and strengthened me**, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. 18 **The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom;** to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Acts 7:56

56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and **the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.**"

Hebrews 2:17

17 Therefore, **He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful** high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

2. Did you ever talk to a veteran?
 - a. A war vet has a lot of wisdom, advice and can provide moral support for those who are currently involved in military conflict.
3. Well, **Jesus is a veteran sufferer**, and now He in a position to help us go through what He's already been through.

[How did Jesus respond to His suffering?]

II. SUFFERING: RESPONSES OF JESUS

1 Peter 2:21-23

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, 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;

A. How did Jesus respond to suffering? He didn't fight it.

1. He didn't go around saying, "This is not fair! I don't deserve this kind of treatment!"
2. He never wanted to get even with someone.
3. He never said, "Enough is enough, I quit!" No, instead, He took it all in stride.
4. He took a bad situation and made a blessing out of it; **that's what He asks us to do!**

1 Peter 3:8-11

8 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For, "THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP

HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT. 11 "HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT. (Rom 12:17-21; 1 Thess 5:15)

B. How did Jesus respond to suffering? He put his life into the hands of His Father.

1 Peter 2:21-23

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1. He trusted the Father to work it all out (all His suffering) for the glory of God, for the purpose of God and for the spiritual betterment of US.
2. So rather than retaliate, fight it and try to get away from it, Jesus trusted God to support Him in the suffering and to make it meaningful.
3. He did! (Matt 4:11; Luke 22:43; 2 Cor 12:9; 2 Cor 1:3-7)

[Peter summarized the disciples' dual response to suffering in this concise, helpful statement

1 Peter 4:19, “Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

When we suffer because we are Christians, if we hope to glorify God we must continue to do what is right (scriptural), and trust Him — that is how we follow the example of Jesus in time of suffering.]

CLOSING

- A. The Christian life is like everything else of value: no pain, no gain.
 - 1. That’s true with our physical lives (health), and that’s true with our spiritual lives.

- B. Do you have anything of great value that didn’t cost you a lot of suffering.
 - 1. Think about the sacrifices you’ve had to make, and the suffering that goes along with it, to pay your mortgage (or to have and maintain this building)
 - 2. The point is, how can we appreciate what is valuable if there is no price to pay for it.

- C. The reason we can appreciate “the crown of glory” (1 Pet 5:4), the “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim 4:8), is only because Someone suffered a lot to bring it to us.

- 1. He tells us that we have our own price to pay.
- 2. First the suffering, then the crown.

1 Peter 5:10

10 **After you have suffered for a little while**, the **God** of all grace, who called you to **His eternal glory in Christ**, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

- D. Do you remember your mother’s embroidery patch work?
 - 1. How on one side was a mass of threads, but on the other side a beautiful picture.
 - 2. For the Christian, life may seem like a lot of loose ends, but from God’s vantage point He sees the picture He’s working on.
 - 3. There is a reason we suffer. We are being prepared for eternal glory!

- E. Finally,

1. Jesus suffered to save you from your sins.
2. Please don't make His suffering meaningless for you.
3. His suffering can bring God's grace and God's salvation to your life.
4. Please respond to Him right now!