

## Christ's Suffering

Unaware: What things were you unaware of as a child? (cell phones, computers...)

There are spiritual realities that we are unaware of.

1 Peter 3:18-22

- 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;
- 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.
- 17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.
- 18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;
- 19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water.
- 21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
- 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Today's text is filled with surprises.

### **Text Outline:**

Suffering for doing good v 17

Christ's suffering for our good v 18

Christ's accomplishments vs 19-22

It is a letter written to a church under persecution – suffering for the sake of righteousness.

### **I. Suffering for doing good.**

For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

When the righteous suffer for doing right, verse 17 says that it is the will of God. Peter has recently stated,  
 “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...” (2:21)

It was the will of God for Christ to suffer to be the sin bearer. As His followers we will share in His sufferings. A few verses in chapter four state this clearly. Are we willing to admit our struggle with this concept?

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.” (4:12-13).

Paul writes to the Roman believers:

“...if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Rom. 8:17b-18)

Suffering can build our character in this life, and provide many lessons for our lives, but the greatest benefits are yet to come.

## **II. Christ’s Suffering on our behalf**

For Christ also died for sins once for all,  
*the just for the unjust,*  
 so that He might bring us to God,

Christ’s death was sacrificial, substitutionary, and sufficient

### **1. Sacrificial –**

For Christ also died for sins once for all,

The writer to the Hebrews says of Christ’s death on the cross,  
 “...He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself...  
 Christ [was] offered once to bear the sins of many...”

(Heb. 9:26, 28).

And again, “He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.” (Heb. 10:12)

**2. Substitutionary** – He died in our place  
*the just for the unjust,*

We deserved death because we were sinners and Christ paid the price.

**3. Sufficient** –  
so that He might bring us to God

Atonement – made us right with God – ‘*At-one-ment*’

### **III. Christ’s Victory**

...having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;  
<sup>19</sup>in which also He went and made proclamation  
to the spirits *now* in prison,  
<sup>20</sup>who once were disobedient,  
when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah,  
during the construction of the ark

I really enjoy this textual surprise. Peter gives us two amazing insights into what happened before Jesus appeared to His disciples after being raised from the dead. Our flesh - our physical bodies that will die; but we will be alive in spirit.

- **Jesus proclamation in Hades**

While Jesus body lie in the grave His spirit having left His body made a visit to Hades, the place of the dead. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus two distinct places or destinies were given for each. The place of the dead was divided into two parts – Paradise or Torment, with a boundary of a bottomless chasm in-between. Lazarus was in Paradise, and the rich man in a place of torment. Apparently, Jesus visited this place of torment, specifically identified as a prison of wicked souls. The clues given in Scripture describe this prison, or holding area for souls awaiting the final day of Judgment. The Revelation of John the apostle describes this coming time:

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:13-14).

This place is not the final hell but a prison holding the dead who are awaiting judgment. Afterwards the holding area itself is thrown into the final lake of fire.

The dead that Jesus visited are described as those who were disobedient; who had lived during the time in which Noah was building the ark, just prior to God's judgment of the world by the great flood. During the 120 years that Noah was building the ark he was warning the people of the coming judgment. Also there were wicked angels that transgressed the boundaries between men and angels, cohabiting with human women. Jude writes of these fallen angels, "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day..." (Jude 6)

Peter writes of the patience of God during this same time, as men inspired by demons became increasingly wicked.

Genesis records,

"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He as grieved in His heart." (Gen. 6:5-6)

God patiently waited for people to repent from their wickedness for over a century as they grew worse and worse.

"I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land... for I am sorry that I have made them." (v 7)

"Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence" (v 11)

Jesus' Proclamation Keyrigma – ...made proclamation

Very likely it was a shout of glorious victory, similar to "It is finished!" echoing from the cross which paid for sin, conquered death, and purchased salvation for all God's people past and future.

Afterwards Jesus emptied out paradise, or opened the doors allowing the spirits of saints to enter the presence of God in the heavenly realms.

**Jesus makes an appearance in heaven**

Paul writes in the Ephesian letter,

“Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive a hosts of captives, and He gave gifts to men.’ Now the expression, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? (i.e. place of the death- Hades which He emptied). He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things).” (Eph. 4:8-10)

Paul spoke of his coming death not in terms of going to paradise, but entering into the presence of Jesus.

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain... having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.” [than staying with them]. (Phil. 1:21,23b)

The net result of Jesus finished work on the cross, followed by His proclamation, is that He then ascended to the Father in full victory, bringing with Him all the saints who had died and were waiting for this time.

Jesus made proclamation that **He was the ark** that would bring people safely through the flood of God’s judgment. Then He escorted the saints to heaven.

Peter writes,

...eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water.

- 21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
- 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Noah and his family survived the flood. Only the ones who entered the ark were spared. How does baptism fit into this scenario?

**Corresponding to that** ... Gk. antitupos as an ‘anti-type’

The ‘type’ was the flood which delivered Noah and his family from the world of wickedness through the Ark.

**Baptism saves us** is the picture of believers fully identifying with Jesus

– joining with Jesus’ death [as someone into the waters of baptism];

and fully identifying with His resurrection life as we live a new life in Christ.

Baptizo is the Gk. word “*to join or identify,*” “*to be united with,*”

Through our relationship with Christ we are saved. Paul writes describing this, “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His **death**, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His **resurrection**.” (Rom. 6:4-5)

Our deliverance from sin gives us a clear conscience before God and man. Peter describes Jesus as being *...at the right hand of God*. having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

All that Jesus gave up before becoming a man is restored to Him here. He who was always fully God surrendered his godly prerogatives or rights in becoming man, so that He could die as the sin-bearer and accomplish salvation. After Jesus death and resurrection through complete identification with man and his sin, He returns to His place in heaven.

Paul summarizes this scene:

“...[Jesus] emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant; and being made in the likeness of men...He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:7-11)

Spiritual realities surround us of that we are unaware of. We may only realize rejection when we take a stand for Christ or godly standards. When we pray, worship, feed our spiritual nature with the Word of God, are a part of a Christian fellowship, we are more alert to God’s presence. It’s as if our spiritual eyes and ears are opened. **Imagine Heaven; p. 53.**