

“Now That You Mention It”

I Peter 2:22-25

(Begin with reading the opening paragraph from Pilgrim’s Progress.)

And so begins the adventure of the man who is known as Christian in John Bunyan’s classic book *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

That could be the story of any one of us – loaded down by an unbearable burden and the anguish of what to do about it once we realize it is upon us. We’ll see later on that burdens are lifted at Calvary.

We ended our message last week looking at verse 21 and noting most importantly Peter’s words to these weary pilgrims that “Christ suffered for you.” He brings up Christ as our ultimate example to follow because of the unjust punishment inflicted on Him from false accusations. The preceding paragraph dealt with how slaves were to submit to their masters even when they were wrongfully treated for doing good ending with the reminder to follow the example of Christ who endured harsh treatment for us.

Peter recalled for them the substitutionary, efficacious way in which Christ suffered. His suffering made it possible to buy us out of the slave market of sin, what we call redemption. The chapter concludes by taking a look at the kind of suffering He endured and the effectual work that resulted in our salvation.

What He suffered on our behalf gives us a reason to endure. When we think about all He suffered for us it encourages us to stay strong and stand firm when we face times of suffering. So if you are going through something right now that seems to be a heavy burden too great to carry, look to Christ and be encouraged by His example.

Be encouraged by the sinless Christ

Be encouraged by the suffering Christ

Be encouraged by the Shepherding Christ

Before we turn to our passage in I Peter 2:22-25

let’s read from Isaiah. This passage has been deemed the backbone of the early church on its meditation of the suffering Savior

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Please stand to honor God’s Word.

I. BE ENCOURAGED BY THE SINLESS CHRIST – v. 22

Verse 22 is an important verse because it underscores the importance of Christ’s sinless nature. The sacrifice required for the debt of sin needed to be perfect. So if Christ committed even just one sin, then His death on the cross was of no benefit to us. As a matter of fact we could say that if Christ had even just one sin, then He was not God. And if Christ had even just one sin, He Himself would also have needed to be saved just like you and me. He also would have been under the same curse of sin whose wage is death. The death Christ endured satisfied the debt owed to God because of sin and that it was acceptance is seen in His resurrection. Had God not been satisfied, Christ would still be in the grave and we would still be dead in our sin.

Peter points out His sinlessness.

Notice first that Christ is our example in action.

A. Christ Is Our Example In Action – v. 22a

Peter draws from Isaiah 53 which is a prophesy about the Messiah some 600 years before. Isaiah 53 is about God’s perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. It is a picture of the suffering Savior that Peter draws on to vividly illustrate for us the kind of example we can look to during our own times of suffering in order to draw strength and courage to keep going.

Notice our text says that “He committed no sin” –

ever. He was sinless. Others saw it.

After a moment of remorse and regret Judas returned with the money paid for Jesus' betrayal and confessed to the religious leaders that he had betrayed "innocent blood" meaning that Jesus was without sin (Matthew 27:4).

Of Himself, Jesus stated in John 8:29 that He always did what pleased His Father referring to God.

Then in verse 46 (John 8) Jesus asked the religious leaders if they could prove He was guilty of sin.

When Christ stood before Pilate during His trial in which the religious leaders wanted a guilty verdict from the governor that would sentence Him to death, Pilate after his investigation stated "I find no basis for a charge against Him." (John 18:38) He then repeated that claim in 19:4, 6 when the Jews demanded Christ be crucified.

As Jesus hung on the cross between the two thieves one of them attested to the sinlessness of Jesus by stating "this man has done nothing wrong."

And then in Hebrews 4 the author in describing Christ as our great High Priest had this to say: "For we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, YET WITHOUT SIN." (Hebrews 4:15)

The NIV says we have High Priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses in every way.

The Message reads – "We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all - all but the sin."

One author suggests that the only way in which His temptations differ from our temptations is in the results. He was without sin.

He knows exactly what we are going through because He's been through it – and remained without sin.

Now some might argue "yeah, but He was God." To which we need to remind that person that while in fact He is God, He also was human in every respect. He did not just give the appearance of being human, He was human. (John 1:1, 14)

So, as God He could not sin, and as man He did not sin – ever.

II Corinthians 5:21

I John 3:5

Christ is our example in action – He was sinless. Christ is our example in attitude. In this He was also sinless.

B. Christ Is Our Example In Attitude – v. 22b

"No deceit was found in His mouth."

John MacArthur writes that the mouth expresses sin most easily.

In the presence of the Lord Isaiah confessed that he was a man of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5).

In Matthew 15:18 Jesus said that the things which come out of the mouth begin in the heart.

In Luke 6:45 Jesus said that out of the overflow of man's heart the mouth speaks.

James the brother of Jesus wrote "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." (James 1:26)

He then wrote in James 3:2-12 about the importance of taming the tongue.

Peter says that Jesus had no deceit in His mouth.

We came across the word deceit back in 2:1. It was among the sins we were to get rid of as citizens of a heavenly kingdom journeying here on earth as pilgrims. It is a general term for sinful corruption.

It was a word used to describe mixing something with seed, oil or wine to dilute it. Christ however, was unmixed, uncorrupted, not deceitful in anything He did or said.

He was totally honest. He always told the truth. Give that some thought and go away encouraged that all the promises He made will come true. He didn't try to deceive us with false hopes and empty promises.

As a matter of fact no matter what you are going through consider Christ.
Hebrews 12:2-3

Here is the answer to our times of suffering when we may want to give in or give up – consider the suffering of Christ and all He endured, so that you don't grow weary or lose heart. He suffered for you. The word consider in verse 3 means to think about Him and weigh His worth, to look at carefully or seriously, to examine, to think about in order to understand and decide. Before you toss in the towel think about all He endured on your behalf. Don't just give a glance His way, take time to thoroughly examine His enduring actions as a means of bolstering your own decisions to not give up.

So when you are in the middle of some difficult event look to Christ who suffered for you, consider what He endured, consider that all His promises are reliable and will come true. Let Him be your example and be encouraged.

From verses 23-24 let's be encouraged by the suffering Christ.

II. BE ENCOURAGED BY THE SUFFERING CHRIST – vs. 23-24

Peter returns with thoughts from Isaiah 53 and the kinds of things Christ suffered.
We notice first that Christ suffered patiently.

A. Christ Suffered Patiently – v. 23a
Christ was insulted, but gives us an example of His silent submission even in the face of His suffering. The word “revile” (KJV) or “insult” (NIV) is a word that refers to abusive speech, especially in an insulting manner that is done over and over. It describes harsh, verbal abuse and can be accompanied with physical abuse.
Matthew 26:67-68
Matthew 27:27-30

Through it all we see that Christ humbly and patiently accepted it.
Matthew 26:59-63
Matthew 27:12-14

How many of us would say that's hard to do, to stand by knowing you are innocent while false accusations are relentlessly hurled at you? Christ kept His composure through it all because He knew there was a greater purpose to it than defending His innocence and honor. So how is it that Christ could endure such opposition from sinful men? We find the answer in how Christ suffered positively.

B. Christ Suffered Positively – v. 23b-24

Don't you find it a display of incredible resolve on the part of Christ not to retaliate?

Here's the answer to how Christ could endure such hostile opposition without retaliation: “He entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly.”

We'll get to it eventually but notice quickly what Peter writes in 4:19: “So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”

Was it God's will that Christ suffer? Absolutely. So Christ did what was natural setting an example for us – to commit Himself to God.

So we go back to Hebrews 12:2 and consider that

we are to “fix our eyes on the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame.”

Was there shame in the cross? The Old Testament says that anyone who hung on a tree was cursed. The cross then became a stumbling block to the Jews who then considered in their minds that Christ couldn't be the Messiah because He was cursed for hanging on a tree. Yet Christ turned it around and made it a blessing and found joy in it because through His suffering and death on the cross He accomplished our eternal redemption and His glorification. Hebrews 12:2 continues by telling us that what was shame turned out to be His glory because He was then raised to be seated at the right hand of God the Father. We then read in Hebrews 1:3 that after He had made purification for sins by dying a substitutionary death on the cross He sat down at the right hand of God who exalted Christ who was cursed because of our sin. Being seated on the throne is an indication that the work of redemption was done. There wasn't anything else that He could do, nothing else that could be done and nothing else that needed to be done. As He cried out on the cross “It is finished”.

Christ knew that by entrusting Himself to the Father, who judges justly all those who insulted Him, all those who beat Him, all those who condemned Him would ultimately face a Just Judge. They would stand before God and give an account for their actions and be found guilty.

Romans 12:19 is a good verse for us to remember when we face unjust suffering. “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

Christ had every opportunity to retaliate, to fight back but He didn't. During His trial He said He could have summoned 12 legions of angels to defend Him. In the Roman military a legion

consisted of 12,000 soldiers. Christ could have instantly called 72,000 angels to rally to His side. But as Isaiah 53:7 “He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.”

Don't try to avenge yourself. Instead give it to God who in His time will judge justly those who insult you, who cause you to suffer. Our example is Christ in how He suffered patiently the pain and humiliation of the cross and the crowd.

Now notice something important from verse 24. First we see Christ's personal involvement – “He Himself”. He stepped forward and offered Himself to bare our sin. We can't do a thing about our sin.

We are most familiar with the first stanza of the wonderful hymn *Rock of Ages*.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy wounded side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
save from wrath and make me pure.

We are less familiar with the next two stanzas which clearly states that we are utterly helpless to do anything about our sin.

Not the labors of my hands
can fulfill thy law's commands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.

It says that I can't work hard enough or obey God's

commands or zealously pursue doing good or shed enough tears of remorse. Nothing I do can atone for my sin. I bring nothing to the table with which to bargain for my salvation. Only Jesus can save. I come naked and destitute looking to His grace so that He can wash me.

In my quiet time this past week as I came across a wonderful hymn that expresses the work of Christ as explained in verse 24. It was written by William How in 1854 titled *Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love.*

Jesus! Name of wondrous love!
Name all other names above!
Unto which must every knee
Bow in deep humility.

Jesus! Name of priceless worth
To the fallen sons of earth,
For the promise that it gave—
“Jesus shall His people save.”

Jesus! Only name that’s given
Under all the mighty heaven,
Whereby man, to sin enslaved,
Bursts his fetters, and is saved.

Jesus! Name of wondrous love,
Human name of God above!
Pleading only this, we flee,
Helpless, O our God, to Thee.

Christ personally invested His life “He bore our sins in His body.” He took our sin on Himself.

The word “bore” means to carry as a sacrifice. It implies a burden of tremendous weight. It was a heavy load that Christ carried away for us. Sin is such a burden it makes the very frame of all creation grown (Romans 8:22). The word “bore” also underscores that Christ was personally active and a willing participant in the transfer of our sin to Himself.

Let’s return to Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* and to our traveler Christian.

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Verse 24 speaks to the vicarious and substitutionary nature of His death that it was for “our sins” taking our burden, our debt on Himself.

John Phillips writes “At Calvary, the sin of the world was heaped on Him. He paid it all! God can now write ‘paid in full’ over every bit of it. People do not go to hell because of their sins; they go to hell because they refuse to accept Christ, who died for their sins.”

I John 2:1-2

J. Durham Smith –

All our sins were laid on Jesus,
Jesus bore them on the tree;
God, who knew them, laid them on Him,
And, believing, we go free!

Calvary indeed covers it all!

When we trust Christ we are now dead to sin and alive to righteousness. We are now in Christ and a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17). We now experience a freedom from future judgment and the guilt of sin; we can experience a freedom from a life of sin and experience a freedom to live for God.

What joy is mine when Christ I see,
Who bore my sin upon that tree,
The chains of sin that held me fast
Are gone for good, I’m free at last.
(HW)

When we consider what Christ endured for sin we must now have a different view of sin. We must come to loathe sin and no longer delight in it.

Christ died for our sin, let’s not dishonor Him by continuing in it. Live for righteousness. It was by His wounds we are healed. This is not physical healing as some claim, but spiritual healing. The mortal wound we suffer because of sin has been healed, cured because of His death on the cross.

I hope you will be encouraged by the sinless Christ and by the suffering Christ. Let me close with this: be encouraged by the shepherding Christ.

III. BE ENCOURAGED BY THE SHEPHERDING CHRIST – v. 25

Again we go back to Isaiah 53. Verse 6 says we are all like wandering sheep who have the propensity to wander. The sheep had wandered from the shepherd but now they are returning to Him. I have read numerous reports about how dumb sheep are.

A dockhand was loading sheep onto a ship. He had heard how dumb sheep were so he decided to do a little experiment. He placed an obstacle on the gangplank leading onto the ship and when the sheep came to the obstacle they all stopped. He picked up 5 or 6 sheep one at a time and lifted them over the obstacle. Then he removed the obstacle and when the rest of the sheep came to the spot where the obstacle was they all jumped as if jumping over it.

We are all like sheep going astray. It implies putting yourself in danger, being ignorant, helplessness, and getting lost. But this Shepherd helps us find our way back.

Notice two roles that Christ has.

The first is that Christ guards as a shepherd.

A. Christ Guards As A Shepherd

Peter uses the past tense here. We “were” like sheep, wandering around and lost. But we returned to the shepherd. Returning implies repentance – our turning from sin and turning to Christ. There are numerous occasions where we are referred to as sheep and the Lord as the Great Shepherd as in John 10. We also have that wonderful parable Christ tells of the shepherd who has 100 sheep, one of which is lost. He leaves the 99 in order to go find the one lost sheep.

We can also turn back to Psalm 23 which reminds us of the great lengths the shepherd goes to in order for his sheep to be taken care of. Christ our Shepherd wants the very best for us. And so in our

times of suffering know that He will care for you. Psalm 23:4 reminds us that He is with us every step of the way through our journey as pilgrims, even in difficulty. He will never leave us or forsake us, that’s how much we mean to Him. He guards us. Ezekiel 34:11 “I will look after My sheep.”

Keep in mind that Christ our Shepherd has our best interest at heart and consider those afflictions we encounter to be “achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” II Corinthians 4:17 Be encouraged by the shepherding Christ who guards.

The second role we see is that Christ guides as an overseer.

B. Christ Guides As An Overseer

It’s the same word used elsewhere for Bishop and literally means one who watches over someone. Paul uses it of spiritual leaders watching over a local church. Christ oversees us, guides us in daily living through His Spirit.

Hebrews 13:20-21 “May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Remember that He bought you with His own blood. He has a vested interest in you, so He will guard you and guide you. Our response to His guarding and guiding according to John 10:27-28 is to follow Him and He will give us eternal life, life. He will not only remove the burden of sin, He can help with the difficult burdens you face each day.

Now that you mention it Christ is our example in times of suffering so be encouraged.