

"The Believer's Suffering"

Part 3

1 Peter 3:13-5:14

Introduction: In the last two messages that we have looked at in First Peter we have been considering the suffering of the believer and with what attitude we are to face the suffering with.

Notice 1 Peter 3:13-15

We learned that we are privileged when we suffer for our Lord because the suffering draws us nearer and the suffering prepares a way for glory. We also considered how we are not to be troubled in our hearts by the terror of persecutors and the remedy to keep from being troubled is to sanctify Jesus Christ as Lord in our hearts. With that we are to be equipped to give an answer of the hope people see within us. This answer is to be given with self-control and respect.

Notice 1 Peter 3:16-17

We are to live in such a way that we do not violate our conscience and so that we do not give anything to the enemy to use against us. When they slander us, they are to have absolutely no evidence to use against us. Peter tells us it is better to suffer for righteousness than to suffer for doing evil.

It is expected for people to suffer for doing evil.

Romans 13:2-4

² *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

³ *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

⁴ *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

It is not expected for people to suffer when practicing righteousness, but it happens over and over. It is not natural for a person of the world to suffer for righteousness and not seek vengeance but as believers we are not to live as the world. We are to live as Jesus

would and that means that instead of seeking vengeance, we are to seek a blessing for those who would bring the suffering upon us.

1 Peter 3:9

⁹ Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

This is where we stopped last week. As Peter now continues his thoughts, he will point to our Example to follow in suffering.

Jesus Christ, our Example.

I. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

Notice 1 Peter 3:18

This is probably the single most detailed verse containing the message of the Gospel. We see 5 marvelous points here.

1. The purpose of His suffering. - *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins...*
2. Jesus' substitutionary work. - *the just for the unjust...*
3. The reconciliation. - *that he might bring us to God...*
4. Jesus' finished work upon the cross. - *being put to death in the flesh...*
5. Jesus resurrection - *but quickened by the Spirit: ...*

We need to understand why Peter gives us this verse. Peter is showing the Perfect Example of the principles he has just listed in 13-17.

- a. Jesus suffered for doing what was right.
- b. Jesus did not fear those who were set against Him but committed Himself to God.
- c. Jesus lived with a clear conscience, and He never once gave His enemies something to use against Him.
- d. As a result of all of this Jesus received a tremendous blessing and reward in His own resurrection and exaltation.

II. The Longsuffering of Jesus Christ

Notice 1 Peter 3:19-20

As we look at these verses, we need to first of all determine what event Peter is referring to here. There are many different thoughts on these verses.

Some believe that these verses refer to a time between Jesus death and resurrection when He descended into hell/hades to offer the people who lived before the flood a second chance at salvation. But there is no Biblical support for this.

Some believe this is a reference to Jesus descent into hell to declare victory to the fallen angels that crossed the forbidden line in the days of Noah and were then imprisoned.

2 Peter 2:4

⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

This view is interesting, but it does not fit the context of 1 Peter which we are looking at. In the verses that we are looking at Peter gives the idea that Jesus preached to people not angels.

Notice 1 Peter 3:19-20 again.

Peter's seems to be referring to the people that were alive in Noah's day. They had multiple warnings for 120 years that there was a judgment coming upon the earth.

Genesis 6:1-3

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

² That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

³ And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

They were warned through Methuselah who name means, "when he dies it will come," and Methuselah died the very year the flood came upon the earth.

They were warned when the animals came in pairs and boarded the ark.

Genesis 7:7-9

⁷ And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

⁸ Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,

⁹ There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

These were all warnings given by God to the unsaved of Noah's day. But when did Jesus preach to these people whom Peter tells us were in prison? Jesus preached to them through Noah. While Noah built the ark he also preached of the coming judgment. They heard his words and they watched him build the ark. When Noah preached it was Jesus preaching through him.

2 Peter 2:4-5

⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

⁵ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

But Peter tells us that Jesus preached to the spirits in prison.

Notice 1 Peter 3:19-20 again.

The idea is that they are in prison/hell NOW but in Noah's day they were on the earth listening to Noah's preaching. They were not in prison in Noah's day, but they would be the moment they died.

So this then brings up a question, "What does this have to do with the suffering of the believer?"

Peter is showing us the longsuffering of Jesus as He patiently preached through Noah for 120 years. Jesus endured the ridicule through Noah as the warning went out. The reason He allowed this to go on for such a long period of time was because there were souls who would perish if they did not repent. Jesus was longsuffering with the people of Noah's day as He longed to see them come to salvation.

Let me help you to see a little more of the longsuffering of our Lord as He patiently reached out to the people of Noah's day. He could have given them a month's notice and then brought the flood, but He instead gave them 120 years. This is so significant! That 120 years was filled with pure evil and unrighteousness.

Genesis 6:5

⁵ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

This extended period of time would increase the suffering of our Lord on the cross. He died for the sins of the world and so He died for the sins that were committed in that 120-year period of longsuffering.

Isaiah 53:4-6

⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Application:

How does all of this apply to me? Jesus was longsuffering in Noah's day and eight people were saved. We too must be longsuffering with people today so that we might reach them with the Gospel and have an opportunity to be saved. Jesus was certainly longsuffering to each one of us before we were saved and still is today. Therefore, if we are to follow our Example, we too will endure whatever God allows us to face and be longsuffering with people in order that they might come to Jesus Christ.

If we are going to reach people who are set against us, we must show grace and forgiveness. Vengeance can have no place in our lives for vengeance will just escalate the animosity. Vengeance was the way of the religious leaders of Jesus day.

Matthew 5:38-42

³⁸ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

³⁹ But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

⁴⁰ And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

⁴¹ And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

⁴² Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Let us keep in mind Paul's words in Romans.

Romans 12:19-21

¹⁹ *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

²⁰ *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

²¹ *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

What does it mean to heap burning coals of fire on an individual? There was a practice in Egypt that when a person was repentant, they carried a pan of burning charcoal on their head. If this is what Paul is referring to then he is telling his readers that to treat our enemies with grace and forgiveness we may just cause them to repent and come to Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

Example from Pakistan.