

TITLE: "Satisfaction in Suffering" (Part 5)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:21b

THEME: *Every believer is a servant who is to suffer patiently and justly even as Christ suffered patiently and justly for him.*

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Read Passage

It's been 3 weeks since we've been in this passage

If you're anything like me, your brain goes cold about as quickly as a cup of coffee on a windowsill in Dec. If I could retain even 1/4 of what I've learned/studied over t/ysrs. I'd be a genius.

A genius I'm not & so for my sake as well as yours I want to take a brief look at t/ground we've covered so far B4 we move forward through v. 23.

We began this passage in v. 18 back on April 15

Spend an entire hour looking at t/first word, οΙΚΕΤΑΙ (from οΙΚΕΤΗΣ) - slaves, or more specifically servants. Domestic servants.

Didn't think of it at t/time, but it was a little ironic that we began a study of t/word 'servant' as well as t/entire subject of suffering on April 15 which is a day of suffering for many of you.

We have "servants & suffering" - "servants & suffering"

As this passage unfolds it brings t/two together in reverse order: "suffering servants."

You see, t/passage beings by addressing a very relevant & hist. issue: slavery. We noted how Christianity brought an end to slavery, first in England under Wilberforce/Wesley & then in t/U.S. under a host of godly men & women.

But as Peter writes, t/Spirit of God is moving him & moving t/topic from suffering servants of men to suffering servants of God.

Scope of Peter's intent & his audience opens up from t/particular in v. 18 (slaves) to t/general (every Xn) by t/time you get to v. 21.

We are slaves of the Suffering Servant who are to strive for satisfaction in our sufferings since He suffered for us.

Peter begins by addressing the slaves of men . . .

Servants, submit yourselves to your masters with all fear. . . .

This continues t/greater theme of submission that has dominated 2d half of ch. 2 & will continue into ch. 3.

Servants, submit yourselves to your masters with all fear. . . . (that is, with all fear of God, not men).

Peter is addressing t/danger that slaves who became Xns extrapolate that into thinking that freedom in X means freedom within their social order. You are free in X, but that doesn't mean you are free from your physical circumstance.

Even as Paul reminds us in 1 Cor 7:21-22 {summarize} ==>

21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. 22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.

Similar to a man who finds himself in prison for murder. While there God graciously saves that man. Is he forgiven? Yes! Is he free in X? Yes! Does that mean he should be released from prison? No!

Submit to those authorities that God has placed over you.

Remember vv. 13-17? {review}

Peter is establishing a common theme

Submit, willingly, w/humility place yourself under God-ordained authority. Regardless of what you think of that authority.

Can't say, *"Well, I will heed and honor good, conservative God-fearing politicians, but not liberal God-blaspheming ones."* God doesn't extend to us that option.

Unconditional principle here (so long, once again, that t/authority doesn't command one to do what God forbids or forbid that which God commands).

That unconditional principle continues into our passage, V. 18b ==>

. . . **Not only to those who are good and gentle** (ἐπιεικής - kind, reasonable), **but also to those who are perverse.** (σκολιός - crooked, dishonest).

Give you a little preview . . . take a look at 3:1 {cite}

Take that thought backwards - Wives w/unregenerate husbands may win them, how? By their godly behavior. Servants w/unregenerate masters may win them, how? By their godly behavior. Believers living among ignorant, foolish men may win them & silence them, how? v. 12/15.

What about suffering?

1000s suffered under w/wicked Rom. Emp. Nero. Millions have suffered & suffer today under wicked tyrants all over t/world. Servants have suffered. Slaves have suffered. Many women suffer in marriages to godless men.

Strip away those specific circumstances & we find that everyone suffers. Unavoidable. Suffering is a democracy & we all share in it. Suffering is an equal-opportunity employer & it discriminates against none.

I'm told that Hasidic Jews have a mythical story about a "sorrow tree." According to the story, on judgement day God's faithful will be invited to hang their miseries from "the tree of sorrows." Once all have done so they will then be given permission to walk around the tree and survey everyone else's miseries in order to select a set they would rather have. According to the Hasidics, in the end they all freely choose their own personal set of sorrows once more. [Maxie Dunnam, "perceptions"]

There's a kernel of truth there. For genuine believers in JC, that is. If I may be so bold to rewrite t/legend, I'd put it this way ==>

When we stand complete in glory // are like him for we see Him as He is, we will look back on our sorrows, our "sorrow tree" & we will see how God tailor-made them for us. How they were uniquely woven into t/fabric of our lives. We may never know all t/reasons why ==> humility as God breaks us of our pride & self-sufficiency; glorify Him through our weaknesses; through them we display t/sufferings of X in our own lives.

I'll never forget my 1st or 2nd year of college I met a young man named Tim. Tim was quite a character. We had biology together & once visited the campus of ASU to collect & label various plant specimens. Tim was a newlywed, as was I. Once, the four of us got together for dinner. Tim had a heart for missions. During t/summer break he took a trip to Africa to help in the construction of a church.

I remember I was home during t/week & Lois was just getting home from work. She had picked up the mail & rushed into the house saying, "Tony, Tony, it's Tim." She held in her hand a letter from the school saying that Tim had died in Africa. He was working on t/roof of t/CH & while trying to reach a safety net that was to be installed, Tim slipped & fell 35 feet to his death. Tim was 24.

Surely, God, you could have prevented that from happening! He was there to serve you! He was so young! He had a young wife! God, how could you let this happen? Are you not omnipotent? Are you not loving and merciful?

The open-theists would say that God didn't know this was going to happen. He was taken by surprise. He would have prevented it, if He could. But in order to preserve men's freedom, God has chosen to limit what He knows. At times he's like the proverbial ostrich who plunges his head into the ground.

No. That's not good theology. Good theology affirms that God is indeed omnipotent, loving and merciful. He's also sovereign. Good theology affirms that God had done this. He not only allowed, but ordained my friend, Tim's death.

After all, were not all his days ordained when not yet one of them?
139:16

Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth?
Lam. 3:38.

After all, is God not the potter who has the right to do with his clay whatever He deems good and wise?

Spirit of God was at work. Tim told his bride before he left for Africa that, if anything happened to him there, he wanted his organs donated to the African people.

A 57 year old man received Tim's heart. Another his eyes. New heart, new eyes. How many more have received t/greater gift of spiritual eyes that see & spiritual hearts that resonate w/the joy of new life?

II. God blesses us when we suffer well (19-20)

1. Suffering well means that we rest in God's providence (18b)

How we must cast ourselves upon t/sustaining grace of God's providence, knowing that come what may He cares for us! His care encompasses our affliction.

Spurgeon asks ==>

"What have we to fear? Another man looks up, and if he sees a lightning flash, he trembles at its mysterious power. We believe it has its predestined path. We may stand and contemplate it; although we would not presumptuously expose ourselves to it, yet can we confide in our God in the midst of the storm. We are out a t sea, the waves our dashing against the ship, she reels to and fro; other men shake because they think this is all chance; we, however, see an order in the waves, and hear a music in the winds. It is for us to be peaceful and calm. To other men the tempest is a fearful thing; we believe that the tempest is in the hand of God. Why should we shake? Why should we quiver? In all confusions of the world, in all temporal distress and danger, it is for us to stand calm and collected. . . . We are to say—let others say what they please—'I know God is here, and I am his child, and this is all working for my good; therefore I will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst o the sea.'" [sermon on Matthew 10:30 delivered on April 11, 1858]

1. *Suffering well means that we rest in God's providence*

We know that God has, in that providence, called every believer unto affliction. That's verse 21 ==>

For you have been called for this [purpose] . . .

Suffering well not only means that we rest in God's providential goodness

2. Suffering well means that we worship God in our suffering (18a and 19a)

a. Twice in this passage we find the phrase "this finds favor"

(1) Verse 19==>

For this [finds] favor, if out of consciousness toward God, one endures pain when suffering unjustly.

(2) Verse 20 ==>

... But if you should suffer for doing good and endure it, this finds favor with God.

(3) We noted that this is an "inclusio"

Bookends an important idea. (might note that t/word "favor" here is the same word commonly translated "grace" in NT - Gk. noun $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$).

Peter may be using it as an equivalent of the O.T. idiom ׀׀׀ ("to find favor," E.g. with God). ׀׀׀ used in Gen. 6:8 of Noah who "found favor" in God's eyes." To find favor w/God is to please Him, it is to be satisfied in Him & He w/us. In short it is worship.

b. Again, we noted the life of Job . . .

Job loses his family, his wealth & his health. His wife tells him to curse God and die. Job responds by affirming two things: 1) God's providence ("shall we not only accept good from God and not "ra" = "evil, distress, calamity."); 2) He worships {summarize} ==>

Job 1:20-22 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." 22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

1. Suffering well means that we rest in God's providence

2. Suffering well means that we worship God in our suffering

3. Suffering well means that we suffer for righteousness sake (19b-20)

19 For this [finds] favor, if out of consciousness toward God, one endures pain when suffering unjustly. **20** For what good would it be if, when you sin and are roughly treated, you endure it? But if you should suffer for doing good and endure it, this finds favor with God.

a. "unjustly" is a key word in verse 19

That word stands in apposition or contrast to t/phrase "doing good" in v. 20.

If, out of consciousness toward God, that is, w/my heart set on pleasing Him, I am afflicted for unjust reasons, I find favor in His eyes. If I suffer for doing good, I find favor in His eyes.

1PE 3:14 *But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, {you are} blessed. . . .*

With that Peter recalls t/words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 5 . . .

Bring you back to our three main points (big picture) ==>

I. Servants are to submit themselves to their masters (18)

II. God blesses us when we suffer well (19-20)

III. We have been sovereignly called by God to suffer well (21a)

<A.> Look at verse 21 ==>

For you have been called for this [purpose] . . .

<1.> Literally, "You have been called for this" (what?)

<a.> For suffering!

That's the context, isn't it? Why t/verse goes on to say ==>

. . . since Christ also suffered on your behalf leaving for you an example so that you might follow in His steps . . .

<b.> Suffer like He did

He was called to suffer and so are you.

<c.> "Called" = καλεω * Verb: Aorist Passive

Culminative aorist (perfective force). IOW - it's translated like t/perfect tense, "You have been called."

You were called in t/past & that calling is relevant to your life and situation now. That's t/idea.

<(1)> The word "calling" is rich in theological truth

"Effectual Calling" (it's efficacious, irresistible, effective). It was through God's "effectual call" that you came to forsake your sin & follow X.

That same effectual calling that brought you to t/fellowship of JC also brought you into t/fellowship of His sufferings.

For you have been called for this [purpose] . . .

The purpose is to suffer and to do so w/o sin. God not only called you to salvation, but to suffer.

Phil. 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

<(a)> No way of escaping it

Suffering & how you respond to that suffering is a mark of genuine saving faith. That's t/parable of the soils in Matt. 13 - some hear t/word & give some sort of assent to it, but when persecution and affliction come they fall away. What Peter calls t/proof of faith in 1:7.

III. *We have been sovereignly called by God to suffer well*

Actually have 4 sub-points that I want to look at in this regard. These sub-points are answering t/question, "How can we be satisfied in suffering?"

I actually changed t/preposition. Rather than satisfied "with" suffering, it's "How can we be satisfied IN suffering?"

Our satisfaction isn't w/the suffering; it's w/JC in t/suffering.

It was said that one of the godly Puritans sat down to his meal one day and found that he only had a little bread and some water. To that he exclaimed, "What? All this and Jesus Christ, too!"

Again, "How can we be satisfied in suffering?"

First==>

A. We can be satisfied IN suffering because Christ suffered for us (21b)

For you have been called for this [purpose], since Christ also suffered on your behalf . . .

1. We have a God who has experienced suffering

That is unique to Xnty. God has entered into and tasted of t/sufferings of men. Allah doesn't suffer for Muslims; Buddha doesn't suffer for Buddhists. Yet, JC, t/eternal 2d person of t/Trinity suffered for all who have been called by His name!

John 10:14-15 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me,15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."

Believer, say it to yourself: "Christ suffered for me!" When we hear that our minds automatically default into substituting t/word dying for suffering. While that's true, He didn't just come to die, He came to suffer.

Isa. 53:7 - He was oppressed, He was afflicted.

Hebrews 2:18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

He was t/lamb slain (slaughtered) before t/foundation of t/world (Revelation 13:8).

2. suffering is the means by which we receive our final reward even as it was the means by which Christ received His

The ultimate reason that suffering exists in the universe is that God may display his glory by the suffering of Christ to deliver us from suffering. The suffering of the innocent in our place, to bring us everlasting joy.

This is the connection to why we have to suffer. It was the ordained means for Christ!

By His suffering, Christ "entered into glory"

LUK 24:26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

The crown of thorns must come before t/crown of glory!

a. Christ's suffering was meritorious

He suffered for us. I would go so far as to say that t/suffering's of X are imputed/credited to us so that when God sees our suffering, he overlays it w/the sufferings of His Son.

Suffering was part of Christ's active obedience for us. Our affliction would be meaningless if Christ had not suffered for us, on our behalf. Since X suffered for us & imputes to us the glory of his sufferings, our sufferings are an acceptable form of worship. By them we enter into "The fellowship of His sufferings."

2CO 4:17 *For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,*

A. We can be satisfied IN suffering because Christ suffered for us (21b)

B. We can be satisfied in suffering because Christ left us a living example (21c-23)

For you have been called for this [purpose], since Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving for you an example so that you might follow in His steps.

1. He left us an example

a. Fascinating word

ὑπογραμμος - Here only in N.T. Very literally, t/word means Lit. "a writing under."

It's a word that was used in antiquity of what was called a copy-head that was at t/top of a child's school exercise book. T/copyhead was there for the child to imitate. He would look at t/type at t/top and trace it out below. This was a way that children learned t/letters of t/alphabet, for example. We might think of it in t/sense of tracing paper.

. . . . [He] also suffered on your behalf, leaving for you a ὑπογραμμος –an example so that [Purpose clause] you might follow in His steps.

We trace the footprints of Christ with our own, like a child walking in the snow, following the footprints of his father.

b. In this context the footprints are those of suffering

We don't mind following in Christ's steps if it's convenient, or if the way is easy and pleasant. That's American Neo-Evangelicalism.

Come & follow Jesus! He won't cramp your style; you can add him to your already busy life. No demands, no repentance, no difficulties, no suffering. Xnity Lite n' Easy (no Xnty at all).

(1) It's like the Parable of the Soils in Matthew 13

20 “And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

When X calls a man to follow Him ==> it's to t/battlefield, not a vacation.

2 Tim. 2:3 - Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

A. We can be satisfied IN suffering because Christ suffered for us (21b)

B. We can be satisfied in suffering because Christ left us a living example (21c-23)

Paul said he "imitated" Christ. 1 Cor. 11:1.

John exhorts us to walk in t/same manner as He walked (1 John 2:6).

There is encouragement in knowing that He has experienced suffering. He has tasted of the bitter vine of affliction.

I had planned on getting a little further along this AM, but I am forced to stop short.

But I think Heb. 4:15 and 16 is a good place to land the plane.

So t/writer to t/Hebrews encourages us w/these words in 4:15-16 ==>

15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

As I said earlier, X suffered & died for His sheep. Are you His? Have you been born-again by His grace? If not, I would exhort you turn from your sin even as you turn to X.

Do you see your sin B4 a holy God? He will in no wise acquit the guilty. Do you see t/Lamb of God, God the Son who lived a perfect life, crucified, died and buried, resurrected the third day. He came to live and die for fallen men & women . . .