

TITLE: "Christ's Suffering and Our Salvation" (Part 1)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 3:18a

THEME: *Christ suffered for a time so that we could be saved for eternity*

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{Read Passage}

Believe it or not, but with this passage we close out chapter 3. There's a lot here. This is a difficult and somewhat controversial passage of Script. But it's also a rich and deeply rewarding passage to study.

The path to the promised land is paved with pain and suffering; but we can persevere through whatever lies ahead because Christ traveled the same path and prevailed for us.

Christ's suffered for a time so that we could be saved for eternity.

Christ's Suffering and Our Salvation.

{Connection Between 3:13-17 and 3:18-22}

We ended v 17 3 wks ago my wife noted that while we talked about concluding a section (5 vv. starting w/v.13) we really didn't totally conclude in that t/train of thought seems to continue into v. 18. IOW - there's no real break between v. 17 & v. 18. That's true. Not a break, but a shifting of gears or a change of focus.

The connection to t/thot of vv. 13-17 is very much at t/forefront. The theme of that passage was how to be faithful in facing persecution. No secret persecution involves suffering, so v. 17 ends on that note {read}.

Now we turn a bit of a corner in v. 18

Peter's readers (includes us) are pointed to X who also suffered unjustly, unfairly, but righteously. He's ultimate example of **suffering for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.**

Similar to what we saw in chapter 2 {read vv. 21-23}

We are again reminded that suffering was X's path to glory - 1:21 - **God raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.**

This continues a basic theme of 1 Peter

You are I are to be faithful; we are to persevere in suffering knowing that our faithfulness will be rewarded with glory just as Jesus' was.

Suffering ==> Glory theme. Turn to chapter 1 {read vv. 6-9}

This Suffering to Glory theme focuses on the example of JC who, in His incarnation, traveled t/same road of suffering to glory.

The path to the promised land is paved with pain and suffering; but we can persevere through whatever lies ahead because Christ traveled the same path and prevailed for us.

I've said it many times, but I do not see how anyone can make sense of life apart from knowing JC. All that is this life would be futility apart from Him.

I can't imagine living as an unbeliever. As it is, I wrestle w/the whole concept of getting older. Of watching my parents age. Of facing t/inevitable issue of mortality.

A week ago a man I knew only three years old than I jumped into t/shower. Little did he know he would never jump out // it was t/last shower he'd ever take // he would never again kiss his wife or his kids in this life. He jumped into t/shower and suffered a sudden massive stroke. 48 y/o he was pronounced completely brain dead at t/hospital. Praise God He was a believer.

It's a great comfort to know that God is in control of all things

Even my friend's death. But how do people who don't know X face it when they realize they aren't in control. When they realize that they cannot turn back t/time. They're no longer in t/prime of life. Like a battery. We're born fully charged. By the age of 35 or 40 you're about half charged. (We all ought to have little power meters on our sides.) If you reach 70 or 80 you prob. don't have a lot of time left. We're not rechargeable batteries. When we're done, we're done.

Not only are we not rechargeable, we're inconsistent. We can completely fail at any point in the process. To press t/analogy, if we are batteries designed for 75 years, we might 95 or we go at 25. There's no guarantees folks. That's in God's hands. Who knows that there may be someone here that will never set foot in this church again. You have an appt. w/death that you don't even know about.

I don't mean to be morbid, but think about it

Say you're going to die in a car crash this week. On Saturday afternoon at precisely 2:22 PM EST. You are going to be hit in an intersection by someone who runs a red light. That person is 44 years old. He was born in 1964. If he'd never been born, you'd never get hit. In fact, he moved to NY from MI two years ago. If he'd never moved, you would never get hit. He bought a big truck last week. He used to drive a subcompact.

If he was still driving the s.c. you would have survived. And he was running late for work, so he was speeding. If he had not been speeding you would not have been hit. He was running late for work because he was at traffic court. If he had not gotten that ticket, he would not have been in traffic court and if he had not been in traffic court he would not have been running late and if he had not been running late you get the picture!

Here's your life, say you were born in NY in 1970. Here's this man's life, he was born in MI in 1964. You could draw it on a map. One day your paths would cross and be forever changed in a fraction of a second. 1 single second out of t/nearly 31.5 million seconds that make up only 1 yr.

We can no more keep t/seconds from ticking away than we can keep ourselves free from t/suffering & death that is inevitable.

If God were not, & if He were not in control, we'd just be victims of cruel fate.

There's joy. There's joy in living. There can even be joy in suffering. But only through the cross. The cross of JC is what transforms suffering into hope. Apart from t/cross suffering and pain would be senseless.

We can't escape suffering - but we can face it with hope

After all, this is why Peter could say that your faith is more precious than gold (1:7).

No true believer would exchange his salvation for all the money in the world. Nature of genuine salvation. A recognition of t/great inheritance we have as believers and that nothing can compare. Why ==>

Matthew 13:44-46 44 “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

The path to the promised land is paved with pain and suffering; but we can persevere through whatever lies ahead because Christ traveled the same path and prevailed for us.

I. Christ's Suffering and Our Salvation (18-22)

A. Christ's Victory Came Through Suffering

That's Peter's point ==>

For even Christ suffered . . .

Briefly mention that there is a textual variant here. Some translations have "died" and others have "suffered." Either way, the meaning remains t/same because t/word "suffered" points toward X's death.

Peter never uses the word "died" but uses the word "suffer" 11 x. "Suffered" also fits better w/the connection to the previous passage. I don't want to confuse you, but I'm siding w/those textual scholars who favor "suffered."

1. What About Our Suffering?

That fact that v. 18 begins as it does (for even) is pointing back to v. 17 & drawing a contrast.

a. What is the Nature of our Suffering? Why do we suffer?

(1) We Suffer Because of Sin

That's it in a nutshell. If there were no sin, there would be no suffering. Even X's suffering was a result of sin, just not His own. That's very general. How about something more specific.

(a) We Suffer Because of Our Own Sin

If you don't take care of your body, smoke, don't eat well, don't exercise, drive recklessly or engage in other dangerous practices, you will eventually reap the consequences.

If you break t/law you will suffer the consequences. Why Peter says in 4:15 **by no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or evildoer.** And in 3:17 {cite} - Look to Christ is your example 2:21-22 {cite}

Galatians 6 - 7 **Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.**

I don't know how many of you have done any farming. Many of you have planted gardens. If you sow (plant) radishes you don't reap (harvest) cucumbers. If you plant weeds, you'll get weeds // tomatoes / tomatoes.

If you sow a life of misery, guess what you'll get? We know people like that, don't we. In fact, we have a culture of misery because we have a culture who, like Sinatra, sing with their lives, "I'll do it my way."

8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

(a) We Suffer Because of Our Own Sin

(b) We also Suffer Because of the Sin of Others

In my parent's home church back in AZ they had a situation where a woman in t/congreg. was having an affair w/her boss. She left her husband and kids behind & eventually t/CH was forced to excommunicate her. My parents were at t/meeting where they did that. The husband was there & he sat and cried like a child during t/whole thing. He suffered because of his wife's sin. My mom and dad expressed their love for him, as did t/rest of t/CH. My dad even said, *"Hey, let's get together in a few days for lunch."* Man said he'd love to. They never did. A week later t/husband shot his wife to death in their home & then turned t/gun on himself taking his own life. One of t/children came home from school to discover t/bodies. They, then, suffered along w/the rest of t/surviving family because of his sin.

We suffer because of the sin of others. Certainly, it's not usually that drastic. It may be a hostile boss or coworker. It may be a hostile spouse. For many believers in t/world it's t/suffering that comes from sinful men who hate JC and all who stand for Him. That's what we looked at in vv. 13-17 ("Faithfully Facing Persecution").

(c) We Suffer Due to Sin in General (living in a fallen world)

We suffer from natural disasters // disease & death & accidents & injuries. Millions around t/world suffer from poverty. For many even a clean cup, of water, something we take for granted, is a luxury. We learned last week about how Irvin & Alice Kofa lost a son to bad drinking water.

We live in a fallen, sin-cursed universe. The deadly tentacles of sin have reached everywhere. Why Paul could say in Romans 8 that ==>

For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth . . .

Every time there's a so-called natural disaster, earthquakes in China, tornadoes in Kansas, a Hurricane in N.O., a cyclone in Myanmar - we are reminded of this verse.

Also reminded that not all suffering is a result of personal sin. Imp.

In John chapter 9, t/disciples saw a man blind from birth. They asked Jesus, “**Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?**”

This was t/standard thinking of t/Jews. Suffering is a direct result of personal sin. No!

Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Luke in his gospel records that some people came to Jesus with the story about a group of Galileans who had been killed by Pontius Pilate who then mingled their blood with their sacrifices. Perhaps some were thinking, *“What sin did these Galileans commit that this would happen to them?”*

So Jesus says to them **“Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate? 3 “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**

That's t/message. We live in a sin-cursed world. You never know when tragedy's going to strike! Repent. Make sure you don't perish eternally.

To press the point, Jesus gives them an example ==>

4 “Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in

Jerusalem? 5 “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Over t/past year or two we've heard of several disasters in our own nation involving construction cranes that have collapsed. When things like that happen you ought to think of this passage.

i. We Suffer Under the Providential Hand of God

God's P. = His sustaining t/creation; His providing for t/creation; His complete control and guidance over all things that happen in t/creation.

Last year at this time we were in a section of 1 Peter that we entitled, "Satisfaction in Suffering".

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

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

We cast ourselves upon the sustaining grace of His sovereignty. God has a design for each life & that includes even t/circumstances of OUR suffering.

Back to verse 18 ==>

I. Christ's Suffering and Our Salvation (18-22)

J.M.E. Ross wrote that verse 18 is “one of the shortest and simplest, and yet one of the richest summaries given in the New Testament of the meaning of the Cross of Jesus” (“The First Epistle of Peter,” in A Devotional Commentary.

London: Religious Tract Society, n.d., pp. 151-52).

1. What About Our Suffering?

2. Christ's Suffering (18)

4 ideas out of this verse that relates to X's suff. ==>

a. The Fact of Christ's Suffering (18a)

b. The Nature of Christ's Suffering

c. The Purpose of Christ's Suffering

d. The Culmination of Christ's Suffering

a. The Fact of Christ's Suffering (18a)

Is there any doubt that JC suffered? Really suffered // terribly / horribly?
His suffering wasn't imaginary; illusion; wasn't diminished by t/fact He was God. He really suffered to the same degree and extent that any man can experience suffering.

Where Peter starts ==>

(1) For even Christ Suffered

The phrase ==>

For even... (most translations have simply "for")

Connects this verse with the preceding passage.

"Faithfully Facing Persecution"

Expect hostility and react with hospitality

I. A Ready Defense: Facing Persecution for Christ's Sake (13-17)

{review}

Note the connection in verse 18 ==>

a. The Fact of Christ's Suffering (18a)

For even Christ suffered . . .

I like what the old commentator Matthew Henry says here.

He really captures the flow of thought ==>

Jesus Christ himself was not exempted from sufferings in this life, though he had no guilt of his own and could have declined all suffering if he had pleased . . . Now, if Christ was not exempted from sufferings, why should Christians expect it? If he suffered, to expiate sins, why should not we be content when our sufferings are only for trial and correction, but not for expiation? If he, though perfectly just, why should not we, who are all criminals? If he once suffered, and then entered into glory, shall not we be patient under trouble, since it will be but a little time and we shall follow him to glory? If he suffered, to bring us to God, shall not we submit to difficulties, since they are of so much use to quicken us in our return to God, and in the performance of our duty to him?

That's t/point. We know that Jesus suffered. And if He suffered, who are we to expect any less?

a. The Fact of Christ's Suffering (18a)

What about ==>

b. The Nature of Christ's Suffering

Why did He suffer? What are some of t/characteristics of His suffering?

(1) Christ Suffered for Sin and Because of Sin

Had there been no sin there would have been no suffering. So we can say, "Yes, He suffered for sin and because of it."

(a) Not His Own Sin (He was Sinless)

1 Peter 1:19 - "The Lamb unblemished and spotless"

2:22 "He committed no sin and there was no deceit in his mouth."

During His earthly ministry no one was able to level an accusation of sin against Him.

Judas recognized His innocence and with regret declared, "I have sinned against innocent blood."

Pilate's wife called him a "Righteous Man" & Pilate Himself was forced to say, "I find no evil in Him."

Hebrews 7:26-27 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

He knew not sin; He was sinless & perfect. Yet, he was born into a sin-cursed world.

i. He Suffered at the Hands of Sinful Men

His own townspeople rejected Him. His countrymen mocked Him. On several occasions they tried to kill Him. Even His brothers encouraged Him to go to Judea where they knew His life would be in danger.

In t/end it was an apostate Jew by t/name of Judas who sold t/Son of God for t/price of a potter's field, a worthless piece of ground filled w/holes that was to be used as a burial place for vagrants.

It was godless men who cried out, "give us Barabbas!" & "Crucify this Jesus!" // tried Him, condemned Him, beat Him, & finally crucified Him.

Acts 2:23 this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

ii. He Suffered from Living in a Fallen World

When we think of the sufferings of Christ (cf. 1:11) we tend to think of the events that surround the end of his life. His prayer in Gethsemane, His betrayal, his trials, the beatings, and finally His crucifixion. These things are at t/pinnacle of his suffering. But he suffered throughout life, just as we do.

His own brothers hated Him. He was scorned by t/Jewish Leaders. He saw t/ravages of sin in people's lives. He witnessed mothers grieving over sick and dying children. He cried at t/grave of his dear friend Lazarus. He suffered intense temptations t/o his life, among t/worst was his 40 day tempt. in t/wilderness. He was betrayed by friends & abandoned at t/time of His greatest need. He smelled t/stench of leprous skin; He saw t/tears of orphans & widows. He intimately knew t/o His life what suffering was all about.

iii. He Suffered Not for His Sin but For Ours

He also lived in constant shadow of what was coming. From His youth He knew that he had an appt. with t/cross. Not only t/physical pain, but t/inexplicable pain of bearing t/stench of sin. He was always separated from sin. But he lived in t/cross-hairs of what was to come, what couldn't be avoided - t/sting of physical & spiritual death.

At that moment when t/sky grew dark for 3 hours // Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

When Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and died. The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, & OT saints miraculously resurrected.

And for t/first time in eternity t/pure fellowship that existed between The Father, Son, and H.S. was interrupted.

Something else about ==>

b. The Nature of Christ's Suffering

(2) His Suffering was Unique and Unrepeatable

For even Christ suffered once for all concerning sin . . .

(a) The phrase that's used here: περὶ (concerning) ἁμαρτιῶν (sin/sins) indicates that Peter is referring to a sin offering

Get that? When these two words for t/phrase "concerning sin" a sin offering is in mind. Phrase "concerning sin" translated "sin offering" in t/LXX in Lev. 5:7; 6:30. Peter is thinking of X's death in terms of a sin offering. Also used that way in Heb. 5:3 and 10:26.

(b) Not just any sin offering - unique sin offering

Unique in that it is final, sufficient, unrepeatable. There is no other suffering, no other offering that can make atonement for sin. We do not suffer for sin; our suffering is not expiatory (doesn't remove our guilt).

That it is unrepeatable is clear from the words used ==>

For even Christ suffered once for all concerning sin . . .

(c) Very important word and concept for you to grasp

It's a word that conveys a concept.

i. Word is ἁπαξ (HAPAX)

In language we will sometimes take about a word being a hapax legomenon - or a hapax - a word that's only used 1x (for example, there are 1500 words in the Hebrew Bible that only occur once.)

Even more importantly, the word refers to something that is unique and unrepeatable.

3rd verse of Jude **Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

Here's t/contrast. The phrase "for sins" is used of t/OT sacrifices which were repeatable.

The tabernacle & temple in Jerusalem had regular sacrifices for sin that were going on all the time. Some, like the DOA, were repeated yearly.

All of these repeated bloody sacrifices foreshadowed a final bloody sacrifice that would be a ἄπαξ !!! The sacrificial death of Christ (was for sin, it was t/just for the unjust, it was to reconcile us to God) was sufficient. It can never be rivaled or repeated. It's done!

ii. Why is that important?

Couple of reasons. First we have to appreciate the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for our sin. We can't add to it and we can't take away from it. It is perfect.

Second, there is a large contingent w/i Christendom that denies t/finality of X's death, among t/largest t/RC Church.

In Romanism, Christ is offered again and again and again over and over and over. Each time a mass is said, millions every year, Christ is sacrificed.

I've said many times, the Mass is at the center of Roman Catholic soteriology. If you have no mass you have no salvation. Why those o/s of t/RC Church have no hope. They have no mass or priesthood.

At the center of the Mass is the doctrine of transubstantiation, that the elements (bread and wine) literally are transformed into the body, blood, and divinity of JC. So that when the elements are consecrated by t/priest (only a RC priest can do this) a miracle occurs & what once was mere bread is now literally t/body and divinity of JC.

In the fourth and fifth chapters of its Thirteenth Session (October, 1551) the Council of Trent declared that 'by the consecration of the bread and wine a change is wrought about of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood,' and that therefore 'the faithful of Christ may . . . give to this most holy sacrament in veneration the worship of *latria*, which is due to the true God . . . For we believe that in it the same God is present of whom the eternal Father . . . says: *And let all the angels of God adore him.*'"

You may rightfully worship t/wafer because, it's not really a wafer, it's JC in His full divinity! The priest has the power to call Christ down from heaven where he is sacrificed again and again.

Each faithful Catholic ingests the literal body & divinity of JC, all a misinterpretation of Jesus' statements in John 6, and a violation of OT law which forbade t/eating of human flesh & t/drinking of blood.

The NT knows & t/ancient CH knew nothing about such a doctrine.

Contemporary theologian Robert Reymond writes that:

"It is a late medieval philosophical effort to explain a real presence of Christ in the Supper, physically perceived, which involves the change of the substance of bread into the substance of Jesus' human flesh without changing the accidents of the bread (that is, the bread still looks, feels, tastes, and smells like bread)--a real philosophical conundrum. It first received canonical status at the Fourth Lateran council in A.D. 1215 in order to counter the anti-clerical, anti-sacramental teaching of the Albigensians that were perceived as imperiling the medieval church, especially in France. It took two generations for the theological formulation of the doctrine to be worked out, with its full formulation finally being stated by Thomas Aquinas in his two *Summa*, and its liturgical expression established in the feast of Corpus Christi, for which Aquinas also wrote the service and the hymns." [Reformation's Conflict with Rome]

Reymond points out that the Reformers rightly criticized t/mass because

- * there was no biblical support for it;
- * it gave mere men undeserved authority over t/souls of men;
- * the fact that it did not stress faith as t/person simply ingests t/spiritual benefit of the sacrament w/the mouth w/no emphasis placed on t/heart;
- * its magical character which makes it an invisible & unverifiable miracle, unlike the miracles of t/NT which were visible and verifiable; and the mass' implicit attack upon Christ's finished work at Calvary.

If you doubt that last point, let me read for you what t/Council of Trent declared in the 2nd Chapt. of the Twenty-Second Session (Sept, 1562)

' . . . Inasmuch as in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the mass is contained and immolated [offered in sacrifice] in an unbloody

manner the same Christ who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the alter of the cross, the holy council teaches that this is truly propitiatory. . . . For, appeased by this sacrifice, the Lord grants the grace and gift of penitence and pardons even the gravest crimes and sins. For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests who then offered himself on the cross. . . . The fruits of that bloody sacrifice . . . are received most abundantly through this unbloody one [and] it is rightly offered not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions and other necessities of the faithful who are living, but also for those departed in Christ but not yet fully purified."

No ==>

. . . Christ suffered once for all concerning sin . . .

Remember I said earlier ==>

The tabernacle & temple in Jerusalem had regular sacrifices for sin that were going on all the time. Some, like the DOA, were repeated yearly. All of these repeated bloody sacrifices foreshadowed a final bloody sacrifice that would be a ἑφάπαξ !!! The sacrificial death of Christ was sufficient. It can never be rivaled or repeated. It's done!

The writer to the book of Hebrews makes that same point over and over again. Wrap up this AM by turning to t/book of Hebrews

Theme = Excellency of JC; Uniqueness // Superiority over t/OT system.

Chapter 7 (vv. 22-27)

verse 27 = hapax (ἑφάπαξ.)

Chapter 9 (vv. 1-12; 24-28a) - {note Trent above}

verses 26/28 - hapax.

Chapter 10 (vv. 9-18)

verse 10 - hapax (ἐφάπαξ.)

ROM 6:10 **For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.**

John Calvin wrote: "[Rome is] attempting something ingenious: to shape one religion out of Christianity and Judaism and paganism [transubstantiation and adoration of images] by sewing patches together." He called the Mass, that which blasphemes Christ, suppresses the eternal power of his cross work to save sinners once and for all, wipes out the true and unique death of Christ, robs men of the benefit of his death, and nullifies the true significance of the Lord's Supper. [Institutes, 4.19.31. and 4.18.2-7]

"Christ's Suffering and Our Salvation"

His suffering, his sacrifice is finished. When He cried out from the cross, ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ ("It is finished!") He meant it.

For even Christ suffered once for all concerning sin, the just for the unjust, in order to reconcile us to God-

We've looked at ==>

a. The Fact of Christ's Suffering

b. The Nature of Christ's Suffering

We still need to cover ==>

c. The Purpose of Christ's Suffering

d. The Culmination of Christ's Suffering

Next time.