

Session 6: The Work of Christ....Salvation through Suffering

1 Peter 3:17-22, “For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. ¹⁹ After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— ²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.”

Peter’s comments about the work of Christ:

- **The Work of Christ was unique and never need be repeated.**

Paul states the same thing in Romans 6:10, “....when Christ died, He died once for all...”

Hebrews 7:27, “.....He (Jesus) does not need to offer sacrifices day after day (unlike other high priests who have to first offer sacrifices for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people). He (Jesus) sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.”

Hebrews 10:10, “...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

On the cross, something happened which never needs to happen again...and in that happening sin is finally defeated.

On the cross, God dealt with man’s sin in a way which is adequate:

- For all sin,
- For all men,
- For all time.

- **The Sacrifice was for sin**

The death of Christ is the sacrifice which atones for the sin of men.

Sin is that which interrupts the relationship which should exist between God and men.

The object of sacrifice is to restore that lost relationship.

God gives...Man must accept/receive...Man must believe.

- **The Sacrifice was Vicarious**

Vicarious: performed or suffered by one person as a substitute for another or to the benefit or advantage of another.

“The just for the unjust”...Oh, the love that drew salvation’s plan.

Oh, the grace that brought it down to man. Jesus...the perfect one sacrificed for me...the unrighteous, pitiful, unworthy sinner.

- **The Sacrifice was to Bring Us to God**

In the Old Testament, only the priests had the right of close access to God. Layman could only come so far in the temple (Court of

Gentiles, Court of women, Court of Israelites)...no further. Only priests were allowed to come into the Court of Priests; and only the High Priest into the Holy of Holies.

Jesus brings us to God; he opens the way for all men to God's nearer presence.

- **The Sacrifice was for All Who Might Believe in His Resurrection.**
v. 21 b, "...saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ..."
Remember, Paul stated, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9)
- **The Sacrifice and Work of Christ was a Complete Triumph.**
The meaning is that there is nothing in earth and heaven outside the empire of Christ.
 - In Jesus' death, he brought the good news to the dead and to the living;
 - In his resurrection he conquered death; even the angelic and the demonic powers are subject to him; and he shares the very power and throne of God.

Christ the sufferer has become Christ the victor.

Christ the crucified has become Christ the crowned.

1 Peter 4:1-6, "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. ² As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ³ For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴ They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵ But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit."

The obligation of the Christian

"He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.."

Three thoughts as to possibly the meaning:

1. **Suffering in itself is a great purifier:** Jews believed that at the time. Through suffering, a man becomes humble and contrite—yielding to the Spirit. He feels that he has "come through the fire (temptation holds no hold on his mind, will, or even emotions). Could it be that Jews still felt this way during the Holocaust?
Some feel that the idea is that suffering sanctifies and that not to be punished is the greatest punishment which God can lay upon a man. "Blessed is the man whom thou dost chasten, O Lord," Psalm 94:12. "Happy is the man whom God reproves," Job 5:17.
2. **Suffering for the Christian faith strengthens our determination to live for Christ**—the idea is that if a man has come through

persecution and not denied the name of Christ, he comes out on the other side with a character so tested and a faith so strengthened, that temptation cannot touch him any more. Peter believed that....and probably had watched many of the followers of Christ put to death for their faith.

3. ***In the act of baptism, a pagan (life of debauchery and sin) shows that he is turning from a despicable life to a life of victory over sin.*** The idea that when a man “rises to new life in Christ”, he has said good-bye to former way of life and realizes that judgment is coming for the sinner.

1 Peter 4:6, I think that it means that “those that were dead in trespasses and sin, has had the gospel preached to them, and some now live in the Spirit of God.”

What it does not mean...that those that are dead (in the grave) will have the gospel preached to them to give them a 2nd chance.

Many believe that Jesus does not give up on the sinner even after he is dead. Catholics believe that souls can be prayed out of purgatory (2nd chance theory).

DO NOT GIVE IN TO THIS THEORY....GOD IS NOT MOCKED!

1 Peter 4:7-8, “The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”

We all need to live in a spirit in which we feel that the Lord can come at any time.

All this verse tells us is that “no person on this earth or that has ever walked this earth as flesh and blood know the time in which the end will come.”

We need to understand that God is holding to his timing and the 2nd chance is given only while a person is alive....not after he is dead.

Today is the day of salvation! Don't put off today what we have no promise for tomorrow.

The Psalmist was literally and doctrinally right when he said that, “In God's sight a thousand years were just like a watch in the night” (Psalm 90:4). Our lives are just a vapor...here today, gone tomorrow. A flower that is budding and beautiful for a short time....but it withers over night.

Why do we need to realize that? When a person realizes the nearness of Jesus Christ' return, he is bound to commit himself to a certain kind of life. In view of that, Peter states that we ought to:

- ***Be steady in mind...***When we see the affairs of earth in the light of eternity that we see them in their proper proportions; it is when God is given His proper place that everything takes its proper place.
- ***Be sober in mind...***To take things seriously is to be aware of their real importance and to be ever mindful of their consequences in time and in

eternity. It is to approach life, not as a jest, but as a serious matter for which we are answerable.

So that we will:

- **Pray as we ought...(Preserve your Prayer life).**
We learn to pray only when we take life so wisely and so seriously that we begin to say in all things: "Thy will be done."
- **Cherish for each other a love that is constant and intense.**
*Christian love is not an easy, sentimental reaction. It demands everything a man has of mental and spiritual energy.
Loving the unlovely and the unlovable....
Loving in spite of insult and injury....
Loving when love is not returned.*

Love covers a multitude of sins.....Christ' love and suffering unto death for us covers the multitude of our sins.

God does not overlook our sin...but He knows that the blood of Jesus is the only way that we can have forgiveness of sin.

"Covered in the blood...Washed in the blood....and it makes us white as snow!"