

1 Peter 2:18-25

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[0 : 00] Again, I'll remind you that Gideons are all volunteers.

! They don't have any paid staff. They're all just good workers in their own churches, and this is another way that they serve the Lord. And so it is a men-only, except the wives have a sister organization kind of called the Auxiliary, so husbands and wives can participate together.

So, well, thank you, Brother Brian. I appreciate that, and it's good to be a participant, knowing that every Bible that we help to buy, we were a part of that ministry.

May God bless every person who receives one of those. So glad to see all of you here today, and we are continuing our study of 1 Peter. Now, some of you are visiting with us, haven't been here in a pretty good while, and we are just going straight through the book of 1 Peter, usually about 6 or 8 or 10 verses a week.

And so today, we'll just continue along with that, and let me begin with prayer first. Heavenly Father, Lord, today we're here because we need a fresh meeting with the living God.

[1 : 23] We have come to look into your Word together, and as we look into your Word, look into our hearts, O God, and touch us, and change us into the likeness of Jesus, our Savior.

Meet with us again, O God. Speak to our hearts. And now bless this sermon time, we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen. Well, we've been studying through 1 Peter.

The main theme is that you can have hope in every situation you're in, in a world that's not really your home. We're only passing through this world, and Peter brings that up several times, and then talks about how we keep faith and hope, no matter what happens.

And so today, we're in 1 Peter chapter 2, and we're going to be, it's a short passage, we'll just read all of it. So, Mark, if you'll give me the next slide there, and we're going to be doing verses 18 to 25.

Slaves, in reverent fear of God, submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

[2 : 38] For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering, because they are conscious of God. But how is it, to your credit, if you receive a beating for doing wrong and enduring it?

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. Next slide. To this, you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate.

When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree or on the cross, depending on what translation you're reading.

So that we might die to our sins and live for righteousness. By his wounds, you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

[3 : 58] Well, as we look at this, there's really, I think, two sermons in here. But then, after we go through the two different thoughts Peter's into, we really see that he blended them together and that they're very related.

One leads right into the other. So, in the first one, you might wonder, and we'll look at the next slide, we'll go back to the first verses we looked at there.

You might wonder, is the Bible actually justifying slavery? Is the Bible saying, okay, so slavery's an okay thing? And I hate to say it, but in the history of America, there were Christians who used this passage to justify the whole institution of slavery, which was a terrible thing.

When, in fact, if you read this carefully, in no way is Peter saying that slavery's okay or acceptable. He talks about it being harsh. He talks about it being unjust and that people will suffer unjustly as a result of slavery.

So, Peter is not, in any way, saying that slavery's a good thing. The reason, though, that maybe he doesn't come right out and say, slavery's just plain old wrong, is because slavery, in the Roman time, that Peter lived in, was very different from the slavery that you and I know about based on our culture of growing up in America and based on the kind of human trafficking that helps in the world today.

[5 : 36] And so, I had to do a little research on that. And let me describe to you some of how slavery was different then. So, Mark, next slide, please. The first thing that's real obvious was different about slavery in the Roman times and today was the fact that it had nothing to do with racism.

It was not a case of one race of people enslaving another race of people. The slaves and the owners were all of the same race. and so, how did you become a slave?

You also typically were not born a slave in Rome. You typically, but it was a lot more to do with social class, you typically became a slave because you got deeply in debt and it was related to poverty.

And so, if you had a terrible debt you couldn't pay, rather than be taken to a debtor's prison, you could pay your debt off by selling yourself into slavery.

And so, most people made that decision. That's how they became a slave. Now, in the worst cases, sometimes it might be a family with multiple children and they had a debt and a debtor, the creditor, was saying, pay up or I'm taking half the family here to jail or I'm taking the father to jail and they would feel like, well, rather than send the whole, you know, father to jail and the family falls apart and starves, we're going to have to sell one of our children here to be a slave of someone.

[7 : 14] And what a terrible and dreadful thing that would have been to do. But now, a really good thing, if there was anything good about slavery, there's not. But a good thing about Roman slavery, almost all of them, by the time they were 30, had bought their freedom and were no longer enslaved.

So it wasn't a lifelong sentence to be a slave. It was a debt that you could pay back. Another big difference with Roman slavery, slaves could own property.

They could have a side business. They could go home at night. If the whole family was not enslaved, they could be permitted to go home at night with their family. They simply had a job to do.

Maybe they were servants in a household. Maybe they worked a field, whatever. But they could have side jobs, a business of their own, make money, own property, and be able to buy their way out of slavery, which was a better part of that institution.

So in kind of every way, as you look at slavery back then, it was a lot more like today's employment employment than American slavery.

[8 : 30] Today, you pretty much have to go to work because you probably got debts and you might have a bad boss who's unjust and it can be a very harsh working place and their slavery was a lot more like employment than American slavery or like human trafficking where you have no rights of any kind and somebody else owns you and controls your every movement.

It was not really like that. However, if we take the Bible as a whole, I do want to make it perfectly clear that the scriptures are saying over and over that people are made in the image of God.

and so slavery, just the whole idea of slavery has to be against Christian principles because no person is better than any other person.

We are all equal before God with the same Jesus died for every person and so the reason that slavery ended in the world was because of the influence of Christianity.

it was a leading Christian that first did away with slavery in the whole English Empire, a guy named William Wilberforce and it was through Christian influence really, preachers all up and down, especially in New England that led the way and doing away with slavery in America.

[10 : 10] The whole civil rights movement in America was primarily led by Christian pastors I mean, the Bible sets men free and so Peter in no way is saying slavery is a good thing.

He's just trying to talk about if you are enslaved then here's advice about your attitude. So now let's look back at some of what Peter says there then.

Next slide. He says in 20 and 21 if you suffer for doing good and endure patiently God is pleased with you.

For God called you to do good even if it means suffering. So in this case again if he's referring to kind of the way we reply to ourselves maybe it's more like an employment situation.

You may have a terrible boss, a terrible work situation but you feel like God has placed you in that situation for a reason and that you should stay there.

[11 : 15] And so Peter's sort of saying okay you're in that kind of situation then endure it as a gift to God as an obedience to God endure that.

Now he's not talking about that it's a good thing if you're suffering because you did wrong. Two weeks ago I went to see a young friend of mine who's been in prison for 21 years.

He got there when he was 20 years old for murdering somebody. Peter's not saying you are commended because you're suffering. He says no if you're suffering because you're in the midst of doing something good and that's why you're suffering then God is pleased with that.

He's not talking about if you're suffering because you're sick. In other places there's scriptures about being sick but this has nothing to do with that kind of suffering. This is a suffering you're in a situation.

It might be a family situation. You may be in a bad situation with a spouse or a child or a parent or whatever and you could perhaps escape from that but you feel that God has put it on your heart that he's using you in that situation as a witness or there to care for your children or to make a difference in your community or whatever and so for God's sake you say I am going to stay in this situation with God's help I'm going to endure this then it says there God is pleased with you.

[12 : 45] This is the kind of thing Peter's talking about here. And by the way Peter's not saying that it's always the right choice that you should stay in a bad situation.

He's not saying that you're in a bad workplace you must stay there. He's just saying if you're there and the Lord has placed you there then prayerfully you consider your options and what you should be doing and how you can serve God in your life.

So this is the emphasis that Peter's had there in the first part of this. But now the second part of this sermon and this passage that we're going to be looking at I think it's just so interesting that we get it today.

Now remember we've been going straight through the book of first Peter and we had no thought about what verses we would arrive at on what given dates and yet here we are at the beginning of what we call Holy Week and this week we're going to be remembering that Jesus Christ suffered for us that he died on a cross for us that'll be this Friday and then this Saturday we will remember that his body was in a grave cold dead and so it's amazing to me that that is what the rest of this passage deals with and God just kind of timed it that we could look at that today as a reminder to all of us so let's start to look then at the second half of the passage first of all in verses 21 and 25 Christ suffered for you leaving you an example that you should follow his steps he suffered for you he committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth or a more simple translation is just he never sinned and he never deceived anyone so Jesus is completely innocent we know that he is completely innocent he never sinned the only person who ever lived who never sinned

Jesus our savior now why did he die well the wages of sin is death death is the result of sin the payment for sin is death if Jesus never sinned did he have to die no Jesus did not have to die he could have ascended back into heaven alive I suppose he could have lived on the earth forever he never sinned so then why did he die that is the heart of the gospel message he died because of his love for us he accepted our punishment he willingly chose your punishment which was death for your sins and accepted that punishment and died in your place and Peter makes this very clear let's think about how he suffered because Peter is going to go through that one terrible kind of suffering is in the next slide here you'll remember what

[15 : 57] Judas did to him Judas was one of the twelve disciples he leads the mob to arrest Jesus in the dark at night and he kisses him to show him to show the guards there who to arrest and it's just so touching that Jesus says to him Judas would you betray the son of man with a kiss I mean what for those of you that have ever had bad family issues bad family problems you've ever felt betrayed by a close friend betrayed by a family member betrayed understand that Jesus has also walked that path and he didn't retaliate he didn't try to punch him out he didn't try to get even all he did was say you're betraying me with a kiss it's an amazing example that Christ sets for us how do you deal with the kind of suffering that a family member can bring to you and then the next slide again we're still in this second chapter here at first Peter and in verse 23 he says when they hurled their insults at him he did not retaliate and when he suffered he made no threats well what insults were there you remember that in this week we will remember that on

Friday and during Thursday night Jesus was dragged away into a false trial they brought lying witnesses to say he did things he had never done and he silently endured it he didn't retaliate he when he suffered there as they gave him that terrible beating as they put a crown of thorns on his head as they forced him to carry a cross on a back that had just been beaten and to drag it through the streets and in all of these things he made no threats as an old song goes and as he told Peter when he was being arrested don't you know I could call ten thousand angels don't you know I could call ten thousand angels right now but I'm going to willingly suffer this silently for you because this is the will of God and Peter saying to us sometimes you must suffer in silence to fulfill the will of

God in your own life and then in the next slide or the next verse and really this is one of the best verses in the whole Bible to understand what is the good news remember the word gospel means good news what is it in its essence it's right here in verse 24 Jesus himself bore our sins in his body on the cross or on the tree so that he might die to sins and live for righteousness and by his wounds you have been healed he was bearing our sins in his body so they nailed him to a cross you know that he had to hang there bleeding to death suffocating as he was not able to get his breath as his body was dangling hanging as his joints were being pulled out of joint just a terrible agonizing death and what does he do in those moments he still looks out for others he forgives the people who are crucifying him he looks out for his mama and makes sure his friend is going to provide for her his thoughts are completely about others he does nothing to defend himself he even manages to rescue a sinner who's dying beside him and say yes today you will be with me in heaven in every way he's an example for us when we are mistreated how should we respond and in doing that he's carrying our sins on himself and then that very last phrase by his wounds you have been healed and I don't know if you've noticed the new banners that our worship team has gotten for us this season and put up here to help us remember this beautiful time that we call

Easter but this one has that scripture on it by his wounds by his wounds we were healed how are we healed first of all from the moment that you understand what Jesus did for you and from the moment you make that decision to be a follower of Jesus Christ and accept his death in your place from that moment you are spiritually healed you are delivered from death you cross it over into eternal life you are spiritually healed now as you continue to live your life as a Christian and let the Holy Spirit and the Word of God work in your heart you also become emotionally healed a lot of hurts and pains you suffered God will be healing those you become healed in relationships with others you become healed in your own attitudes your own greed your own self-centeredness he's healing you by his wounds in all of those things and then wonderfully and sometimes he will even miraculously physically heal people who come to him in prayer with an illness and say Lord I just believe by your stripes by your wounds I was healed and so sometimes the

Lord will miraculously heal in that manner but we all receive the healing of Christ and we all will receive physical healing eventually and ultimately at the time of death and then in the resurrection we will be resurrected with new bodies glorified bodies free from all pain free from all sickness rejoicing forever I have a good friend who was born with cerebral palsy and he's been in a wheelchair all his life and he's a believer and he's about 60 years old now and not long ago I was talking with him and he said brother Matt there's one thing when we get to heaven I'm going to outrun you in a foot race I said okay brother it's a challenge you're on but you better show up ready to run so but think of that that he's spent his whole life in a wheelchair but he has this glorious hope that one day he'll have that glorified body that Christ is going to heal him because by his wounds we were healed hallelujah so this is the gospel and then

[23 : 14] Peter concludes in the last verse that we'll look at verse 25 for you were like sheep going astray but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls I can really relate to that before I trusted in Jesus as my savior I was very much going astray I mean I just if there was a decision to be made most of the time I would make the wrong decision I'm talking important decisions in life who you're going to spend time with what you're going to be doing how you're going to spend you know whatever I mean I was just out there a sheep wandering lost but Peter says from the time then that you receive Christ and believe Christ then you come to that good shepherd the shepherd and the overseer of your souls and by the way for the

Bible scholars that like to go into the details a good bit of this passage comes straight out of Isaiah 53 so Peter was a scholar of the Old Testament and was really drawing from Isaiah 53 the suffering servant and he brought many quotes into what we've just been reading together and discussing here well how about you can you honestly say it just be all really honest with yourself and with God right now can you honestly say the Lord Jesus is my shepherd and if you can't then the scripture says you're lost he extends his hands to you today today he reminds you that he died on a cross took your sins on his body on the cross and he extends to you and he says come to me are you weary are you heavy laden has your sin weighed you down come to me I will forgive I will heal I will restore you you will be adopted into my family we're going to sing a closing song and there may be somebody here today that's never quite made that decision they've thought about it a lot you've thought about it you've almost made that decision then I'm going to stand down front today as we sing and you could come to me and say today I want to publicly acknowledge that I'm a follower of Jesus and that he is my shepherd and we'll pray together and the whole church will rejoice with you also as long as

I'm down front any other prayer need in your life I'll be more than happy to pray with you about anything so I'm going to ask the musicians to come we'll pray as they're coming Lord we've seen the gospel message today and we've seen what Jesus did for us and how incredible it is and now Lord during this song we ask you to work among us and to lead any straying sheep to come back to the good shepherd this morning in this place right now in Jesus name amen