

Endure Suffering Graciously

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[0 : 00] chapter we read in 1 Peter chapter 2. It's really from verse 18 to the end.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps, and so on.

Now, as Peter has been emphasizing all through this letter, the Christian's conduct ought to be Christ-like.

That, of course, goes without saying, because it is something that Jesus himself taught. It's something you find Paul teaching in all his epistles, and you will find that that is the writing and the theme, whether we come to practical letters like James, or whether it is Peter's letters or John's letters.

[1 : 25] It's always highlighting the importance of the conduct, our conduct in life. And it should be becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

Now, of course, when we follow the Lord, we are seeking to obey his commands. And we always got to remember that God's commands are based upon his holiness.

And when we are seeking to follow the Lord, and when we live in obedience, when we follow him out of love, when it's a heart of love that motivates us to follow the Lord, then we are being conformed to this holiness more and more.

And, of course, that's what causes the sorrow within our heart when we fail, when we sin, when we find that within our whole being there is another power and foreshadow work, which is working contrary to the work of grace.

The work of grace is desiring to follow the Lord. You as a believer today, that's what you want to do above all. That is your great desire.

[2 : 38] And many a day you've said to the Lord, Lord, I want to follow you with all my heart. And yet sometimes by the end of the day, you find yourself saying, Lord, have mercy upon me.

Because as you reflect over the day so often, what you see is a failure to be what you hope to be, to be what you know the Lord demands that you be.

And this sense of sorrow that is found in your heart is a reflection of the grace that is there. Because this grace causes this upset in your heart where you go to the Lord and you're asking for forgiveness for what you've done in wrong.

Now, this holy living should govern all our life. Not just our hour of worship or our hours of worship on a Sunday or midweek or whatever. A Christ-likeness should govern all our actions.

In every area of our life, whether it is social or business or recreational or family or educational, in all the different areas, wherever we are, wherever we are, we don't walk into the place of work and say, well, I know I'm a Christian, but I'm taking off my Christian coat just now and I'm putting on my business coat or I'm putting on my work coat and I'm leaving my Christianity behind.

[4 : 03] That's for Sunday. That's for church times. The rest of the time, this is for me. Now, the Christian doesn't operate like that. Christian doesn't have liberty to do that.

Christian doesn't want to do that. And that is what makes the difference, is that there is this life that is being lived. Now, you and I are so aware of our failure and our shortcomings, but there is this desire to bring Christ into all the different areas of our life.

And there should be a growing Christ-likeness, despite our failures, despite what we are, so that we're beginning, in our different dealings with people, there should be this.

In fact, we'll come to look at that. We won't look at it today, but that's the very thing that Peter goes on to write in chapter 3. Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husband, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word.

That's without a word from you. By the conduct of their wives. I suppose one of the great examples of that was Augustine's mother, Monica, who was apparently an exceptional Christian.

[5 : 19] And Augustine's father was a complete unbeliever. I can't remember, was he an agnostic, but he had no interest or no time for the gospel. But Augustine, in his confessions, writes about, tells us about that, that his mother was just such a consecrated Christian, and her example of godliness and Christlikeness was so amazing, that before he died, his father had come to faith in the Lord.

And he said it was through the example, through the witness, through the Christlikeness of his mother, that that's what one, wasn't so much what she said, it's what she was.

And that's the very thing that Peter goes on to write about. We'll look at that when we come to it. It's the example. This is the impact. It's not always what we say.

It's what we are. And this is what Peter is emphasizing here. What we are. So that the Christian ought to be operating by different standards.

Not for the sake of being different. If we try and be different just for the sake of it, we will fail miserably. It's not going about saying, right, I must show that I'm different. Not at all. Our focus is on the Lord and his word.

[6 : 41] And if we follow that, then we will be different without us being aware of it. If we're being aware of it and saying, well, I must just, we've got to be true to ourselves, but true to the Lord.

True to the Lord and true to ourselves. And as we follow that pattern, then that honesty and genuineness of life will have its impact upon others.

And then Peter goes on to highlight the importance of being submissive and showing respect to authority. Now, he puts a lot of emphasis in his writings upon this submission, but showing respect to authority.

And, you know, that's one thing that's severely lacking in the day that we're living in is our lack of respect to authority. Lack of respect to people, lack of respect to property, lack of respect to position in all society.

We see it in so many fronts. And it's a very sad thing. And I think it's a symptom of the fact that the gospel's impact is gone.

[7 : 48] Because this is one of the things that the gospel instills is a respect for authority. Authority in the home, authority within the church, authority within society, because God has set up structures.

And when that authority is minimized and when there is no respect for it, it is a symptom of the fact that the gospel's impact is going.

So Peter is very strong on the importance of showing respect. And then Peter, again, as we said, he highlights the importance of being submissive, even when we're suffering, even when we're suffering, suffering wrong.

And that's what he says in verse 19, for this is a gracious thing when mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. And then he says, for what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure.

So in a sense, that's self-explanatory. If we've done wrong and we suffer for it, well, that's no big deal. Because if we've done something that is wrong and we're suffering for it, well, that's a consequence of our action.

[9 : 04] But so often in life, people are suffering for being right and being honest and being fair and being just. and they're suffering for it. And that is hard to take.

And any person who is going through that knows exactly how hard it is to take something when you are trying to do your best and to be fair and to be honest and to be just, and yet you're being hit for it.

It's difficult. And we can react in loads of different ways to that and it's understandable. But Peter is saying to us, you know, this is part of, this is sometimes part of what it is to be a Christian.

This is part of what it is to be taking up the cross and following him. And then what Peter does is he says, right, I know, and these, these early Christians were really suffering because they were losing their homes, they were losing their property, they were losing their work, they were losing their rights, they were losing all these things.

It was tough being a Christian. And Peter says, you are, you're so just and right in everything you're doing and you're still suffering. But then he says, right, I know something of your pain.

[10:21] Can I focus you upon a person? And he says, let's look at Jesus. Let's put our focus back upon Jesus. Here is an example of somebody who really suffered because all that he ever did was just and right.

And you know, when you think about it, when you look at what Christ endured upon the cross, when you look at Christ, what he endured for sin, not his own sin, but our sin, you see then what our sin deserves.

And then you say to yourself, well, you know, whatever happens to me in life, however bad things might be, because of my sin to a certain extent, I even deserve more than this.

However, when you look at Jesus Christ as a sin bearer, who went there for your sin and my sin, the wonderful thing, the amazing thing about Jesus is that all throughout his life, a holy life, a righteous life, a good life, he never did anything but what was good.

He never took a step in this world but that which was in obedience to his Father. He didn't do anything of himself. All to his Father, for his Father, and for our good.

[11:41] It was wonderful. Every step that he took, it was for us in obedience to the Father. And so, it's remarkable. And yet, everywhere he went, he did good.

He was healing, he was teaching, he was feeding. When people were in distress, he helped. When they had no food, he gave them food. We all know how he healed.

There was something about the life of Jesus. You know how often it tells us he was moved with compassion. Moved. It was like his whole being was upset by.

His whole being was, it was like in turmoil with compassion when he would see the effect of sin, the misery that sin was bringing into people's lives.

I hope we have something of that in our own heart and life as well. That we also know what it is to be moved with compassion. That we aren't oblivious to people's hurts and pains.

[12:43] And yet, all the time as Jesus dealt and reacted with all the situations round about, he suffered and he suffered and he suffered. But you see, the sinless one, that's for you, for to you have this been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps.

He committed no sin. Neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in turn. When he suffered, he did not threaten but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

My friend, at the end of the day, that's what we've got to do. Here's Jesus. And all the time, there was this kind of like silence about and constant submission.

Every day, he submitted himself to the law. Isn't this amazing? He is a lawgiver and yet he comes in our place and he's fulfilling the law every single day for us.

He submitted himself to his persecutors. Now, we know that over and over but let us remind ourselves, remember when they came to the garden and he went deliberately to the garden.

[14:01] You know, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he told Peter and John about this upper room and he gave them directions about this and that that they would see this and they would see that and to follow this man and they would eventually find where they were going to have the supper.

And some people wonder, why was it done so mysteriously and in such a hidden way? Well, a suggestion maybe is that Jesus didn't want Judas because Judas was with them, didn't want Judas to know where they were actually going to have the supper because Judas was waiting for the opportunity to betray Jesus.

And after the supper, you remember, they went up into the room and they had the Passover and then there was the supper. But we know that it was from the upper room that Judas went and he went off to finalize his deal with the religious leaders and the chief priests and such like.

And Jesus then went from the upper room to the place that he was most likely to go, the place that Judas knew. It tells us that to the Garden of Gethsemane. So there is every possibility that there

was this sort of secrecy about where the Passover and the Lord's Supper was to be instituted. The Passover kept and the Lord's Supper instituted for the fear that Judas would betray Jesus and they wouldn't get that opportunity to have the Passover and institute the Lord's Supper.

[15 : 43] It's only a suggestion. But anyway, Jesus went to the place where he was most likely to be arrested, to the Garden. And remember when the soldiers came and he said to them, who are you looking for?

They said, Jesus of Nazareth. And he said to them, I am he. Remember what happened? They fell backward to the ground.

They all fell. It was like an unseen force threw them to the ground. It must have been quite an amazing thing to see all these soldiers and the religious leaders flung to the ground.

And you know, as they got up, as they would be getting up, they would be saying to themselves, what happened there? They all fell backwards. And you would think at that moment they would say to themselves, well, can you put yourself there?

You might, that's what I would be saying to myself, I'm out of here. I'm having no more to do with this. But you see, they were so blinkered and prejudiced against him that they couldn't see anything.

[16 : 51] And then it tells us how Jesus, he gave himself to them. And it was at that point, remember, Peter pulled out the sword in order to defend Jesus. And Jesus said, no, put it away.

He said, I could call on twelve legions of angels to come at this moment. And I'll let the world if need be. But no, this is the hour and the power of darkness.

I am handing myself over. He was in control. It was all by way of submission. All the time. And even before Pilate, remember Pilate when he wasn't, Jesus wasn't speaking or answering Pilate's questions.

Pilate said to Jesus, why do you not answer me? I have power, says Pilate, to release you or to put you to death.

I have power. Pilate is saying to Jesus, power is mine. Then Jesus says to Pilate, he said, you know, Pilate, you could have no power at all except it were given you from above.

[17 : 57] It's not an amazing statement. And you know, the solemn thought is coming. When there is to be another judgment, Christ stood before Pilate in the judgment hall.

the roles are going to be reversed because there's going to come a day when Jesus will return to this world. In his first coming, he came as the Lamb.

Behold, the Lamb of God. In the Old Testament, the call was cried. Remember Isaac said, where is the Lamb? And the Old Testament church down throughout the years was shouting the same thing. Where is the Lamb? Where is the Lamb? Until John the Baptist was able to say, behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And today, he is still the Lamb who's taking away the sin of the world.

But one day, when he returns, people will see the wrath of the Lamb. And let us remember this, that Jesus, gentle Jesus, that judgment, the Father, has given the judgment to the Son.

[19 : 10] That is why the Bible calls it the judgment seat of Christ. Because Christ is to sit upon that seat to judge the world.

And he will judge in righteousness. So the Father has committed the judgment to the Son. And that's what makes the rejection of Jesus such a fearful thing. because sitting on that judgment seat is Christ.

And every person will be brought to face the judge, Christ. And they will be asked by Christ, what did you do with me?

I am the gift of God to the world. Did you accept me? Did you reject me? Wouldn't it be an awful thing to have to face Jesus?

Because we, and you will have to, I will have to, we're going to have to give an account of all that we have done in the body, whether good or bad. It's an amazing thought and it's something, sometimes we push away from our thinking.

[20 : 13] but we will stand before this Jesus. And if we have, if you have, or anyone has rejected him, I cannot think of a more awful situation than to say, I didn't want you as my king.

And Jesus then has no option but to say, well, depart from me. I will give you what you chose. You chose not to have me.

So for all eternity you will be gone. That's it. And you see how solemn it is. We cannot play with these things.

Christ is central to life, to death, to everything. But anyway, we find here that Jesus has come and Jesus is the one who as the lamb he was the one who submitted himself all the time to the persecutors.

But not only to the persecutors, he submitted himself to his father as well. Because he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

[21 : 28] Now we know that cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree. And that's exactly what happened to Jesus upon the cross. And as we know, Jesus is this great picture.

So he said, where is the lamb? Jesus is that lamb. Do you remember in the Old Testament when the sinner came to the temple, to the tabernacle or to the temple and they brought their animal for sacrifice, they put their hand upon the head of the animal.

Put their hand upon the head of the lamb. And when they were doing that, they were doing it in a way, in a symbolic way, saying, my sin is being placed upon this animal.

And this animal is to die for me. Now, of course, this was all pointing. It wasn't the animal. It wasn't the animal that was taking away.

What they were doing was by faith. And they were doing it in faith, believing in a Savior who was to come.

[22 : 33] They knew the promise. Way, way back, Abraham saw my day and rejoiced. Abel, way, way back, Abel sacrificed with the lamb.

Right back to the very beginning. But there was, it wasn't, they weren't believing that the animal was taking away the sacrifice. The animal was but a type showing what the Savior was to do.

And so, the Old Testament church was saved by believing in Christ. But they had this imagery set out before them where they could see in a very graphic way that it was only by way of substitution.

It was only by somebody bearing the sin. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. And so, we now come to the fulfillment of that where Jesus now as the Lamb of God is the one who is now bearing our sins in his own body upon the tree.

Oh, my friend, what a transaction took place there. Because Christ on the cross, let us remember this, here is Jesus, sinless, spotless, in our room instead.

[23 : 56] Jesus received the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, without measure. In other words, he had the fullness of the Spirit. We have the Holy Spirit within us as well, but so often, the sin that is within us darkens the Spirit's ministry within us.

We are often guilty of grieving the Spirit, of quenching the Spirit, because of our sin. Christ was sinless. He had the Spirit without measure.

But as he approached this hour and upon the cross, the Holy Spirit, we believe, was withdrawn from him. What is one of the names given to the Holy Spirit?

The Comforter. Jesus received no comfort. That's what it says in the Psalms, Comforter found I none.

Nobody, nobody on earth, nobody in heaven, to comfort him in his hour of sorrow and agony. Everything was withdrawn from him.

[25 : 10] He was utterly and absolutely alone, bearing upon in his own body our sin. What constitute hell in all the sense of abandonment and forsakenness and the wrath of God was poured upon Christ for you and me.

What a wonderful transaction. But that is not the end of it. God then took and he says, you know, here's my perfect son. My people now are standing in his perfect righteousness so that as God looks at you, my believing friend today, he looks at you through Jesus.

He looks at you through what Jesus has done and he says, you're beautiful. Absolutely beautiful.

That's how the Lord sees his people because he's looking at them through the work of his son. And we find that hard to understand. Remember I would say since Psalm 45, the king's daughter is all glorious within.

You say to yourself, I'm full of sin. Yes, so we are. But with regard to our standing before God, God looks at us through the work of his son.

[26 : 36] And then finally we see there's a lot of other things that we could see here. It tells us, by his wounds you have been healed, for you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

Now as you and I know there's no animal that is more prone to straying than the sheep. It's the most frustrating of animals. And I'll tell you, you'll need some good fence to keep all your sheep in. I doubt there's ever you'll come across any crofter or any shepherd or anything who'll be ever able to say, you know, I never had a sheep that strayed. And my word, they can stray.

That's one of the things about the sheep. They go. They just go. And you know, that's what we're like. Straying sheep. Couldn't find our old way back.

And that's why the shepherd of the sheep came. He came into this world as a good shepherd to give his life for the sheep. He died for us. We've said this before. There are different references to Jesus.

[27 : 37] He is a good shepherd who gave his life for the sheep. He is a great shepherd who today is alive and is looking after his sheep.

He's shepherding us. That's part of what his great work is doing. The Lord's my shepherd. I shall not want. It's not the Lord was my shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd. Today he is shepherding the flock. But later on in Peter it tells us that he's also the chief shepherd. shepherd. And in that role he is the chief shepherd who's going to come again for his sheep to take them all home with himself.

It's a wonderful thing to belong to the shepherd. Where are you today? That's a very important question. But you know the fold, you know there's more room in the fold.

Jesus says this when he talks about himself being the good shepherd. And I have other sheep. That are not of this fold. I must bring them also.

[28 : 45] And they will listen to my voice. In other words, I've got more sheep. Right now they don't know they're my sheep. But they're going to hear my voice. And I'm going to take them into the fold.

And you know where you're most likely to hear the shepherd's voice? It's where you are today.

When you come to his house. Because he's speaking to you. And he's saying, come on, there's, you know what it says elsewhere, yet there is room.

Jesus is saying there's more room in the fold. And the way into the fold is by listening to my voice.

Jesus, as a good shepherd, is calling you today.

Will you come in with him into the fold? Let us pray. Oh, Lord, our God, we give thanks for the great work of Christ.

We give thanks, oh, Lord, for all that he is and all that he has done. And we pray, oh, Lord, that we may never take this for granted. May we rejoice in our heart for this salvation.

[29 : 52] And if there are any today who have not come into this union with Christ by faith, Lord, please, today, help them so to do. Lord, may we look to the Savior, look to the one who has pierced, and may we trust and believe.

As a good shepherd today, Lord, we pray to search out and to draw. May there be people in here today who will hear the voice of the shepherd, and our souls will live.

Lord, take us all home safely, we pray. Wash away our sin, in Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen.