

Christ Our Sin-Bearer

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[0 : 00] So 1 Peter 2 at verse 21, Now you recall last time we saw how Peter was setting forth Jesus as an example, and as an example especially in terms of the way in which we are to be subject, in a proper way, in the ways in which the chapter mentions that, but especially there, servants be subject to your own masters with all respect and so on.

And we saw something of what that entailed, and the kind of attitude and actions that are required of Christians when, as it says there, when they suffer for doing good, when they are persecuted or suffering in whatever way for doing good, not justly suffering for something bad if done, but for doing good.

And we mentioned how, as indeed Peter is mentioning there, how Jesus, in the way he himself lived, is our supreme example. He, when he was reviled, did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but he continued entrusting himself to him who judges righteously, that is to God the Father. Jesus, our example.

But for us to be saved, for us to have a right relationship with God, and be set right with God, we need more than an example.

[2 : 06] Even the perfect example of Jesus was not going to be sufficient, would not be sufficient to save us. Because setting out Jesus as an example is fine and good, and he is our example, as we saw.

He is the example of a perfect human life. Even in other respects than what Peter mentions in the immediate context. But Jesus, as an example, still leaves something undealt with, that you and I need to have dealt with, before we can be set right with God, before we can have the power of sin broken in ourselves.

And that is that Jesus was required to die. That Jesus was required to be an atonement for our sin. To answer to God for our sin.

To provide to God the kind of death that we deserved. The very death we deserved. In respect of our sins.

And so he needed to die as well as to be an example by his way of life. And that is one of the great things about Jesus. That you have both combined in himself.

[3 : 28] Our perfect example as to how to live a human life in obedience to God. In how he treats others. And how we are to treat others. But he is also our sacrifice.

He bore our sins in his body on the tree. And it's not just simply that we needed to have something in ourselves dealt with through the death of Christ and its consequences and its benefits to us.

There's another aspect to it as well that we have to actually constantly bear in mind. And that is that God needed to have something done on his side of the relationship.

Because our sin is not just simply something that disqualifies us and limits us from being able to follow Jesus as an example. Our sin is something that God finds utterly offensive.

That attracts his wrath and his condemnation. And that needs to be dealt with. And until that is dealt with and unless that is dealt with we cannot have the salvation that we do have through the death of Christ.

[4 : 41] He is more than an example because we need it more than an example. And all that we needed in addition to a perfect example we have in the death of Christ in the death of the cross.

Now all of that stems then from the provision that God has made for us there. And again Peter is going back here as we saw in the last passage to the Old Testament to the likes of Isaiah 53 in particular.

But the Old Testament of course had so much built into the system of sacrifices that God had given to the people deliberately so that it would be a symbolism for them of the burden of their sin and

how their sin was something that needed to be transferred away from themselves in a way that God could then accept them into his presence.

And the system of sacrifices in the Old Testament especially sacrifice to do with offerings for sin and on the Day of Atonement particularly that sacrifice that the High Priest gave on behalf of the people for sin they were really images if you like or a way of symbolizing that sin was really in a spiritual sense a very grievous burden that was offensive to God.

That's why you find in the imagery in the practice in the ritual of the Old Testament the person coming with the sacrifice with the animal laid his hand upon the head of the animal. Why was that? [6:13] Well it was symbolic of transferring his sin and the guilt of his sin onto the sacrifice so that that was accepted in the death of that animal in a symbolical way it was accepted in his place or in her place.

And that's what led to the fulfillment of that in Jesus that's really an imagery if you like though they were real events but it was all set out to symbolize to represent the death of Jesus that would fulfill all of these sacrifices for sin.

And here is the transfer in the death of the cross. And the two things we're going to deal with this evening from these verses first of all Christ's death for sin and secondly our death to sin.

Christ's death for sin and our death to sin and by our I mean those especially that are connected to Christ and live in union with Christ as his people they die to sin they have died to sin in their union with Christ and so are made alive to righteousness as we find indeed the purpose here of his death brought before us.

He himself bore our sins in his body on a tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. So let's look at Christ's death for sin.

[7:47] Obviously this is something that is of direct relevance to every single person in this building this evening and it's of direct relevance to every single person in the world if only more of those who inhabit the world would see it.

It's really what we're doing in setting forth the gospel and our testifying to the gospel. It's the burden of mission of evangelism that the death of Christ as that which God has provided at the heart of the gospel is indeed for every human being and is designed to be available to every human being who hears the gospel so that they might come and take this to themselves as God's provided means of salvation.

So he himself that's the first thing we're looking at Christ's death for our sins first thing you see in that is he himself bore our sins and that he himself is absolutely filled with the grandeur of God.

Who is this he himself who bore our sins in his body on the tree? Who is he talking about? Well he's talking about Jesus Christ but how do you identify Jesus Christ?

Who is Jesus Christ? Who do you think of him? What do you think of him when you ask the question who is he? Is this a human nature that was hanging on the cross? Is this a human nature that was given?

[9:13] Yes there's a human nature involved but that does not define the person. We say this so often but it's so important that we understand the identity of Jesus is the Son of God.

That's who he is. It's nothing less than God himself in the person of Jesus the second person of the Trinity that God is.

without going into any of that it's sufficient for our purpose this evening to say this is God in our human nature having taken human nature to himself in Jesus Christ.

This is who he is. How do you see your sins this evening? how have you come to look upon your sinfulness?

If we treat sin in any way lighter than the Bible itself does we will never understand the death of Jesus. We will never understand why God had to come into this world to do this.

[10:27] Why God in the person of his own son actually came to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. If you don't treat seriously this whole matter of sin your sin my personal sin then you're not really going to engage with the reality of what happened at Calvary when Jesus Christ died on the cross.

He himself he himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree. And you can see that sin must be absolutely serious beyond what we can possibly ourselves fully understand or imagine or else it would not have led to God in the person of his son coming to actually do this and give himself to this to bear these sins in his own body on the tree.

So there's the question that arises from that or one of them at least for the moment. How seriously do we reckon with sin? It's a small matter to you. Is it just something that you think of as you do when you offend another human being?

When something is done that really comes between you and somebody else and needs to be rectified? Is that all sin is to us? Or is sin just simply a human transaction where we do something wrong without really realizing how that itself impinges upon God, upon his glory, upon his rights? When you see the death of Jesus brought before us in the gospel in this way, then you begin to really see, well, you know, my sin must be enormous, my sin must be of such depth and of such dreadful color and of such seriousness before it took this on the part of God himself to deal with it. [12:26] That's what Romans 8, of course, reminds us of as well, that when we were disqualified from providing or creating salvation for ourselves, what happened? Well, God, in sending his son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, why did he come?

Was it just to give a good example? that's certainly not absent from it, but that's not the primary reason that Paul has for him coming into the world. He came for sin, to deal with our sin, to take our sin to himself, to take the consequences of our sin to himself, to take its penalty, to take its curse. That's what he did, and it's he himself. You see, you can never get away from these words. He himself did this. He didn't send somebody else, he didn't delegate it to somebody else. He didn't as God, as the second person of the Trinity, say, I can't possibly, as God, this is just beyond me, this is below me, this is beneath me.

I can't possibly be expected to go and actually do this for sinners who have offended me, who have broken my law, who have thrown in my face the goodness that I showed to them.

[13:47] How can I possibly be thought of as going into that world in which they live, taking their humanity to myself, and more than that, taking their actual sin to myself.

That's what he did. That's what's happened. He himself. And not only are these words a reminder of the seriousness of sin, they are also a reminder of the wonder of the Savior.

So the second question is not just simply what a sin to us, what does sin mean to us, how serious is our sin to us, what do we think of Jesus? What is he to us?

What do we think of when we read here that he himself bore our sins? How precious is he to us? How vital is he to us?

Can we live without him? Can I face eternity without him? Can I look at my sins and think, something less than this is going to deal with it and going to be enough for it?

[15:00] He himself. And then he himself bore our sins. That means he carried them. He took them to himself.

He actually made them his own. He did no sin. That's what you read earlier on. He committed no sin. Neither was deceit found in his mouth.

He committed no sin, but he himself bore our sins. The sinless son of God. He made the sin of his people, and all that's attached to the sin of his people, he made it his personal property.

He made it his own. He took it to himself as if he had always been this great sinner that faced God with this burden, with this load of his people's sins.

He bore our sins. He didn't just come into close contact with them. He didn't look at them from a distance. He didn't provide something in respect for them or in regard for them, in regard to them in relation to these sins.

[16:11] He didn't just provide something taking account of our sin without it actually coming to be a bearing of these sins himself. He bore them.

He took them to himself. And you know that's why, one of the reasons why, when you come to Jesus, you place your trust in Jesus, when you take Jesus to yourself as he's offered in the gospel, you no longer possess your sins as a burden, because he's already carried them.

He bore our sins as the heart of our salvation, the heart of the gospel, but the heart of our salvation. And you see, he took the full weight of it, you might say, of our sin.

We can't possibly measure the weight of our sin, only God, and indeed only Jesus knows that. How heavy a burden is it? It's as heavy as the wrath of God.

God. It's as heavy as the condemnation of God. It's as heavy as hell, because that's what he bore, our sins, and all that was attached to it.

[17:27] He took the full weight of that to himself. You remember on the way to Calvary, that they took his wooden, the wooden cross that he was carrying, on which he was going to be crucified,

that he had over his shoulder, and carried for some distance.

They took it off him and they gave it to Simon of Cyrene to carry at that point. The weight of the cross, literally, that wood of the cross was taken off him physically, but the burden of sin was still there.

It couldn't be taken off him, because he'd come into this world to carry it. The burden of our sin, he took into his death, the death that was due to us for our sins.

It was transferred to him, and transferred to him by way of his death. And he did it in his body. He himself bore our sins in his body.

Now, you mustn't think from that, that what Jesus gave by his death on the cross was his human nature as a sacrifice. remember who this is.

[18 : 38] There's not simply a human nature that you think of when you think of Jesus on the cross. It is still the Son of God in our human nature, but it is he who bore our sins, and he bore it in his body.

He himself bore our sins in his body. In other words, although it's more than just that he offered his body or his human nature for our sins.

It was through that human nature that he suffered, through that human nature that the Son of God experienced the weight of our sin, through that human nature that he died, the death of the cross. But it's his experience. And of course, deity, the divine nature, cannot die. But through this amazing conjunction of deity and humanity and the person of Christ, the person of the Son of God, bore our sins in his body on the tree.

And that's the final thing in him being Christ's death for sin. He bore our sins in his body himself on the tree.

[20 : 02] The word tree, of course, is used there by Peter for the cross. It wasn't a literal tree like you find growing nearby in the gardens. It was, in fact, a cross made of wood.

But it's described here as the tree, as it was in the passage we read where Peter met with Cornelius. That's the word that's used there as well.

And why is that word used? Well, it goes back again to the Old Testament, and especially to the likes of Deuteronomy in chapter 21, verses 22 to 23. And Galatians chapter 3, verse 13, picks that up.

If you consult these verses afterwards, you can see the connection. That's Deuteronomy chapter 21, and Galatians chapter 3, and verse 13. Because what you find there is a reference to whoever is hanged on a tree being cursed.

cursed is he who's hanged on a tree. The death penalty, as it was exercised so graphically there.

[21 : 08] And what Deuteronomy set out, and Galatians pick up, I can maybe just read the version Galatians so that we can see exactly how Paul uses that reference from Deuteronomy in Galatians 3 and 13.

He's talking there of the law and how it's not by the works of the law but by faith or through faith that we come to be justified or set right with God. So he says, the righteous shall live by faith.

And verse 12, the law is not of faith but rather the one who does them shall live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. And this was so that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham, God's promises to Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

But look, he's mentioning there the word is curse, of course. It's frightening, isn't it, really, even to think of that. And we would never have invented it ourselves, of applying that to the Son of God.

[22 : 19] But this is what God himself says, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. He bore himself, himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

He was made a curse. He was made the curse that God applies to sin. He was put away from God as one who was no longer fit to be in his presence in respect to the burden of sin that he was carrying and the guilt of that sin as God saw it.

And the bearing of that wrath of God due to sin fell upon him to the extent that he was made a curse. Now you imagine, what does that mean for us this evening?

What is that really saying to us this evening? What does it say about our sin and what does it say about our need? What does it say about this person of Jesus Christ? Well again it says, if he was made a curse, how great must my sin be and my guilt be.

And if he was made a curse, then there is no way in the world or in eternity that if I put my faith in him that that curse is ever going to come back to haunt me.

[23 : 48] Because he was made a curse for my sin. That's the wonder of salvation, of salvation in Christ.

He bore our sins in his own body and it's literally on to the tree. Now the theologians and commentators have divided us to the meaning of that word it literally says, unto the tree. And we could misuse that. But it means I think at least this, that when he bore our sins on the cross, he bore them onto the cross in such a way that it makes it clear for us here that he experienced every single aspect of that curse and of that death that was due to us for our sins.

It was unto the cross that he bore our sins. Nothing less than that. But surely also it means this, that that burden and that curse and everything due to us for our sins, he bore it onto the cross, that's to say, into his death, and he left it there.

There's no need to deal with it anymore. It's not going to come back to require being dealt with again. He bore it onto the cross.

[25 : 18] And that's why you can say that Jesus is the only Savior, the only name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.

And we should never be embarrassed about saying that in a world of tolerance, of equality, these things are fine in their own place, but never to the usurping of the uniqueness of Jesus as in himself, the way, the truth, and the life.

No man comes to the Father, he said, except by me. There it is then, Christ's death death for sin. He took his people's sins to himself, he made them his own, he bore them in his own body onto the tree, and he left them there.

He answered for them there. His death is sufficient for time and for eternity, for us and for God, as God required it for our sin.

Secondly, very briefly, our death to sin. This is the other side of it. He bore our sins himself in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

[26 : 40] Now, when anyone dies, when we ourselves will die eventually, whenever it will be, you can think of that as a break with this world and your life in this world.

You're breaking with the present reality you have of living here and you're going into eternity. It's a break with one state for another state.

That's how it is without salvation as well. Christ died so that through his death we might have the power of sin broken, the dominance of sin broken.

Let me just point to Romans chapter 6 and verse 12, same thing he's dealing with there, where he says that the death he died in verse 10, he died once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Now there's a whole lot of stuff there that we can't possibly go into this evening, but what is important is this, that through the death of Christ, as God dealt with sin, he dealt a death blow to sin.

[27 : 51] And when you come to believe in Christ, and when you come to accept Christ, that's what he's saying later on in the chapter, you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and therefore having been set free from sin, you have become slaves or servants of righteousness.

What's happening? What God is doing is breaking the dominance of sin in our lives when we come to know Christ. When you come to be alive in Christ, the power of sin is broken, and it all goes back to the death of Jesus, but in his application by the Holy Spirit in our personal experience of salvation.

It's not that you stop sinning, it's not that you're no longer aware of sin in your life, but the dominance and the power of sin is broken, and replaced by another dominance, another power altogether.

The tyrant sin has been defeated, and the Holy Spirit has taken over in the hearts of such people. He died for sin so that we might die to sin, that we might live to righteousness, that's the other side of it, that you might die to sin, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

The positive side of it, the righteousness, the moral standard, the judicial standard indeed that God requires, and that is available to us and is fulfilled for us in Jesus Christ through his death.

[29 : 45] death. We're skipping over this very quickly in the interest of time, and I know it's warm, but there's such important points in terms of who Jesus is and how he relates to us in salvation, and

how this is absolutely the crux of our salvation and of the gospel too.

And he goes on to say, by his wounds you have been healed, again going back to Isaiah 53 in particular. Now Jesus did some of these servants, remember this is going back to verse 18, servants be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust.

And some of these servants would be badly treated, not all by any means, but some would be flogged, beaten, badly treated.

So was Jesus. The greatest part of his sufferings undoubtedly were to do with bearing the burden of our sin and bearing the wrath of God and being made a curse.

But even on a physical level, you can see how desperately Jesus suffered as he bore the sin of his people, as he would have been tied to that pole on the pavement as it was called, and then lashed with a Roman scourge piece of wood with leather strips attached to it, and each of these strips studded with either bits of bone or something hard like that.

[31 : 26] Imagine being whipped, scourged, tied to a pole with that. Now he's saying, by his wounds, you have been healed.

The sufferings of Jesus, incalculable sufferings of Jesus, physical, spiritual, mental, but they're all part of him himself, he himself bearing our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

And so every single day that I live, I should be saying to myself, has Jesus suffered in this way so that sin would survive in my experience?

Has Jesus suffered this so that I would take any delight whatsoever in any single sin in my life? Has Jesus suffered the way he has? Has Jesus died the death he has died so that I should actually treat sin in a way other than to actually want to be completely forgiven and completely rid of it and live a holy life to God?

If that's not my mind tonight, then I'm despising the death of Christ. I'm belittling the sufferings of Jesus. If that's not what I'm seeking, by his wounds you have been healed.

[33 : 01] For you were like sheep going astray, but you've now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. You see, he is rounding it off for us by saying, all of this that is true of Jesus is actually part of his shepherding care for his people.

He came into this world to seek and to save that which was lost. And in his own parables you find that so often referred to, that as a shepherd goes in search of the one sheep that was lost, so Jesus came to seek and to save lost sinners.

And he went so far in that seeking and in that saving of them, to bear their sins in his own body onto the tree, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

righteousness. He is the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Peter is using that word overseer in chapter five. Interestingly, for us as a congregation, we've just elected new elders as well as deacons.

The word overseer is applied to elders as well as the shepherding of the flock is included in the sense of the word. But here it's Jesus himself. He's the shepherd and overseer, the one who actually oversees and has charge of your souls, of your persons.

[34 : 33] Frank Greif, a hymn writer who lived at the end of the 1800s and died in 1919, wrote this hymn around about 1902, I think it was.

It's entitled, Does Jesus Care? Does Jesus care when my heart is pained too deeply for mirth or song? As the burdens press and the cares distress and the way grows weary and long?

Does Jesus care when my way is dark with a nameless dread and fear? As the daylight fades into deep night shades, does he care enough to be near?

Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed to resist some temptation strong? When for my deep grief there is no relief, though my tears flow all the night long?

Does Jesus care when I've said goodbye to the dearest on earth to me? And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks?

[35 : 41] Is it anything to him? Does he see? Oh, yes, he cares. I know that he cares. his heart is touched with my grief.

When the days are weary, the nights long dreary, I know my Savior cares. Let me leave you with another question.

I put it to myself as I put it to you too. Who now is your care who's looking after your life?

Let's pray. Lord, our God, we pray that you would bless your word to us once again. We give thanks for the detail that you give us concerning your sufferings, concerning the death you died on the cross.

We thank you that these details are accurate, that we can believe them to be the truth, and that you have revealed them to us so that we might, coming to be shamed of our sin, and coming to turn from them in repentance, might willingly and gladly turn to you as the one who in yourself bore the sin of your people in your body onto the tree.

[37 : 04] And help us, we pray, to live to righteousness and to die to sin in our daily lives. And able us to be thankful that you have provided for us, that great principle of power, by which the power of sin is broken, and by which your spirit lives within our hearts.

So go before us now, we pray, hear us and accept our worship for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, we'll sing once again in conclusion from Psalm 22.

Again, we'll sing from Sing Psalms. Psalm 22, this time the tune is Wareham, and singing verses 27 to 31. After having spoken about such sufferings on the part of the psalmist as he represented the Lord, the whole earth, in verse 27, the whole earth will remember him and turn towards the Lord their God.

All peoples will bow down to him, the nations of the world abroad. Dominion to the Lord belongs, and over nations he is king. The rich of all the earth will feast and worship with an offering.

So on to the end of the psalm, verse 31, the whole earth will remember him. The whole earth will remember him and turn towards the Lord their God.

[38 : 44] All peoples will bow down to him, the nations of the world abroad.

Dominion to the Lord belongs, and over nations he is king.

The rich of all the earth will feast and worship with an offering.

All those whose destiny is just will humbly kneel before his throne.

They cannot keep themselves alive, for they depend on him alone.

[40 : 09] Posterity will serve the Lord and generations still to come.

will tell to come will tell the people yet unborn the righteous act that he hath done.

if you allow me to get to the main door please after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and ever more.

Amen.