

1Pet 2.21-23—Called to the Fellowship of Christ's Suffering

Christ Suffered For Us, vv.21-23

- I. Christ took up a body like ours so He could suffer for us, Isa 53; Mt 16.21.
 - A. In variety, number, and severity, the sufferings He endured were like no human being had ever experienced, Lam 1.12.
 - 1. They were all unmerited and undeserved, v.22.
 - 2. They were all for sin—our sins. Our sins put the terrifying wrath of God into His suffering, cp. 1Cor 15.56.
 - B. All His sufferings were for you. He bore at the hands of God what you deserved, Jn 18.8; Heb 10.5-7; 2Cor 5.21.
- II. And He bore it all with the utmost patience, v.23.
 - A. The earth quaked for Him and the sun turned its face away for Him; but He was silent. And when He did speak, He prayed for His murderers, Lk 23.24. In fact, He died at their hands in order that they might be saved, Acts 2.41.
 - B. In the very place where every man would expect to find impatience, the only thing seen in Christ is His entrusting Himself to the Father, Lk 23.46.
 - 1. He placed His complete confidence in His Father's righteous judgment.
 - 2. He had no need to avenge Himself against men because He knew the Father would fight for Him. He looked above and beyond all second causes to the First Cause in the will of His Father, Ps 40.8; Isa 53.10.
 - 3. He saw in all the events that occurred to Him, the manifestation of His Father's will and therefore humbly and patiently, submitted to it all, Jn 12.27; 18.37.
 - C. Christ's great example was in that He was willing to suffer as severely and as long as was necessary, to secure all the grand objects of the Covenant of Redemption, because it was the will of His Father, Heb 10.7; Jn 12.27-28; 17.4.

Our Calling to Follow Him in His Sufferings, v.21

- I. Christ intended His life to be a copy for us to follow, v.21; Jn 13.15.
 - A. His entire life is our rule, Mt 4.19. But most especially, every step He took in the way of suffering was a step He intended us to trace with our own lives, Mk 8.34-35; Lk 14.26-27; cf. Jn 8.12.

- B. He lived His life with the intention of showing us what we can expect from this harsh world and how we should behave in it, cf. Phil 2.5-8; 1Jn 2.6. In every part of the Christian race, we're to run drafting behind Him, carrying our cross, Heb 12.2.
 - C. But it's not His mere suffering which we're to copy, but rather His meek, patient, and holy endurance of undeserved suffering, because it is *to this* that we've been called, vv.18-21.
- II. In calling us to be Christians God called us to *suffering*—and to *patience* in the face of it—because He called us to *follow His Son*.
 - A. And the reason for this is because suffering is the preeminent way by which He conforms us to His Son, Heb 12.10-13; Rom 8.28-29; 8.17; 6.10-11. Nothing works like suffering.
 - B. And so this is our *calling*. The Christian life is a call to suffering, Mk 8.34-35. To try and follow Christ without suffering is to follow a different Christ and not the One whom the Father sent.

Our Response to Suffering

- I. There's no reason to ever be surprised or discouraged when we meet with undeserved suffering from the world, Jn 15.18-21; 16.1; 1Pet 4.12-13.
- II. We need to understand—and be comforted—that our being called to suffering is for a holy purpose, Heb 12.10-11; Hos 2.5-7; 1Pet 1.6-7.
 - A. We're called to a Kingdom (Mt 25.33; Col 1.13), to an inheritance (1Pet 1.4; Col 1.12), and to glory (Jn 17.24). But the way to it is through suffering. Not because it's meritorious, but because it's the best furnace to rid us of all our dross, Mal 3.3-4; Heb 12.11.
- III. Not only is it useless to complain against God's hard providences, but it's a telltale sign of the very immaturity, pride, and selfishness for which God graciously brings you into suffering in the first place, Lk 22.31-34; Ps 119.76; Ezk 14.10-11.
 - A. When you're tempted to complain, remember that the only thing you should be complaining about is your disordered will, that it's so bent on your own way and not yet subdued to the will of God.
- IV. When we find ourselves in undeserved suffering, we should submit to it in a spirit of meekness and forgive the ones who wrong us.
- V. When we find ourselves suffering unjustly, and know it to be the Father's will, let us prayerfully commit ourselves and our cause to Him, and let us endure His will in patience and meekness—because this is pleasing to Him and will further conform us to His Son.