

We continue our study in 1 Peter. We have seen a number of very important things so far, and I would encourage you to look back at past sermons on our Website, and if you need a printed copy, let me know.

Peter is writing to those Christians who had to flee their homes because of their faith in Christ. He reminds them that in spite of their situation, they can have joy in Christ because of who they were and their relationship to God.

Peter summarizes the status of the Christian in 1 Peter 2:9-10 (READ). This is an incredible description of who we are – we have been chosen by God Himself, we are a royal priesthood, in that we have direct and immediate access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We are a holy nation, we are separated from the world and the ways of the world, and we are a special people ... a peculiar people.

As a result of our special status he then begins a series of exhortations on how we should act and react. The first of these we saw three weeks ago where we read these words in 1 Peter 2:11-12 (READ). We are in a spiritual battle, but as pilgrims, those just passing through on our way to heaven, we are to abstain from the fleshly lusts that are all around us.

Then last week we saw our relationship to those in authority over us – 1 Peter 2:13-17 (READ). We must understand that whoever is in charge is there because God has placed them there – they are His ministers, and therefore we are to obey them, respect them, honor and pray for them.

He continues his exhortations in the passage that is before us today, where he address slaves and masters – 1 Peter 2:18-25 (READ).

Now, I will grant you, that on the surface, this passage does not look like it would apply to us, because it looks as if Peter is addressing those who are slaves – that is, those who are the property of someone else. But, as we look at the entire passage we see some very powerful reasoning as to why we should endure suffering when we are treated wrongly for being Christians.

Again, remember the context of the letter. He is writing to pilgrims of the dispersion – those who had to flee their homes because of their faith in Christ. He has told them all the blessings that they have received from God, including having a place reserved in heaven for them.

This is why he then exhorts them to live and act in a certain way – in a way that is in accord with what the scriptures teach. This includes those who are slaves and who have come to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

As I have stated in the past, we really don't suffer in our country for being a Christian. Yes, we might get ridiculed ... we might be belittled. And we know that the media is generally against us. But we really don't have to worry about being arrested and tortured or even killed for being a Christian.

But there are other parts of the world where being a Christian or even telling others about Jesus Christ can bring imprisonment or death.

What I would like us to look at today is how should react if we are treated wrongly, and the reason why we

should react in a certain way. And that reason is the example of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Peter is talking to those Christians who are slaves ... those who are servants. This was very common in those days. Peter does not condemn slavery, but he does tell them to obey their masters – not only the good ones, but also the harsh ones.

Look closely at what he says. *“But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.”* If we suffer wrongfully for being a Christian, this is pleasing to God.

As he goes on, he gives the reason – 1 Peter 2:21 (READ). He tells us that we have the example of Christ before us that we should follow. As he suffered, we will suffer also. Notice that he says that we were called to suffer.

Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3:12: *“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”* If we desire to live for God, in accord with what He has revealed in His Word, we will suffer persecution.

Jesus tells us this in John 15:18-20: *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”*

Further, the Scriptures tell us that we are united to Christ in his sufferings. We read in Philippians 3:10,11 these encouraging words from Paul: *“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

And in 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 we read: *“We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.”*

The example that we have before us is the life of Jesus himself. Peter then quotes from Isaiah 53:9 in 1 Peter 2:22: *“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth.”* As I said, this is from Isaiah 53, which is one of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the suffering of the Messiah.

Listen to these words from Isaiah 53:3-9 and think about what happened to Jesus as I read these words: *“He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked; But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.”*

This is exactly what Peter tells us in the remaining portion of our passage – 1 Peter 2:23-24 (READ). The

results of our Saviors suffering is that we have forgiveness of our sins. Without the shed blood of Christ there is no forgiveness of sins.

He concludes with some great words of comfort in 1 Peter 2:25: *“For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”*

The Bible says that we are like sheep that have gone astray. But because of Christ, we are rescued by the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ and we have the salvation of our souls.

So, regardless of the suffering that we may encounter because we are Christians, we can take comfort in the fact, that we are following the example of our Savior, but know this also, that we have forgiveness of our sins and that the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, is looking out for us.