**1 Peter: The Glorious Outcome of Christ’s Sufferings**

1 Peter 3:18

**Context**

**1 Peter 3:18-22**—*For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;****19****in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,****20****who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.* ***21****Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,****22****who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.*

One of Peter’s theme throughout this epistle is living well in the midst of suffering. He centers our ability to do it well based on the life of Christ. No one endured more unjust hostility than He.

**1 Peter 2:20-21**—*For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.* ***21****For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,****22****who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;****23****and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;****24****and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*

Our suffering needs to be understood in the light of Christ’s suffering. His was unjust. Ours often is just. His fulfilled God’s plan. Ours often fulfills God’s plan. His brought people to God. Ours often brings people to God.

At the heart of the gospel is the fact that Jesus, perfectly righteous, died for the utterly unrighteous. In His suffering, He fulfilled all that God required of Him, completed the work, and sat down at the right hand of the Father. Because of His suffering and sacrifice, God was highly exalted. In turn, God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name.

We often never understand suffering we face, but it is very unlikely that we will face the kind of suffering Christ did. We may suffer unjustly, and you may even suffer for another’s sin, but we will never know what it means to suffer for the sake of another’s sin in the way Christ did to satisfy the Father’s holiness.

**Hebrews 12:4**—*You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin*

God is sovereignly working in all of these matters. The mystery of diving providence is a comfort to us as we face life circumstances. Mindful, it never absolves or excuses the sinfulness of man nor the evil that one commits. People are fully responsible for their actions and will be held accountable for them. But God works all of it after the counsel of His will.

***Ephesians 1:11***—*He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him****10****with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him****11****also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,****12****to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.*

Peter wants these beloved of God to understand the blessings of the finished work of Christ and that His suffering gives them hope as they suffer. The same is true for us today.

**The Suffering of Christ accomplished our Salvation**

1. **It was crucial**

***18****For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit*

1. “*For*” –the context of the verse is based on vv**13-17**
   1. You will suffer unjustly; don’t be surprised or disheartened
   2. Consider Christ and His unjust suffering
2. Christ triumphed in His suffering
   1. In excruciating pain
   2. In a horrific way
   3. Unjustly so; He did not deserve to die
3. It not only was crucial, but was the suffering to its worst conclusion—death
4. The ultimate suffering is to be murdered for the sake of righteousness
   1. Some translations equate “died” with “suffered”

**18***For Christ also hath once suffered for sins… (KJV)*

* 1. He suffered the most

1. He *died for sin*
   1. Sin was the reason the sinless Son of God died

**Isaiah 53:4-6**—Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. **5**But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. **6**All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

**8-12**—By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? **9**His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. **10**But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. **11**As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. **12**Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

**Matthew 26:26-28***—**While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”****27****And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you;****28****for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.****29****But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”*

**John 1:29***—The next day he \*saw Jesus coming to him and \*said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

**Romans 5:8-11***—But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.****9****Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.****10****For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.****11****And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*

**8:32***—He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

**Colossians 1:20-22***—and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.* ***21****And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,****22****yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach*

* 1. Peter will say earlier that Christ committed no sin

**2:22**—*who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth*

* 1. Christ fully pleased the Father and was perfect in every way
  2. He was perfectly holy

**Luke 1:35***—The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.”*

**2 Corinthians 5:21***—He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

**Hebrews 4:15***—For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.*

**7:26***—For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens*

1. **It was for sin**

***18****For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit*

1. Christ died for the sins not His own
   1. The context is for the believer suffering for sins
   2. When believers suffer at the hands of others (suffer because of another’s sin) in one way it is parallel to Christ suffering
      1. The sins of hatred, reviling, slander, abuse of power
      2. The sins of criticism, hostility, persecution, etc.
   3. When we suffer for righteousness sake, it is analogous to Christ
      1. Christ died for the sins of others
      2. He committed no sins
2. He suffered as a sin offering

**Romans 8:3**—*For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh*

* 1. The wages of sin is death

**Romans 3:23**—*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

* 1. Sin requires a blood offering or atonement

**Hebrews 9:22**—*And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

* 1. The blood of bulls and goats could never atone for sins (they were only a symbolic foreshadowing of Christ)

**Hebrews 10:4**—*For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

* 1. Christ’s death fully atones for sins

**Hebrews 10:19-23**—*Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,****20****by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,****21****and since we have a great priest over the house of God,****22****let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.****23****Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*

1. **It was once for all**

***18****For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit*

1. *One for all (hapaz)—*one time; of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition[[1]](#footnote-2)
   1. The OT system of sacrifice required repeated offerings
   2. The offerings were regular and necessary
   3. Christ’s offering was not to be repeated
   4. It ended the necessity to continue the sacrifices because His was THE perfect sacrifice
   5. It was sufficient for all time

**Hebrews 1:3***—And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*

**7:26-27***—For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;****27****who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.*

**9:27-28***—And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,****28****so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.*

**10:10-12***—By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* ***11****Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;****12****but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,*

1. His work on behalf of His own fully satisfies the righteous requirement of the Father
2. It satisfied His judgement for sin and His holiness
3. **It was vicarious**

***18****For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit*

1. Vicarious—acting or done for another; a vicarious atonement
   1. The just for the unjust
   2. The righteous for the unrighteous
   3. The sinless for the sinful
2. An eternal God making a once for all sacrifice to atone for sin
   1. God’s eternal Son offering Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin through His atonement and thereby securing eternal redemption
   2. In contrast to a finite being offering an eternal atonement for his own sin and it never satisfying God’s righteous requirement
3. Christ was the only One who could atone for sins

**2 Corinthians 5:21**—*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

1. Christ willingly laid down His life

**John 10:15-18**—*even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.****16****I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.****17****For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.****18****No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”*

* 1. In accord with His father’s plan
  2. Done before the foundation of the world

**Acts 2:23**—*this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

**Acts 4:27-28***—For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,****28****to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.*

**Acts 13:27-29***—For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him.****28****And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed.****29****When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb.*

**2 Timothy 1:*9****—who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity*

**Revelation 13:8***—All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.*

1. Peter wants us to understand the practical nature of such a substitutionary suffering of the Savior
   1. It illustrates that such extreme affliction and injustice resulted in a supreme triumph
   2. The most heinous thing possible (the creature killing the Creator) brings about eternal salvation to the very ones that are killing Him
   3. If such a victory occurred with the greater, we too (as the lesser) can be encouraged in our unjust suffering
2. ***18b*** *So that He might bring us to God*
   1. Christ brings us to God
   2. He provides the way—the only way
   3. Symbolically illustrated by the temple veil torn at the death of Christ

**Matthew 27:51**—*And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.*

* 1. As royal priests now of God (**2:9**), we have access to God and can enjoy His presence

**2:9**—*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, A holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

**Hebrews 4:16***—Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**10:19-22***—Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,****20****by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,****21****and since we have a great priest over the house of God,****22****let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

* 1. *Bring us* (prosagō)—to lead, to bring; to open a way of access, for one to God; to render one acceptable to God[[2]](#footnote-3)
     1. Jesus introduces us to the Father
     2. In ancient courts certain officials controlled access to the king. They verified someone’s right to see him and then introduced that person to the monarch.[[3]](#footnote-4)

**Hebrews 6:19-20**—*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,****20****where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

1. **It was proclaimed**

***18****For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit****19****in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,****20a****who once were disobedient*

1. Christ heralded a triumphant message
   1. He triumphed over sin
   2. He triumphed over evil spirts
   3. He triumphed over Satan
2. That’ll preach!

**Conclusion**

When we suffer for doing what is right and at the same time continually entrust ourselves to a faithful Creator, we will triumph. Faithful is He who calls us. Let us be faithful to Him.

**NOTES**

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**Source**

Most of the message and notes come from:

Richard W. DeHaan, Good News for Bad Times: 1 Peter

R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude

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John MacArthur, The Triumph of Christ’s Suffering, Pt 1, 1 Peter 3:18, Oct 8, 1989, gty.org

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[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

1. Strong’s G537; MacArthur quoting W.E. Vine, 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Strong’s G4317 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. MacArthur, 207-208. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)