

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **The Triumph of Christ's Sufferings**

**1 Peter 3:18-22**

#### **Part One**

We have finished **1 Pet. 3:13-17** which spelled out for us what needs to be true of our lives if we are going to effectively cope with persecution. At the end of this particular section of Scripture in **V. 17**, Peter makes a very important point. He says **“it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”**

Do people really believe this? Do you believe this? Theoretically people may in fact say “yes” but when the rubber meets the road they may in fact by their choice demonstrate something quite to the contrary.

Consider the issue of telling the truth. Let me ask you a question, “Is it right to tell the truth?” Hopefully your answer will be “certainly it is right to tell the truth.” Let me ask you another question, “Will telling the truth sometimes lead to suffering?” Again the answer will be yes. Certainly there are times when telling the truth may very well lead to suffering. Would it therefore be better if placed in a particular situation to conceal the truth and tell a lie hoping to get away with it? Based on **V. 17** what would Peter say? He would say that it would be **“better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”** How do we know that this is so?

In **VV. 18-22**, Peter goes on to give us a very dramatic demonstration of the truthfulness of what he has just said. Let us take our Bibles and read this very important passage of Scripture, **“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order 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) And 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.”** Why can we be so sure that what Peter has said was right? Because Christ Himself dramatically demonstrates it to be true.

In the midst of Christ's passion we will see his victory. In the midst of Christ's suffering we will see his triumph. Suffering for righteousness sake is not the path of destruction but rather to glory. We need to be assured of this. And there is no better passage of scripture to highlight this point than the passage that is before us this morning.

Hopefully as we study this passage there will be a growing determination in our lives individually and within this church corporately to pursue those things which are right no matter what the personal cost might be to our lives or even to this fellowship. Why? Because, we really truly believe it is better to suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong! Hopefully the passage we will be studying this morning will help deepen that conviction.

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As we examine this passage there will be four different aspects of Christ's victory that will be highlighted for us. There will be four different manifestations of His victory.

### CHRIST WAS TRIUMPHANT IN SIN-BEARING

The world may have seen Christ as defeated. His mission and message destroyed. In their eyes he died on the cross as a criminal.

Why was Jesus executed? He was executed because the Jews believed by calling God His father He made Himself equal with God (John 5:18). Certainly if he were not the Son of God as he claimed, there would have been a basis for the charges against Him, but truth of the matter was that He was in fact who he said He was.

Jesus' willingness as God's Son to take on a human form in order to serve this world in righteousness and display Himself as God became in reality the very basis of the unjust persecution against Him.

When individuals are executed, typically we would assume that there must be some kind of crime that had been committed to be worthy of death. Though this might be a reasonable assumption certainly it would be a false assumption, in the case of Christ.

So how could we say that **“it is better if God would will it so that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong?”** When we see such a great miscarriage of justice as we do in respect to Christ? What good was accomplished by it?

What does **V. 18** say? **“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”** If Christ had not righteously suffered what He did for righteousness sake He would not have been able to bear my sins or your sins to the cross of Calvary and thus bring us to God.

I would like us to take a few minutes this morning and consider several different features of this sin bearing that were highlighted in the passage.

IT WAS ULTIMATE - What is the ultimate expression of suffering that one can endure? Certainly that would be death. Look at **V.18** and see what it says.

What does the passage say? It tells us that He “died” (APOTHNESKO) for sins. The KJV translates the Greek word as “suffered” but certainly no one argues that Christ's death was not the focal point of his suffering. Clearly Christ's death is in view here.

Jesus did not simply pass out on the cross as a very few people would have us to believe, but he did in fact what? Die on the cross! This reality is very important for us to appreciate.

Yes, Christ has called us **“to take up our cross and follow Him,”** but the cross that we are called to bear is certainly not any heavier or crueler than His own.

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The first feature of the sin bearing of Christ we see in this verse is that as our sin bearer Christ **died**. What is the next feature that we see?

IT WAS RELATED TO SIN NOT HIS OWN - Let us again look at the verse and see what it says. **“Christ also died for sins.”** The phrase “for sin” (PERI HARMARTION) is the regular phrase in the Septuagint used to refer to the sin offering (**Lev. 5:7; 6:30; etc.**) and conveys the thought of atonement. The plural points to the mass of sins that He bore for mankind in His death.”

According to a man named “Whedon, the preposition PERI (“for”) represents Christ throwing himself down, upon, and around sins in such a manner that the falling curse of the broken law would surely strike him.

Not only was His sin bearing ultimate, but it was for sin not His own. In a sense this is what God, through Peter has called us to do also. He calls us to be zealous for that which is good. Ultimately to suffer for sins, not our own. Though there is this similarity, we should not at all get confused with the fact that Christ’s sufferings, that Christ’s death was atoning in nature, and any suffering on our part would not be.

The first feature of Christ’s triumphant sin bearing was that He died. The second feature is that His death was related to sin which was not His own.

HE DIED IN A UNIQUE WAY - There has never been and never will be a death like the death of Jesus. Let us continue to read the verse. What does it say? **“For Christ also died for sins once for all.”**

We have just commented on the fact that Jesus died for sins and that this phrase clearly was parallel to the phrase used in the Septuagint for the sin offering. The Christ offering for sin on the cross of Calvary was quite different than anything the Jewish faith had ever experienced. Never had they seen a sin offering offered **“once for all.”**

Every year at Passover in Jerusalem over 1/4 millions lambs were sacrificed. This was the Jewish experience. But this passage speaking of Christ’s suffering tells us that Jesus **“died for sins once for all.”**

**Heb. 7:26-28, “For it was fitting that we should 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.”**

This is why the new covenant is so much better than the old covenant.

**Heb. 9:23-26 “Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. (24) For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;**

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**(25) Nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own. (26) Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”**

The Roman Catholic Mass sacrifices Christ over and over and over again by representing the elements of the communion as His literal body and the juice as his literal blood. And this is wrong. There is no ongoing blood being poured out. And there is no ongoing flesh being broken. This was all done once never needing to be repeated again.

Not only was His sin bearing ultimate, related to sin not His own, unique in that it was comprehensive but:

THE DEATH OF CHRIST WAS VICARIOUS - A vicar refers to a deputy or agent who acts in the place of another, thus the word vicarious means that one takes the place of another, serving, or acting as a substitute. And this is exactly what Jesus did for us, it says, **“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust.”** 2 Cor. 5:21 says it this way **“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

What an infinite expression of love for me and for you. “And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior’s blood? Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! how can it be that thou my God shouldst die for me? Amazing love! How can it be that thou my God, shouldst die for me.”

THE DEATH OF CHRIST WAS PURPOSEFUL - Again let us look at the passage and see what else it says, **“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God.”** Jesus had no intent in just sending those who would embrace Him as their Lord and Savior into God’s presence. He was intent on “bringing” them into the presence of His father.

### CONCLUSION

THE WORLD WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT CHRIST WAS A MISGUIDED TEACHER WHO TRAGICALLY DIED ON A ROMAN CROSS.

THAT IS NOT TRUE. JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD WHO WILLINGLY CHOSE A PATH OF SUFFERING WHICH INCLUDED THE CROSS THAT WE MIGHT ENTER INTO HIS TRIUMPH AND BE BROUGHT TO GOD.

Many years ago this beggar morally bankrupt and distant from God came to Jesus in faith, trusting in Him and His work at Calvary. He gathered me up into His arms and carried me into the throne room of God.