

Christ The Sinless One: Saved By His Sacrifice, Shaped By His Steps

Lessons from 1 Peter 2:21-25 on Faith and Witness

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This evening, I want you to start with opening up your Bible and go with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 15. Sometimes God gives us vivid reminders of what it means to live and even die with Christ at the center. Just days ago, Charlie Kirk, a public figure known for speaking openly about his faith, was addressing students at Utah Valley University.

Minutes before his tragically as he was tragically shot and killed, he read aloud from this passage 2 Corinthians 5:15: “and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.” After saying that verse, he went on to affirm Jesus Christ was a real person. He lived a perfect life. He was crucified, died, and rose on the third day. And He is Lord and God over all. End quote.

Those were for him the last few words here on earth. What a public witness to the truth of the gospel and in a way an echo of the very heart of the passages that we've been reading and we'll continue to read tonight in 1 Peter chapter 2. And if you will please go ahead and turn to 1 Peter chapter 2 and we'll be reading from verse 21.

We've been speaking on Peter writing to believers facing unjust suffering, unjust suffering. And he points to Jesus, the one who suffered without sin, without deceit, without retaliation. We'll be reading that in verse 22 and on.

We will see that when He was insulted, He didn't insult back. When wronged, He didn't seek revenge. Instead, He entrusted Himself to the Father who judges justly.

One of the things that stood out this week with me when I was listening to I'm sure what everyone else was listening. It was what Charlie Kirk once said in an interview. He said this: “I want to be remembered for courage for my faith. I want to be remembered for courage for my faith.” And in his final moments, that courage was on display.

Not in anger or fear, but proclaiming Christ. Proclaiming Christ. And that was what we all want to do in our minds, don't we? As Christians, we want to be courageous. We want to speak of Christ in any place that we have the opportunity to do so. And it's not many times when going through a sermon where I'm going where a sermon is verse by verse does a moment come when there's an incident and it's where we are in the text.

I was wrestling with putting together this sermon in light of what happened and a lot of emotions, a lot of different sorts. Turn to the Psalms. I turn to of course our text and much of what has helped me is focusing on Christ. Focusing on Christ and that's what we're going to be doing tonight in the passages that we're about to read. That's always the solution. Amen. Solutions always to focus on Christ no matter what is going on circumstantially. That's what keeps us focused on what pleases God and what we are to we are called to be as Christians.

So if you would follow along with me, we're going to start with verse 21: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." Peter highlights here that it's our call to suffer. In fact, Christ, His main reason that He suffered was for us. You see that in the text. It was for us.

He didn't do it for Himself. He did it for us as believers. And then He leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. I pointed out last week the idea of an example is a model. So when a child first understands how to draw and would use a perfect model to perfect his drawings.

And so He is our model. He is our perfect example of Christ. Amen. And we are to follow His pattern. He called us into it. Are we going to be courageous to follow in His steps? I want us to know that I'm hoping that this message gives you that courage just like it did for Charlie Kirk who mentioned many times about his Savior during his opportunities to share about the gospel.

Here Peter highlights both the actions Christ avoided and those He embraced in verse 22. In verse 22 He avoids things you'll see. And He provides a model for believers for us not perfectly. Again we're not perfect like Him but to follow His example. To follow His example.

Christ shows us His emissions pertaining to Himself what He did and it was His actions directed to whom His Father He was to please His Father and He was perfect at that He followed God the Father's instructions to the tee and as mentioned in my previous sermon I asked those here to go and read the Gospels again and again to remind yourself what Christ did here on earth because it will show you you will start seeing more and more details as you read and read and read.

Just something that I picked up on was the time when He stood in front of King Herod and He didn't say anything bad about him. He respected the office. Remember I gave a message about how we are to respect the office.

And He did that perfectly. He did that with Pontius Pilate as a governor. And He went along. That was His mission here on earth. But Jesus totally recognized primarily God's authority as He is the Son of God and even the governments that God put in place as I mentioned He came to do God's will and fully went along with it. He is an example for us because He never sinned. Well I was just talking with somebody today. Isn't it amazing that our example is the perfect example? Think of all the people that are trying to follow somebody today. Everyone humanly speaking is not like Christ. There's no one like Him. What a privilege we have that He is our main example for us. He received the ultimate example of His Father loving Him. That's the ultimate example. That's what Jesus received, right, from God the Father.

It mirrors the suffering of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's how we should live our lives as He is our example. A harsh employer can be, another way of putting it, a harsh employer can

be God's training ground to help you become more like the Lord Jesus. Have you considered that more and more as a believer as you mature in Christ, how important it is that you're a witness for Him? Is that burdening you more and more and more? That's God's grace when He shows you that. He doesn't just show that to everyone. He doesn't just show that to everyone. So take that with humility that you get to be that witness for the Lord Jesus Christ and for God. So this is precisely what God intends for you when He places you in situations where you suffer for the sake of your conscience. If you have that kind of conscience, that sensitivity, again that is God's grace on you that your conscience is not seared where you're not receiving and understanding what grace means in your life.

Let's go into verse 21. Verse 21 says, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." I want to end it in this verse even though it's really connected with verses 22 to 25. This is going to be the bridge for next week's study when we talk about Christ as our example in greater and greater depth. But I want to end with this introduction as it were to be looking forward to our next week's message willing on this passage. And so verse 21 looks at the suffering that is part of being a Christian. It's just part of being a Christian is this life of suffering. It's not something you just try to avoid the inevitable meaning like you see suffering coming at you and you're trying to avoid it. That should not be a mark of a Christian. A mark of a Christian is you see the suffering coming head on and you're going Lord help me through it. That's a mature believer. You're not thinking about yourself. Help me to go through this situation for your sake for the Lord's sake. And so that's the kind of idea that verse 21 is helping us to remind ourselves of.

That we're not just trying to get through this suffering as quickly as possible as well. I love this analogy of steps. It's not a leap you notice which most people call it a leap of faith. That's not strong. It's the steps. And it's whose steps? The Lord's steps. I love that incremental movement and direction because it feels hard. You want to just get out of the situation. I've been there. I know how that feels. But take the word of God as it is and you'll actually want it. So let me go into it. So you don't want to quickly avoid it.

You want to process it step by step as it were. And the Apostle Paul puts it like this in 1 Corinthians 6-7. He talks about why not rather be wronged. And this whole passage is about believers. It's such a terrible thing that in this church in Corinth believers are taking each other to court. And sad that in the context of Corinth they were thinking like that i'm just gonna i'm gonna win in this way not winning for christ not win other people to Christ but to just win for my rights as it were. They were an immature church.

They were believers but they were immature in many many ways. And this was one aspect that they fell short on over and over again. Paul had to call them out. He had to call them out. And Paul basically says Christians should rather suffer wrong or get in another way of saying ripped off. You ever been ripped off in your business or something say it's better to be ripped off by even another believer cuz believers are taking each other to court saying wouldn't you rather be ripped off and dragged and and not be dragged into a civil lawsuit instead think about this because later on the passage i don't have time to go into it but he's saying the main points to keep the unity and trust in god's ultimate justice don't don't short circuit this process he's saying to the corinthians let it play through.

See what God does with this with justice. Wait for him. They were just too quick again. I just want to I don't want to suffer. I'm being unjust even amongst believers. Okay. Understand God's ultimate justice in this. Paul's kind of calm them down. Give him a long view. And instead fighting for personal rights and payback and in secular courts he's saying you are hurting the church's witness to the lost world. You are doing exact harm to the lost that are coming in. They had lost people coming into that church. And there were terrible terrible witness to them by their acts their attitude.

And it's tough. It's tough. It's tough to naturally accept injustice. In the flesh we hate it. And so it's in this text and it's for us to examine it and going yeah it is tough. Yes we're going to endure grief. Yes it's sad. But it's something we really have to learn again and again and again because sin creeps up doesn't it? And all sorts of things can be caused harm to the witness of Christ and the church's witness to the lost world. So the real question is whether you and I are up to it to take and consider the word of god over our rights and our wants. This is what this text continues to confront us with. So as Christians suffering is an intrinsic part of our calling. It starts right there with it's a calling to suffer. It is actually God's call on your life. So to truly understand endurance and suffering and how to embrace them we must look to Christ. We must look to Christ. This is the text. It's like yes you're going through all of this but remember this Peter says. I'm going to help you to focus on Christ in your suffering. So he says in this text look to Christ. It is only when suffering and endurance are connected to him that we can gain value and bring joy in our hearts regardless of the intensity of the suffering. How much did Jesus suffer all the way up to the cross yet he had joy? Remember that text? The joy that was set before him he endured the cross.

That's contrary to man's thinking right? The more suffering the more pain. But yet with Jesus he had more joy when he was approaching greater suffering. And we got to think of it that way brethren that it's countercultural the way we as Christians ought to live. But it's not for our sake again right? It's for the Lord's sake. So Christ's suffering because he never yielded to the world's evil. He never yielded to the world's evil and desired nothing more than to follow God's plan for him. His journey through the world serves us as our example.

He committed no sin either in deed or in word because he was completely devoted to God's will. And he completely entrusted everything to him. Not my will but thy will be done was his prayer. Knowing that God judges righteously he knows that God will ultimately fulfill his justice. So when it says here that Christ suffered as an example for us to follow in this text in verse 21 it's definitely not talking about his suffering to reconcile us as a substitute.

That is not that suffering that is holy of Christ what he did on the cross. We absolutely cannot follow that part that pattern because we will learn what that suffering is in 1 Peter 2.24 the kind of suffering we cannot and should not endure because we can't. So here it's mainly talking about the suffering where he is an example for you to follow. You see that is about his entire life leading up to the cross. Everything leading up to the cross was for our example. Everything on the cross no. So that's our example. He is our example. Our whole life during our time here on earth is his suffering leading up to the cross.

He lived in an absolutely sinful world unclean world just as ours. He was tempted by Satan. He was hated by people even though he loved them. At the same time he went through the suffering

as he could as a merciful and faithful high priest. Hebrews 2.17 Hebrews 4.15 this text talks about Jesus sacrifice to become compassionate high priest for us who could sympathize with human weaknesses and sin right? He was sent just as much as we were yet without sin. So he can become our merciful mediator between God and humanity. He's the only go-to another way of putting it.

He's the only one that can sympathize with us that we don't want to sin. We don't want to sin. We don't want to be rebellious. We want to be like Christ. And so he says think of Christ when you're going through what you're going through and enduring suffering. Because he understood all the trials. He's the only one that understands. He's the only one that experienced what you're experiencing and every detail yet without sin his entire journey on earth is an example you and i can follow that's the hope that's the courage that's the encouragement in this part of the text so when you do that you are fulfilling god's calling on your life that that will be on your mind on your conscious i am fulfilling god's calling by doing this and god is pleased that's god's plan for your life and if you're looking to understand how to follow christ's example seriously i would admonish you to go over the gospels again and again that is where you will find christ and his example for us Seriously consider reading the Gospels again and again and again. You'll see exactly how he responded to all the suffering. Look at how he responded to all the suffering without sin.

Because they all came all types of suffering he endured. So the word example again is used to refer to those in a way they used this all the way back then we still use it today. It's the idea of drawing something for a child and then you would put a piece of paper on that model and then you will trace over it to create the same model for yourself on your piece of paper. That's exactly the same way that you're doing step by step one part after the other. And you might not see everything clearly at the first step nor would you be it halfway.

But as you complete the full model you see the picture. And you go that's what this part of my life was for that's what this part of my life of suffering was for that's what this was in my grief. And then I see it completion an example of Christ now seen in my life. And when you end with that kind of hope and you end with that completion step by step in your life what hope and more assurance and greater joy that you will see that you have fulfilled God's plan for your life and his calling. That's what it means to follow these examples step by step. If you order your life in that way and you endure it yes it will be there will be time and time and time of this again and again. But don't keep your distance from him like Peter did. Don't keep your distance like Peter did which led him to denying his Lord in Luke 22 54.

After Jesus being arrested his disciple Peter followed the arresting officers and Jesus went to the high priest's house. Remember that? But he kept a distance because of fear. That's not what we see here in the text. You can only truly follow Christ by example by sticking close to him. by sticking close to him then you'll be able to follow in his footsteps. Imagine seeing his footprints in the sand. That's where you put your feet.

The further you get the fainter those footprints become. When you walk behind or right behind him his example stays really clear. And that helps you walk confidently in the right direction to the end goal to fulfill your calling in this life. You have a new life. There's so much more about this life that we are to unpack. But it's going to be suffering along the way that's going to be

consistently part of it. So I hope that this message is encouragement to you and that you would reread this passage 18 to 21. Reflect upon it. Look over your footsteps.

How close are you in proximity to Christ? How are you in your current situation? May the Lord help you to stay close to him that you will see his footprints clearly and that you will be able to endure the completion of your model in your life. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father thank you so much for the Lord Jesus Christ and his example that we have the awesome privilege to follow in his footsteps. Father there are many people here God because you have called them to suffering and many here that are suffering unjustly. I pray for them. Lord give them the grace to endure as you have been.

Help them to be reminded of that grace to live it out with joy just like Jesus and his example all the way leading up to the cross. Father I pray for them. Pray for more grace. Pray for more endurance. Pray for a greater witness to their respective bosses if they have a boss to their respective other employees. May you bless them in their workforce. Bless them as well as students here as well.

And also do pray for those that are being rebellious in some way. Father help this passage to remind them that they have mercy available to them that they can repent and they can go back and start off right where they began. And I also pray for the lost Lord that haven't even started don't even know what it means to follow after Christ. God I pray that you would work upon their hearts with this message. Show them that they can live with joy and live in a way that doesn't make sense in the world.

If they have that sense of that this doesn't make sense Father I pray your Holy Spirit work upon their hearts and help your I pray your Holy Spirit will help clarify these things as you did with us Lord as believers because only your Holy Spirit can direct them to the truth which is the Lord Jesus Christ. None of us can do that here in this room. So I pray for your Holy Spirit's presence also in their life and help them to start with trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for the finished work that was done on the cross the suffering that we could not have done only Christ can have was able to endure. Help them to see what he endured for them as a substitute on the cross for the payment of their sin so they don't have to receive the wrath of God in judgment. Bless in this way Father in this mighty way. And we'll thank you in Jesus name. Amen.