

The Sufferings Of Christ

Pointing to Jesus Through Time and Eternity

I'll be continuing my sermon series on First Peter, so if you want, make your way to First Peter. And just to recap a little bit of what I preached on last Sunday or two Sundays ago, I gave a message on verses 8 and 9. And the idea of verse 8 is that Peter was telling the readers of his book, he didn't say you ought to love or you should love the Lord Jesus Christ. He makes a point that if you are in Christ, in whom, right, you love, though you not see him, not yet believing. And that word "yet believing" gives this connotation of looking forward, looking forward, yet believing. It's a continuation. And I brought out a verse from Philippians where Paul makes a similar way of expressing it was the one thing. Remember that the one thing was for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And then you rejoice in what? That you are found in the Lord Jesus Christ and that He's going to protect you no matter what trials you are going through, verse 7, no matter what challenges you're going through, because we know that Jesus will carry us through, right? He is the one that carries us through the trials of life, through all the testings. Why? For a purpose, to refine us. In our trials, we know there's a purpose behind it all. God wants us to be more and more like Christ.

And so we rejoice in that, and that's our way of knowing that we are in the Lord, that there is this refining work going on in our lives, that we know we cannot own up to ourselves, in ourselves, that is anything in us, right? It is Christ the Lord that is doing this work. And so we rejoice, and it's a joy that's unspeakable because there's nothing that could compare to the rejoicing that we have in the Lord, amen. And then verse 9, that there's a point to all of it while we are on this earth, that there's an end, there's an end to our life here, and it's only by the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that we receive full salvation, right, for our souls.

And so tonight, I want to preach from verse 10 through 12. We're going to go through not so much a lot of Bible verses, but we're going to go through a lot of facts, historical facts, historical facts that were not clear in the Old Testament, but now it is clear because the moment Jesus came onto the earth and went to the cross, it was clear that there was a difference, that there was going to be a first coming and a second coming of the same person, the Lord Jesus Christ. So let's dive in to verse 10, shall we? Verse 10 reads this: "Of which salvation," mentioning, reverting to verse 9, "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you."

Now, the emphasis here in verse 10 is so important, and I think it's more needed than in history as we draw closer to the last of the last days, how important it is to know what prophecy is, because here Peter wants us to know what is true biblical prophecy,

what is prophecy defined in Scripture. We're going to get to know that in this verse, as well as in verse 11, but let me just give a little bit more. The most deepest purpose, the most important essence of prophecy is the idea of expectancy, right? Prophecy is supposed to give us this expectancy. Something is to occur. It has not happened yet. We know the facts, but it hasn't happened yet. That's what it is: facts not happening yet. And so it's an onward pointing, an onward pointing. And it's one great important figure that the Old Testament prophets prophesied, and it was going on generation after generation after generation after generation, century after century after century, that it will be fulfilled of their prophecy that they were promising, and that it will be accomplished. And this whole system of prophecy in the Old Testament brought about some glimpses, this anticipation: we're closer, we're closer, this expectation is coming to us, and then the sense of a bright future ahead as the generations after generations after generations kept moving and moving along, that there were kings that people looked at and go, "That's not it, it's not yet, it's not yet."

They looked at priests and they go, "That's not it, that's not it, that's not it." Institutions, that's not it, because the one, the king, whom the prophets were prophesying, will be a king and a sufferer, a king and a sufferer. And so they were looking for this king that would suffer, and they didn't see it, because all they saw was sin, because all kings, just like all of us, have inborn sin. So they were looking for a king that would suffer, but they couldn't put two and two together. So they kept looking, Israel as a whole, and they were hoping that the promises that were given to their fathers, to their forefathers, that it was going to come, but they didn't know the time of it. They didn't know where it would be, but they knew it was going to come.

The prophets, I'm speaking about the prophets now. Zechariah 9:9, we're going to go into. So hold your place in First Peter and go to Zechariah 9:9. So, Malachi, Zechariah, and I want to just lift up not the whole verse but parts of it, and I'm going to explain why I'm doing this. Look at the word, starting with "thy." See that? "Thy king cometh unto thee." Okay, now skip over and go to "lowly," continuing from there, "lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." So Zechariah here, he's talking about the king. It's coming, he's going to come in loneliness, meekness, he's going to ride upon an ass. And so he understands this, but he doesn't understand what he wrote, to be quite frank, because within this text, he's speaking about the first coming and the second coming at the same time, and they're all tied together. And this is where First Peter is talking about "inquired and searched diligently."

Zechariah was inquiring and searching diligently what, by the Spirit of the Lord, penned down and couldn't comprehend it. He didn't fully understand it, but he wrote it down by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. He couldn't quite make the distinction. He couldn't quite make the decision. He wrote it down but didn't understand it. Now Simon Peter, by the same Spirit, makes the distinction. He makes the distinction: Christ came one time to suffer, to bring redemption, and He will come the next time in glory and reign upon the earth.

But before we go there, now go to Matthew, Matthew chapter 21, verse 1-5. Here, Matthew takes, by the same Spirit, and now makes it clear, and he separates verse 9. And I want you to see where he omits, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.” He omits it. He doesn’t include it. Why? Because our Lord Jesus is not coming into Jerusalem for that time of rejoicing. That will take place in His second coming. You know, the famous triumphal entry—that’s where it’s coming from, but really, that wasn’t the triumphal, true triumphal entry. That really comes in the second coming. And then he also omits, “He is just, and having salvation.” You don’t see it there.

Why? Because he’s not talking about salvation in the sense of our souls being saved from our sins. He’s talking about victory here in Zechariah. So he omits that because that will be fulfilled again in the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so we see the verses that I took from Zechariah 9, the verse that I took from verse 9, and I just wanted to pull out from there His first coming. Do you see that? He was meek. He was riding on a donkey. And, by the way, don’t be confused by a donkey being something of a lowly sort. Matter of fact, is that kings would ride in donkeys for the purpose of showing peace. I’m coming in peace. Our Lord Jesus Christ did come as a king in that way, in a donkey, because when you’re coming on a horse, you’re saying it’s war. And you can see that—you don’t have to turn to it—but Jesus is going to come on a horse, a white horse, and that’s in Revelation 19:11. But that’s not here. That’s not in His first coming. He’s coming in peace as a king. And so when He was riding on that animal, He was coming for that purpose, humble, by the prophet emphasizing it.

So why is this important? It’s very important because it’s important to have prophetic order done in an orderly manner. And by the Lord, same Spirit speaking to Zechariah, speaking to Matthew, speaking to Peter, it becomes clearer and clearer. And the function was to point onwards to Jesus and to believe that God spoke through prophets. And the very heart of the message was to proclaim Jesus Christ and to bear witness was the function. Now look at verse here in Revelation 19, if you would like. Here, it’s very clear. John writes towards the end, look at where it starts with the testimony, in verse 10, says, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” That is so important, that is so important. All prophecy was to point to the testimony of Jesus Christ. So the central theme of the Old Testament prophecies was the same central theme of the New Testament preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we’re going to see that in verse 12. So I want you to put that, wrap that in your mind, the central theme, the prophecies, the preaching was all for the centrality, the theme of speaking of Jesus Christ.

Now, as we see, as prophetic, the time clock continues, we get glimpses of more light and less dimness in the Old Testament, as we see now in the New Testament, we’re going to see how everything is now in unity, the Old and the New, because in Acts 10:43, it says this: “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” So in the book of Acts, we see the clarity of all the witnessing that the prophets did was again to point to Jesus. Peter declares, we’re going to see prophets testify that He is, He is the Lord Jesus Christ that will come in the first as well as the second coming. And, you know, you

know, Peter understood this as a slight rebuke, and we see this in Luke chapter 24, beginning with verse 25: "You know, Jesus, after His resurrection, He was standing in front of them, the disciples, one of them being Peter, said, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?'" Look at those words: suffer and enter into His glory. He separated the two. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself made it plain to the disciples.

So the theme, now going from prophecy to now the theme of gospel preaching. Let's go into verse 11 through 12: "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves," the prophets, "but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." So you find the apostle, he's saying, "Look, the prophets, they foretold the same thing that we're doing as apostles, the same report that we're preaching, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." And some remarkable expressions of that you'll find is in verse 10. I started out with that, with the salvation, right? And then we see a clause, "the grace that should come unto you," verse 10, and then in verse 11, "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." So what you see here is more clarity: salvation, grace, Christ suffering, and the subsequent glory. These are all facts. This is the essence, the truth of the gospel, all given by God's grace for the purposes to affect man's salvation. These are all facts of the gospel, and we ought to preach it and proclaim it. It is, it is our duty, it is as Christians our duty to preach the gospel, just like the prophets preached in the Old, pointing to Jesus. We are to point to Jesus.

So it's amazing. You don't have to base things on speculation or a declaration of principles, but on historical facts. We are grounded because they were already done. We are living the time past the Old Testament prophecies, past Jesus dying on the cross for our sin. And that, my friends, comes out all types of clarity and doctrines comes out from that, all theology, and all revelation about God and man. All of it stands on the facts of the gospel: that Christ lived, died, was buried, rose again, ascended back to heaven, and seated at the right hand of God.

So I want to go to the sufferings of Christ, which is the title of my sermon, and it's the text that we're reading from. We see sufferings. Why is that so important? Why is that so important? Because it's the story of the life of Christ. More than that, it's a story of His death. More than that, it's the story of what He did while here on the earth. It's the story of the cross. It's the story of the cross. It doesn't diminish what Christ said while here on earth. It doesn't diminish all the beautiful things that He did, of healings, of sorts, but the main thing, the main thing is what Christ bore. What Christ bore. That is what the Lord Jesus Christ suffered, suffered in our place. That's the facts. He did it.

He went on the cross to pay for our deepest need. And what is that? Well, we know, as believers, we know that it was our sins being dealt with. That's why He suffered. There

was no other reasons for Him to suffer. He was perfect. He had no sin, perfectly obedient, and yet He suffered in our place, both the guilt and the power of sin. Nothing else is more important in the whole storyline of Christ. All the prophecies that the prophets made, think about that, compounding over and over again, the same central message. That's God right there. And when God does a work in your life, that's the same message that you will preach from, because it's the same Spirit that was in the prophets, that was in the apostles, and is now to us as Christians. That is amazing. That's grace.

But again, going back to our sins, the fact that He died on the cross, the sacrifice He made, the sufferings He had to endure, is the heart of the gospel. And this is why Peter puts it right in the middle of Old Testament, New Testament, and this is where the vital power comes from. He knew it, by the Spirit of God empowering him to put here the sufferings of Christ, where the power comes through and through, because it is what He did on the cross that has the power to save us from our sins. Without the sufferings of Christ, our sins will stay the same. But it was the power of the cross, the power of Him suffering in our place, is where all the life is. Him dying for us, that we can live. Paul puts it like this in 1 Corinthians chapter 15:3: "He died for our sins according to the scriptures." That's a lot to unpack.

That's all of Scriptures that were speaking about Jesus and Him suffering. That's the beauty, that's the amazing thing about the Lord, isn't it? The depth, the wisdom, all of it in the gospel. And it's no use to know just, okay, He suffered for us, but there's more than that, unless you can say, as John said, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," that he can say with John, "The Word was made flesh," in Isaiah 53:4, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Strike all of that from the gospel, and there's no suffering, because that's the one thing, the one thing that draws men's hearts, that will satisfy men's ultimate need.

And this is what Jesus said in John 12:32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." He's talking about the redemptive death, what He did on the cross. His death gave the opportunity for men to draw unto Him. But it has a condition: "If I be lifted up." Is He lifted up in your life? Is He lifted up in your life? You either believe that He is, or you reject it. There are only two paths when Jesus is lifted up. But we know, amen, we know, we know, as brothers and sisters in Christ, we know that we have a Christ that's lifted up in our lives. And it's something deeply to consider, the importance of Him being lifted up, because His redemptive death is what's important to the church today, to preach from the pulpit, to hear this word over and over again, that Christ be lifted up, because that is the way men are drawn to the Savior. They do not know that Jesus died for their sin, there is no gospel. And that's why we must lift Him up every time we have the opportunity, because the gospel is about Christ and Him crucified.

Now, Paul makes it another point in 1 Corinthians 1:23: "We preach Christ crucified," right? We preach Christ crucified, because out of all the things of the prophets, Peter reminds us here in our text, He must shine. He must shine, because they, it was not

clear to them. It was not clear to them, this amazing figure that comes out from the Old Testament. And so, looking in the past, it's important to where we are today. And it's what makes all the difference in pivoting from the Old to the New and unifying the two together and knowing where we stand today as believers, that we are still pointing people, we are still pointing people to Jesus Christ and Him crucified, because that is the deepest need, again, to every man and woman that needs a Savior.

Now, just want to bring up, briefly, in verse 12, look at the end there, where it says, "Which things the angels desire to look into." Now, he might be describing, when he was with the Apostle John, and he went over to the sepulchre, and he stooped down, referring to John chapter 20, and he looked, and he then, he saw—well, he didn't see, but after John and Peter left, Mary came, and he saw, and she saw two angels, verse 12, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. So he adds this in here because it was something that John, inspired to write, what Mary saw, and the desire of the angels to look at Jesus and what He just did. And think about it: Jesus did not come to redeem angels. We know that. But know the significance of that, that He came for us, whom creatures on this globe, and having this amazing mystery of the incarnation, the death for one as us, who does not deserve, by the way, the mercy and grace. If you're a true believer, it's constantly something that we think about. Why me, Lord, with all of my sins, that You came to save me, where the angels desire to see that. They cannot receive redemption, but we, as human beings, can. That they would be so interested, that they'll be so fixed—that's the idea of desire—they're just so fixed to what God is doing with mankind, that we are subjects of the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ.

And Ephesians 3:10 says this: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." The sense here, the principalities and powers, are speaking about angels, that they would see, in the heavenly place, the wisdom of God by the church, by what God is doing with the church, which are saints, the believers. Amazing display of God's wisdom that is revealed to the angels. And so we see that all the orders in the heavenly places are looking down at this spectacular thing that's unfolding and is still yet to come in the second coming, but has in the first, that they're so fixed to what God is doing with us as believers in this, what's called the church age, that He would visit us as broken, sinful men, that He would want to rescue us from dying in our sins. This is the loving kindness of God, and we are not to ignore this redemption work that even the angels desire to look upon.

Now, Apostle John is amazing in Revelation 5:9, where it talks about the elders will be singing a new song, and the angels are going to look at the elders singing this song that's saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." So that's in the future, that is going to happen. Amazing, amen.

Last point is, what does the sufferings of Christ have to do with each of us? Now, it's been an encouragement for you as believers, but this text speaks to all of us in this room, and that's where I want to go in the text, as Peter does. Look with me, four times, with verses 10 through 12, and I will emphasize. It says this: "The prophets have inquired and searched diligently of the grace that should come unto you." Verse 12: "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves," the prophets, "but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you." Four times, you see, "unto you, unto you, unto you, unto you." And this word "unto" is signifying towards, that all of this, the prophets were to speak to us, right now, even in this room. The apostles speaking to us, right now. And right now, me preaching this message to you.

Think about that, the consistency, the constancy of the gospel, which I emphasized here, as Paul does, the sufferings of Christ. And so he takes all these wide thoughts—I covered a lot, prophets, apostles—and he gathers it all up, and then he directs it to our hearts. And that's the "unto" each man's heart. He's driving the purpose of all this that's been unfolded before our eyes, to realize that Christ bears to each one of us, because He wants to bear a relationship with you. Think about that. It's a one-on-one, as Pastor Waj mentioned. It comes down to Jesus and you. Jesus and you. Is that a reality? Is that a reality? His cross that He bore was for a purpose, from centuries rolling on, over and over and over again, from beginning to end, that affects heaven, that affects earth, and it goes straight to, not just earth, but you. Wide to you. You see that narrowing, directly to you. He repeats it four times. All of this is for us, right now.

So, as brothers and sisters, we can say, "He's our Savior," amen. Will He have that impact to those that are not, that have not seen Him as the Savior, have not seen that what He suffered was for your sin? Unless you do, there's no connection. There's no connection with the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, because it's either you keep your sin, or you place the sin upon Him. Cannot have both. That's what Christ wants to receive from you. If you don't know Him, I plead with you. I plead with you, with all the prophets, with all the apostles, with all the preachers that have come before me and are going to continue on, there must be that connection.

He must be your Christ. He must be able to say, "My Christ, my Savior." Because when you do, then He becomes, as here in this room, we can all say, "Our Christ," because He came for that purpose, for you. And all you have to do, if God is speaking to you, by the way, He says, "Preaching the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost," the Spirit of God makes it a reality to all of us. He can only make it reality to us. He will bring out all the facts and say, "Yes, yes, and amen." Has that happened? Has that happened? So, Christ and His sufferings, the substance of prophecy, the theme of the gospel, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and the angels that desire, that are fixed in their eyes, from the first coming to when He comes again, what is all this to you? Let this message speak to each and one of our hearts. May God be glorified. May Jesus truly be lifted up this evening, amen. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for this very important message, particularly on the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the sufferings of Christ, the way Peter made it. Lord, I pray that it would not just be words to us, but, Lord, I pray that Your Spirit would make the sufferings of Christ to be more and more of a reality, because there our sins were paid for, for there we saw the power of the cross, for there we become alive, we become truly alive in the Lord Jesus Christ. And, Father, I pray that through Your Spirit, that You would have used this message to speak to those that do not know Jesus, who do not recognize that He paid for their sin on the cross. Lord, I'm depending on Your Spirit to do what only He can do, is convince them of their sin, convince them to look to Jesus, that they will see that Jesus truly was lifted up to draw all men to Himself. Bless to this end, for we ask it in Jesus' name, amen.