

EMPOWERED BY PERSECUTION

1 Peter 2:21-25

The Insight of the Passage: How the death of Jesus Christ empowers a Christian to endure suffering for the faith.

Introduction: Context for the passage: 2:11-20. "Dear friends". Exiles and Christians treated as aliens in the provinces of 1st century Mediterranean Asia.

Verse 12: Christians must conduct themselves among the non-Christians with such decency, honor, and respectability that their neighbors would have no justification for malicious accusations against them.

Verses 13-17: Christians must submit to persecution from civil authorities, unless such submission would require sin. There is a power of shaming when persecution is responded to by good Christian conduct.

Verses 18-20: Christian slaves must submit to their masters' demands.

Peter's burden for Christian slaves was not emancipation but witness. The manifestation to masters of a value greater than personal freedom was of first concern to Peter. That value was freedom from the bondage of sin.

The suffering being guided by this section about household slaves was a **suffering of grief** for punishment despite doing good or having done what was expected.

What goal did the Apostle seem to have in mind as he charged his readers to endure "unjust" undeserved persecution?

To inspire Christians to provide a witness to what Jesus Christ had accomplished in order that any person might be delivered from the just and eternal penalty for sin.

To inspire Christians to provide a living example of such devotion and love for God, that the threat or pain of suffering could not break that devotion.

The principle at issue is persecution for our faith and how we deal with suffering or the threat of it. Christians are to find consolation and motivation in the example of Jesus' suffering.

Why this is a relevant and contemporary concern:

Because of the despising and reproach of Christian moral values happening in our public schools, in companies, in government, in institutions, and even in our courts.

We are called to respond to the threats of people driven by anti-Christian beliefs, with the *manners* of Christ, verse 21.

1. CHRIST'S EXAMPLE: HOW HE SUFFERED FOR US, verses 22-23.

- A. He did not commit sin, verse 22. Hebrews 4:15; John 8:24.
- B. He never lied, verse 22. (Isaiah 53:9)
- C. He did not revile those who reviled Him, verse 23.
- D. He did not threaten anyone who caused Him suffering, verse 23.

2. HOW JESUS ENDURED SUFFERING, verse 23C.

He entrusted Himself to God.

He trusted God to deliver Him from unjust suffering in a way that would accomplish what God wanted accomplished.

Application: • Put your trust in God in the midst of your suffering.

- Find rest in God's promises that He is in control of every situation.
- Find **your** grief from suffering eased by reflecting on how Jesus suffered to earn forgiveness for your offenses against God.
- Let your suffering help your enemies see Jesus' provision for sinners when you forgive them.

3. HIS DEATH IN OUR PLACE, verse 24

He accepted humanity's afflictions—its bitterness, its anger, its violence, its pain, its grief, and its death.

The Father punished Christ with the wrath against sin, and the separation, and the consequent death which we deserved.

In this way Christ was the substitute for those who would be saved.

4. THE EFFECT FOR BELIEVERS OF JESUS' DEATH, verse 25.

Christ having died for sins as our proxy or substitute, puts the believer in a place where the absolute control of sin has been broken and the capacity for righteousness has been born in us. (Isaiah 53:5)

His death heals those he died for. It changes believers within so that we have the capacity to live righteously in a twisted world.

The Good Shepherd has found us and in step with Him we are **CARED FOR, GUIDED, AND PROTECTED!**

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