Daily Devotion #217

**Christ Is Our Example**

**1 Peter 2:21 (NASB)** *“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*.”

I have never met anyone who enjoys suffering. In fact, I have often joked that I take Tylenol or Advil or some pain medication if I even think I’m going to have pain, but there are times when suffering is good. For example, when we have to remove a splinter or when a doctor must set a bone that has been broken, or perform some surgery to fix a problem, suffering is good because it begins the process of healing. However most suffering is not categorized as good. Counselors will tell you that far too many people deal with suffering in wrong ways and end up hurting themselves more in the end.

In Peter’s day, he says to the saints who were undergoing suffering at the hand of Nero in Rome that their suffering is needful. That may sound strange, but the suffering they were experiencing was from living their lives for Christ. For doing what was right in the face of evil. To which Peter says that is what they were called to do. They were called to suffer. His point is that because they had abandoned the evil of the sinful flesh and the evil of the world and surrendered their hearts to Christ, they would have to suffer and suffer greatly.

However, he also tells them that they were to take courage in their suffering because it identified them with their Lord. When Jesus came to the earth, He came to suffer. He came to suffer because true holiness is diametrically opposed to evil and sin. Therefore, any righteous work, in deed or thought, is going to be met with conflict from evil, and, as a result, suffering will be the outcome. That suffering can come in various forms. It’s sometimes emotional, sometimes physical, sometimes mental, and often from other people, but it will come. Why? Because Satan is the god of this world, for now (2 Corinthians 4:3-4) even though God is in full control. (Proverbs 19:21) Because Satan is the god of this world, anyone or anything that challenges his authority will endure suffering.

But Peter tells the saint to not let that truth hinder their work for Christ and their lives in Christ. Christ came to suffer for us, to rescue us so we could be set free from the bondage of sin. (Colossians 1:13) Therefore, because we belong to Him, Satan will come against us. Christ became our example of what it means to suffer for doing what is right. And Christ didn’t do anything to deserve the suffering He took upon Himself. In fact, Peter says, Christ committed no sin and neither was there any deceit in His mouth. (1 Peter 2:22). So if Christ suffered for doing nothing evil, then how much more can you and I expect to suffer? You and I were born of evil - born of a sinful heart and, now, having turned from the darkness of sin and from Satan’s power, how much more are we the enemies of Satan?

There will be many times you will suffer because you have turned to Christ. So don’t be surprised when the world misunderstands you, when the world wants to silence you and parade you as some freakish form of nature, when they want to make a spectacle of you and berate you and condemn you. You have become the enemy of Satan and, therefore, the enemy of the world because the world serves Satan. (Matthew 12:30) It’s not until the precious light of the Gospel opens to us the joy of eternal salvation that we become the sons and daughters of God, which then gives us the ability to see the truth and become keenly aware of the evil in this world. Prior to your conversion to Christ, the world seemed to be normal. But once you turned from Satan, you became His enemy and, for that, you will suffer. The good news: the Lord says to us that we should always live our lives following Him and His example because He has overcome the world. (John 16:33) He has overcome the darkness and has plans of taking us to be with Him one day. But for now, we much tighten our belts and bite our lips, and display hearts of love and compassion to the world. We must always live as examples of holiness and righteousness, no matter what because we now belong to Christ. He overcame the world and its suffering. He is our example.