

Sunday August 22nd 2010

Petros

Part Ten

1). 1Pe 2:18 *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

a). We had seen last week how as bondservants of God we are to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, so as our conduct will be honorable amongst the Gentiles with whom we dwell as sojourners and pilgrims and we had seen how this theme had continued to be addressed in the historical setting with regards to masters and their slaves, as we see in our opening scripture today.

b). And we see here that the Christian slave is commanded to be submissive to his master whether that master be 'good and gentle', that is kindhearted and considerate, or 'harsh', that is dead set against the slave with a personal animosity.

c). And the Christian slave within the household of a harsh master is told that it is commendable, because of what he understands of God, if he 'endures grief, suffering wrongfully' – literally if he bears up under the sorrow and the heaviness that comes from being continually punished for no reason at all. And the context for the slaves understanding of God that leads to this commendable action has to be the salvation of the soul as this is the focus of Peter's letter. And so it is because of God's faithfulness with regards to the salvation of the soul that he is to 'endure grief, suffering wrongfully'.

2). Within our emancipated western mindset the thought of one person 'owning' another as a slave is repugnant, and maybe rightly so. But it seems that within the economy of God the focus is not on the rightness or wrongness of slavery, but on

the rightness or wrongness of the individual Christian's response, whether slave or master, to whatever circumstance they find themselves in. A great example of this within the master/slave relationship can be found in the Book of Philemon – Phm 1:10 *I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, 11 who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.*

a). Onesimus is Philemon's runaway slave who has now become a Christian under Paul's ministry, Paul identifying him as his spiritual son.

b). Philemon, the slave owner, is a Christian who is supportive of Paul's ministry - Phm 1:4 *I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, 5 hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, 6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. 7 For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.*

c). Now what is interesting here are the dynamics of this situation – Onesimus the slave who ran, for reasons unknown, from his master is to be sent back to his master even though Paul would like to keep him - Phm 1:12 *I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel.*

Paul wants to keep him so that Onesimus could minister to Paul on Philemon's behalf, but Paul acknowledging the legitimacy of Philemon's ownership of Onesimus is compelled to send him back. Whether it is right or wrong for Philemon to have Onesimus as his slave is never addressed.

d). Paul, the Apostle, could command Philemon's obedience with regards to how Onesimus is to be treated, but doesn't do so - Phm 1:8 ¶ *Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, 9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you....14 But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.*

e). Paul recognizes the authority that exists in this relationship, right or wrong Philemon is the master and Onesimus his slave, and this is respected.

f). Paul is confident that Philemon will do what is scripturally correct - Phm 1:15 *For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever, 16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave--a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.*

g). But the choice to do what is correct is Philemon's choice. Whether he chose to do so or not we don't know and that will remain between him and God. Regardless of what he would choose though Onesimus is going back.

h). Now Onesimus, being a Christian slave in pursuit of the Kingdom, that which Peter writes, that which we have read this morning, comes into play in his situation as he returns to the master from whom he ran away. And we would have to assume that he is going back willingly because of his new found faith.

i). And being a Christian master Philemon has the opportunity upon Onesimus's return to extend forgiveness, grace and mercy to his slave, just as Christ would to His repentant bondservants.

j). And again it becomes overwhelmingly apparent in this for us that it is to be our faithful obedience to the commands of scripture in whatever circumstances we find ourselves that is to be our focus, not the circumstance itself.

k). Eph 6:5 *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

3). And so, to get back to 1 Peter Chapter 2 and the slave who is to 'endure grief, suffering wrongfully' the scripture says - 1Pe 2:19 *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.*

a). V20 here gives us further amplification of v19. So, simply put, our scripture tells us that there is nothing of value for us, with respect to the coming Kingdom, in patiently enduring punishment for a fault that we are responsible for, but if we continue to do what is right, being faithfully obedient to the word [and again within our context here it would be the slave being submitted to his master] and then we are punished unfairly or punished for no reason at all and we accept that with patient endurance, then this would be commendable before God.

b). Now all this intellectually by just saying the words seems OK, but an examination of the word translated 'beaten' makes this much more uncomfortable.

c). Beaten = Greek – 'kolaphizo' = to rap with the fist:--buffet – from the Greek – 'kolazo' = to chastise (or reserve for infliction):--punish.

d). So here is the slave whose master has an abject dislike of him being punished by being punched by his master's fists.

e). In order to have some clarification of what is meant by the slave being punched by his master we can go to the way this word is used with regards to the Lord, recorded in - Mt 26:66 *"What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death." 67 Then they spat in His face and beat [kolaphizo] Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, 68 saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"*

f). Our example here not only shows us how the word 'kolaphizo' is used but also gives us the exact picture of what the extreme of suffering wrongfully in 1 Peter 2:19 looks like and gives us a chilling insight into the level of hostility within those doing the 'beating'.

g). The beating that Christ received is quite shocking and made even more so by the description of what He looked like afterwards recorded in - Isa 52:14 *Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;*

h). Literally this verse tells us that His appearance was so disfigured from how a man ought to look that He didn't even appear to be human.

i). Such as this could well be the outcome for the Christian servant in the household of a harsh master, and within the potential horror of this situation the servant was to continue in submission, patiently enduring his ill treatment knowing that this would be commendable before God.

4). Now all of this can seem to be overwhelming and disturbing so let's just pause here for a moment and remember some things we have already studied in this letter so that we are not distracted by the detail, but rather can place the detail within the bigger picture - 1Pe 1:6 ¶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith-- the salvation of your souls.*

a). And let us just go forward in 1 Peter to a scripture we shall come back to later -1Pe 4:12 ¶ *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you*

suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

b). We must be careful not to forget - Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs-- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

c). And again let's remember the perspective as we compare the 'now' with the future - Ro 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

5). And so our scripture in 1 Peter then continues - 1Pe 2:21 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

a). 'For to this' – patiently enduring through unjustified, spiteful and potentially violent treatment, 'you were called'. 'Called' is the same word we saw in - 1Pe 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

b). We are called then, 'out of darkness', out from the world system under Satan where revenge, self justification, bitterness and our rights would be the order of the day, into the light in order to follow the example set by Christ, in whom is no darkness at all - Php 1:29 *For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,*

c). We see then that 'Christ also suffered', experiencing particularly brutal and sadistic treatment without any reason for Him to do so. And He did this for us, leaving us an example. The word 'also' takes the immediate suffering of the slave and likens it to the suffering of another. And that other is none other than the Christ Himself – 'He also suffered like you' in other words. What an encouragement it is to any Kingdom seeking believer in the midst of the most difficult and demanding circumstance to know that God in the person of His Son has Himself embraced and endured the most vile and hostile of treatment and can therefore, through His own experience, have empathy with our own adversity. And by seeing where His focus was in the midst of His suffering would show us where ours needs to be also – Heb 12:2 *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

d). Leaving = Greek – 'hupolimpano' = to leave behind, i.e. bequeath:--leave.

e). Example = Greek – 'hupogrammos' = an underwriting, i.e. copy for imitation (figuratively):--example.

f). The picture here is clear for us – Christ has left behind a pattern for us to follow and what is pictured in this word is likened to a child carefully copying something so as to produce an accurate replica of the original.

g). This idea then transforms easily to the idea of following in His steps, figuratively placing our feet where He has trodden as He made His journey through the sufferings of this world toward the glory that awaited Him.

h). Knowing that the scripture tells us - Lu 24:25 *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"*

i). This would give us extra insight into - Ps 119:105 ¶ NUN. *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*

j). The word then illuminates for us not only where we should walk but how we should walk.

6). And so we continue - 1Pe 2:21 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

a). Christ then through His own experience has set the pattern that we are to follow with regards to what it looks like to ‘endure grief, suffering wrongfully’. V22-23 then gives us the detail of Christ’s experience.

b). Christ committed no sin, nor was deceit ever found in His mouth, unlike us who would be guilty of both. The point of drawing attention to this is so that we will realize that there was absolutely no possibility whatsoever of Christ having done anything deserving of punishment. He was then, completely innocent and completely without fault; something that was even obvious to the cynical politician of the day - Joh 19:4 *Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."*

c). If anyone had a case for setting the record straight it was Christ, yet what do we find - *when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.*

d). Reviled = Greek – ‘loidoreo’ = to reproach, i.e. vilify:--revile

e). The thought in this word then is not just to accuse or to curse at, but to deliberately humiliate and shame through wounding and abusive words for the purpose of inflicting emotional pain.

f). The natural response to this would be to retaliate, but retaliation was not Christ's response and nor should it be ours if we are reviled - 1Co 4:12 *And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;*

g). Lu 6:22 *Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake.*

h). 'When He suffered' does not speak of a single event but of something that is progressive. Christ's suffering was progressive, beginning in the garden and then continuing and not finishing until the moment of His death on the cross. Yet throughout this experience, not at any point did He threaten those abusing Him.

i). Threaten = Greek – 'apeileo' = of uncertain derivation; to menace; by implication, to forbid:--threaten.

j). Mt 26:53 *"Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"*

k). It is not that the Lord had no threat He could make, He had some serious things He could have said, but He chose not to.

l). In the place of reviling and threatening 'He committed [Himself] to Him who judges righteously'.

m). The word 'Himself' is not in the original language, but has been added instead by the translators. And although it would be true that He would commit Himself to God we would also need to see in this Him committing His revilers to God also.

7). Now let's not forget that, according to the scripture, 'Christ also suffered for us'. The reason for this is given to us in - 1Pe 2:24 *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.*

a). We see then that Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He literally took our sins, carried our sins, bore the weight of them and the shame of them in His own body and then offered Himself as the sacrifice for those sins on the cross - 2Co 5:21 *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

b). The consequence of this is that we have, through His death, died to sins so that we might live for righteousness – this is exactly how we need to understand being called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

c). Ro 6:6 *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

d). The end of v24 makes Christ's dealing with our sin quite emphatic – 'by whose stripes you were healed'. Healing here can have nothing to do with sickness and disease as contextually this is not in view. What is in view is Christ setting us

free from slavery to sin. There was a time when we were all sick unto death because of sin, because we were bound to it and slaves to it, but that sickness of sin that caused our spiritual death has, through His sacrifice, been dealt with. With respect to the impossibility for us to escape from the ravages of sin, we have been healed.

e). Although we still have a sin nature that has a powerful pull to depravity, and although it will seek to war against our soul at every opportunity, it can have no hold over us except that which we choose to give it.

f). And again, to count the cost of what it took to make that possible – He suffered for us, patiently enduring vindictive, spiteful, and violent persecution - He bore our sins in His own body on the tree and by His stripes our healing came.

g). The word translated ‘stripes’ here is singular in the Greek language. The wound on His back caused by His scourging was one red river of raw flesh, ripped and torn and mutilated.

h). According to the church historians the Christian martyrs at Smyrna around 155AD were so torn by the scourges from Roman whips that their veins were laid bare and even their inner muscles and sinews and even bowels were visible.

i). Perhaps now we could hear with fresh ears the words –
1Pe 2:1 ¶ *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

j). And - 1Pe 2:11 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,*

k). Ro 6:12 *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.*

l). 1Pe 1:18 *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

8). Chapter 2 then concludes - 1Pe 2:25 *For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

a). There was a time, even in our Christian life, when we were not walking the narrow path that would lead to the Kingdom, but now, because we have been brought forth from above to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we have turned about and placed ourselves under the direction of the One who is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls, that we should follow His example and walk in His steps.

b). 1Pe 4:19 *Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*