

1 Peter 3:18-22

“The benefits of suffering (part 1)”

I. Intro

II. Vs. 18 Four things about Jesus death

I. Intro.

The section that we are about to examine is one of the more difficult passages in the New Testament. As such *it would be extremely easy to spend our time trying to understand what Peter is trying to say while missing out on what he did say which is based upon the context.*

The context is clearly the verse above in verse 17 where Peter “*For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*” It then that in verse 18-22 Peter is goes on to show the blessings that always follows “suffering for doing good”. The primary example Peter uses to illustrate this is Jesus, who suffered for doing good when He died on the cross to make the way of salvation for fallen sinful humanity. Because of that Jesus was raised from the dead in verse 21 and given a place in glory verse 22. Many a bible scholar has debated and disagreed on the interpretation of this passage and we will do our due diligence to unravel these difficulties by looking at the original Greek and other passages **but let us NOT FORGET that what Peter wrote was meant to be a practical encouragement to Christians who were facing suffering and persecution.** Peter weaves his way through two examples (Jesus and Noah) but we will only start looking at this in the example of Jesus as they are scattered amongst each other that we will need to untangle in order to get a better look at them.

II. Vs. 18 Four things about Jesus death

1. **The ministry of Jesus**: Here Peter reveal to his readers **four things about Jesus ministry**:

a. Vs. 18 **His death**: Here Peter mentions four things about Jesus death:

1. The duration of His suffering: The word “*suffered*” is not in the best Greek manuscripts, but it is implied as Jesus’ death did involve suffering. Peter is saying that Jesus suffering and death was for “sin” but were vicarious!

2. The purpose of His suffering: That is His suffering and death for “sin” was an innocent One, dying on behalf of those who were guilty. The words “Just” and “unjust” speak of character that being Jesus the “JUST” in character dying on behalf of “UNJUST” humanity.

3. The outcome of His suffering: Peter says that it was, “*that He might bring us to God.*” The Greek places an article in front of the word God which makes it God the Father that Peter is speaking about. The word “bring” in the Greek is “to lead to” and is a legal term that speaks of gaining audience to a King on behalf of another. Jesus brought us into the good graces of His Father! When we received Jesus as our Lord and Savior we also received God as our Heavenly Father! And because of surrender to Jesus we received from the Father the robes of Jesus royal righteousness. Our Lord Jesus has alone provided all who trust Him continual entrance into the presence of God.

4. The confidence we now have because of His suffering: Peter presents these two facts that He wants His readers to know. First that Jesus really died in the

flesh, in a human body on the cross. Second, that “*made alive by the spirit*” this phrase is set in contrast against Jesus’ being put to death and the flesh is in contrast to the spirit. The Greek phrase is correctly interpreted “made alive” as it doesn’t mean “energized” because when you merely energize something it doesn’t mean that it was dead but when you “made alive” it presupposes that it was completely dead otherwise it didn’t need to be “made alive”. The translators have missed by capitalizing the “S” in the word spirit as Peter’s word here is about Jesus’ human spirit against his human flesh. Though it is true that by the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus was raised from the dead, but Peter is not teaching that truth here. To make alive Jesus human spirit presupposes that the death of His human spirit and that now clarifies Jesus words on the cross in Matthew 27:46 where He said, “*My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?*” The Greek word forsaken means to “abandon, desert, leave helpless and destitute.” And the cry of Jesus was addressed to the other two members of the Triune God. God the Father abandoned and deserted Jesus. It is also seen not only in the question by Jesus to the Father and the Holy Spirit but in the fact that Jesus receives *no reply to His inquiry. The fellowship had been broken. Jesus prayer went unanswered for the first time!* The unanswered prayer of Jesus was predicted in the typology of Leviticus 5:11 where the person who was too poor to offer a blood sacrifice offering was told they could bring one tenth part of fine flour, enough for one days bread which was equal to the giving up a life or in this case the life of Jesus. But the person offering was forbidden to include “Frankincense” and

what is interesting is that “Frankincense” was seen by the Jews as a type of ANSWERED PRAYER and here we see that no “Frankincense” depicts the fact that Jesus sacrifice and question went unanswered by the other two of the Godhead. The reason of this answering was that all sin from all humanity for all time had been placed upon Jesus as He was made a curse for us. Jesus earthly spirit had been energized by the Holy Spirit during His earthly ministry and the result of that was that every prayer and miracle uttered by Jesus was completed by completely dependence upon the energy of the Holy Spirit and complete truth in the Father. He lived a sinless life and was the only perfect sacrifice being fully God and fully man. But in the hour of His need, when our sin was placed upon Him who knew no sin both the Father and the Holy Spirit left Him. The Holy Spirit leaving Him was also predicted in Leviticus 5:11 where the offerer was forbidden to include oil in the flour and oil is a symbol to the Holy Spirit and no oil speaks of the with drawl of the Holy Spirit’s sustaining presence while Jesus was suffering on the cross with our sins placed upon Him. So, if we lay over this the messianic Psalm 22 where we find this quotation of being forsaken chronologically Verse 1-13 describes Jesus heart sufferings, 14-18 Jesus’ physical sufferings and 19-31 we have Jesus’ prayer for resurrection. And it was during the time when Jesus was uttering those words that His human spirit was devoid of the life-giving ministry of the Holy Spirit from 9-noon and 12-3 in the afternoon that God the Father would not hear Him. And according to Psalm 22 when Jesus prayed that He might be raised from the dead the Holy Spirit had already returned to

make Him alive again in His Human Spirit as the prayer was answered and our sin was paid for. The fellowship between God the Father and God the Son was restored BEFORE the son died of the cross...this is what Peter is making reference too when he says, “*but made alive by the spirit*”.

Now as I close I want to bring us to what Peter will lead us too at the end of this section now so that we don't lose focus on the point of his illustrations the, **FIVE APPLICATION POINTS** that Peter wished to convey two these dear suffering saints in the first century church. These two examples should cause the Church to understand is in regard to: **The ministry of the Church!** Here is what I believe the purpose of this difficult passage was all about as these five conclusions were some that his readers should have been able to notice as we should as well:

- a. *Christians looking at Jesus and Noah:* **Must expect opposition.**
- b. *Christians looking at Jesus and Noah:* **Must serve God by faith and not by sight in the results.**
- c. *Christians looking at Jesus and Noah:* **Must realize that we can have joy because the victory is certain. We do this because our identity is in God's faithfulness and not our effort.**
- d. *Christians looking at Jesus and Noah:* **Must understand the importance of identifying with baptism and our death to self-centeredness and trust in only God.**
- e. *Christians looking at Jesus and Noah:* **Must realize that Jesus is the only reason we are still breathing earthly air as God wants us to be a “living hope” to everyone we meet.**