"ENCOURAGEMENT TO SUFFERING SAINTS"

I Peter 3:18-22

4-27-2022

INTRODUCTION:

***Take courage when you have to receive opposition for your faith!**

TAKE COURAGE!

I. Realize how Christ suffered, yet He was the most righteous one who ever lived (v. 18)



TAKE COURAGE!

II. Realize how the Spirit of Christ preached through Noah for 120 years, yet His message was rejected by all but eight people (v. 19-20)



TAKE COURAGE!

III. Realize how Christ's resurrection saves our lives when we go through the waters of death (v. 21)

TAKE COURAGE!

IV. Realize how Christ was exalted and received glory when His suffering was finished (v. 22-4:1)

"ENCOURAGEMENT TO SUFFERING SAINTS"

I Peter 3:18-22

4-27-2022

INTRODUCTION:

***Take courage when you have to receive opposition for your faith!**

TAKE COURAGE!

I. Realize how _____,
yet He was the _____ one who ever lived (v. 18)

TAKE COURAGE!

II. Realize how the _____through Noah for 120 years, yet His message was _____ by all but eight people (v.19-20)

TAKE COURAGE!

III. Realize how Christ's _____ our lives when we go through the _____ (v. 21)

TAKE COURAGE!

IV. Realize how Christ was _____ and received _____ when His suffering was finished (v. 22-4:1)

"ENCOURAGEMENT TO SUFFERING SAINTS"

I Peter 3:18-22

4-27-2022

INTRODUCTION:

Although salvation is free and costs us nothing, when you become a Christian there is a price to pay -- not to God but to the world, which is antagonistic to Christ. (*"In the world ye shall have tribulation"* - Jn. 16:33. *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake"* - Phil. 1:29. *"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"* - Acts 14:22)

***Take courage when you have to receive opposition for your faith!**

TAKE COURAGE!

I. Realize how Christ suffered, yet He was the most righteous one who ever lived (v. 18)

The word ***"for"*** ties this verse to v. 17 and gives a reason why it's okay to suffer for doing good. The reasoning is this: It's good to suffer for righteousness because this is what Christ did -- and He was perfectly righteous.

"The just (righteous) ***<u>for</u>*** *(huper)* ***the unjust*** (unrighteous) **-** This one phrase is the crux of Christianity and the theme of the Bible. The substitutionary death of Christ and His bodily resurrection is the sum of the Gospel (I Cor. 15:3-4).

Christ did not die merely to "set an example" as most unbelievers think; His death actually accomplished something. It is important that the soul-winner make it perfectly clear that Christ died as our <u>substitute</u>; He <u>took our place</u>, He <u>paid our punishment</u>; He suffered the <u>equivalent</u> of our eternal damnation; He died <u>on our behalf</u>.

This concept of Christ dying on our behalf is the crux of the Gospel and the emphasis of the New Testament.

Scriptures emphasizing the fact of Christ's substitutionary death
(using the word huper):

"This is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22:19)
"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you" (Lk. 22:20)
"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
"I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
"Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
"Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)
"He . . . delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32)
"Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
"For he hath made him to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21)
"Christ . . . gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
"Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)
"Christ [was] . . . made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13)
"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25)
"Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died for us" (I Th. 5:10)
"Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:6)
"He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9)
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
"Christ also suffered for us" (I Pet. 2:21)
"Christ also hath once suffered for sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
"Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
"He laid down his life for us" (I Jn. 3:16)

Here are some ILLUSTRATIONS explaining how Christ died as our "SUBSTITUTE."

The Judge & the Criminal - Suppose on the streets of our city was a man with a gun. This man one day pointed the gun at an innocent person & shot him and killed him. He then attempted to run away, but a police officer caught him, arrested him, and brought him to jail. The day finally came when he was to go to court to stand trial for his murder. After hearing the evidence, the jury found him clearly guilty of cold-blooded murder. The Judge then rendered this verdict: *"Because of your crime, you will have to pay for it with your life - You will have to die in the electric chair!"* The convicted criminal went back to his prison cell to wait. Finally, the dreaded day came for him to be executed. The guards brought him over to the electric chair, strapped him in, and the officials were about to pull the lever. Suddenly, a stranger entered the room. The officials noticed it was the city Judge, the same one who had found this man guilty and given him the death penalty. They asked the Judge, *"Sir, why did you come here?"* To which he replied, *"Do you see that man? He is guilty of murder, and there is no doubt in my mind that he deserves to pay for it with his life."* With a tear rolling down the Judge's cheek, however, he said, *"But I love that man, and I would be willing to take his place."* The room was silent. The man in the chair could not believe that someone would love him so much. [Rarely would anyone die for a good man; never mind for a criminal - Rom. 5:7-8] But suppose the Law allowed such a transaction. The man in the chair got up, and the Judge sat down in his place. The lever was pulled and the Judge was electrocuted, giving his life for the criminal so that he could go free.

Even though we have never heard of such a thing, that is exactly what Jesus Christ did for you. You see, He is the Judge of the universe. And the judge Himself stepped down from His throne in Heaven, came into this world -- all for the purpose that He might die on the cross and take your place and pay for the sin you committed. He became your substitute. He paid your penalty so that you could be free from the wages of your sin. Jesus died on your behalf so that you wouldn't pay for your sins yourself in the Lake of fire! What love! What a sacrifice!

The Wise & Just Ruler - A wise and just ruler established a series of laws for his people to follow. One day his mother broke one of the laws and was brought to the ruler after being caught. The penalty was twenty lashes. How could the ruler remain just and still fulfill the demands of his love for his mother? He chose to take the lashes on his own back. Justice was satisfied, while love was revealed in full measure.

The Rescue Dog - A man was lost in the Alps. The owner of the lodge where he had been staying sent out his best rescue dog to look for him. The dog found the man half-conscious, grabbed him, and started to shake him in order to wake him up. On coming to his senses the man, seeing the dog and thinking it was a wolf, stabbed the animal. The dog let go and returned to the lodge, where it died shortly thereafter. The dog's owner followed the trail of blood, came to the lost man, and saved him. The dog had given his life so that another might live.

The Burnt Hen - One day a certain farmer saw that a fire had ignited in his wheat fields, and was being blown toward his barns by the wind. To save the stored grain there, he lit a backfire, in hopes that it would impede the progress of the other flames. After both fires had subsided--and the barns had been saved--the farmer walked out through the smoldering ashes of the nearby fields. There he discovered the dead body of one of his hens, which had been caught in the blaze. Sadly, he turned over her black, charred body with his foot--and out from underneath ran four baby chicks. Her sacrifice saved her young ones. Such is the work of Christ on the cross, a place where the love of God dealt with the justice of God, where God's mercy matched God's wrath. Our Lord's sacrifice has saved us." (attributed to Donald Grey Barnhouse)

The Bridge - Gus was the proud operator of a draw bridge over a busy river. Each day, he yanked the levers that would elevate the old railroad bridge to allow the ships below to pass through. One Saturday several years ago, Gus invited his 10 year old son Peter to spend the day with him at the bridge. Peter whooped with excitement. He'd always marveled at the bridge and its levers and big gears. His dad had the best job in the whole world, he figured. An old fishing boat eased up the river toward the bridge that morning, and Gus showed his son how the levers performed. Peter watched with delight as, with a grinding hum and a few creaks, the old bridge separated and rose toward the sky. Gus began watching his gauges and jotting notes in his report book. Then came the unmistakable sound that sent Gus back to his levers: the piercing whistle of the 10:05 southbound train. The 10:05 was a little early, and a little late in blowing its warning whistle. Gus knew he must the lower the bridge quickly to avoid a tragic train crash. As Gus' big gloved hands grasped the levers and pulled, he looked over his shoulder for Peter. Where was the boy? *"Peter!"* Gus' stomach knotted as his eyes nervously darted up and down the bridge. *"Peter!"* The bridge began its descent so that the train could cross. *"Daddy! Daddy!"* Frantic with worry, Gus peered over the edge and saw his son atop the huge bridge gears. The giant teeth of the rotating machinery had consumed the boy's jacket. Now his hand and arm were being devoured, slowing pulling his entire body into the grinding gears. Gus reached for the levers to stop the machinery. But there came the 10:05 train loaded with passengers, whistle howling, roaring toward the bridge. *"Daddy! Help me!"* The terror of the boy's voice seemed to pound within every muscle of his father's body. Gus glanced at the train, then at his helpless son. In that split second, Gus was faced with deciding between the life of his pleading son, or the hundreds of lives aboard the rushing train. Gus pulled firmly on the levers. The bridge continued its merciful descent for the passengers of the train. Gus wept as the machinery squeezed the life from his only son. As the boy's shrieks melted into echoes, the 10:05 sped across the old bridge. The vacationing passengers had no idea what had just transpired below the bridge. In air-conditioned comfort, they waved and smiled at Gus as they whizzed by.

Two thousand years ago, a similar situation faced a loving Father. Much more was at stake back then. But confronted with that awesome decision, the Father chose to allow His Son to die so that we could live.

"That (purpose, goal, reason) ***He*** (Jesus) ***might bring us to God" -*** The idea is <u>reconciliation</u> (sinful man brought into a right relationship to God).

"Christ's suffering made it possible for Him to extend one hand to the sinner and another hand to a holy Father, and bring the two together at the cross" (Anderson, p. 60).

TAKE COURAGE!

II. Realize how the Spirit of Christ preached through Noah for 120 years, yet His message was rejected by all but eight people (v. 19-20)

Note: Other views look at vv. 19-22 as a parenthesis (having little or nothing to do with the context of suffering); whereas this view sees these verses as an integral part of Peter's argument.

When did the Spirit of Jesus ***"preach"***? Two plausible views:

1. After Christ's death but before His resurrection, He via the Holy Spirit proclaimed a message of victory over Satan and condemnation to those in Hell (who lived in the days of Noah).

   Four reasons why a descent by Christ into Hades does not seem likely:

   1) In this context, the example of Christ's suffering is to minister encouragement to believers. How possible if it teaches He preached in Hades? What does this have to do with encouraging believers who are being reviled and insulted in context?

   2) Why proclaim a message of condemnation to spirits already suffering in torment (Luke 16) and reserved for damnation?

   3) Why proclaim this message only to the antediluvians?

   4) This is an additional work of Christ not taught elsewhere in the Bible and appears to contradict Hebrews 9:14ff

** 2. Christ via the Holy Spirit proclaimed a message of salvation through Noah, but the people rejected it and now are in prison in hell as a result of rejecting that message.

   These verses, though often understood differently, "should be understood as a reference to Christ preaching by the Holy Spirit through Noah to the people of Noah's day" (Feinburg, p. 304).

"Preached" - This same word is used of Noah, who is called a "*preacher (kerux) of righteousness"* (II Peter 2:5 - *"And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly"* Heb. 11:7 - *"By faith Noah, being*

warned of God of things not seek as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith")

"The point is that from Peter's perspective as he writes I Pet. 3:19 "the spirits are disembodied and in prison, through they were not in that state when they heard the message. In other words, one needs to supply the word "now" and read V. 19 as 'preached to spirits now in prison'." (John S. Feinberg, I Peter 3:18-20, Westminster Theological Journal, Issue #48, 11986, p. 303-36).

The phrase ***"spirits in prison"*** is explained in v. 20. They were people who lived in the days of Noah (Barbieri, p. 70).

Noah no doubt was laughed at, mocked, persecuted for his building the ark, and ignored, disbelieved and made fun of for his preaching. However, it was not really Noah's message they rejected, it was Christ's via the Holy Spirit. They were rejected the message of the Holy Spirit, who was *"striving with men"* (Gen. 6:3)

Remember, when you are made fun of, ridiculed, ignored, persecuted because of your witness, they are not rejecting you but Christ and His Spirit.

"Disobedient" - unpersuaded of the truth

"...Every nail he (Noah) drove into the ark should have warned the men living in that time of judgment to come" (Barbieri, p. 70)

"Longsuffering. . . waited" - "The righteous sufferer should not be discouraged about the length of time it takes for his vindication. It may come quickly. . . or it may take a while (as with Noah - 120 years)" (Feinburg, p. 335).

"Waited" - to earnestly wait with expectancy and anticipation

"Since they refused the testimony of the Lord through Noah, the flood came to destroy them. Therefore, they were confined to the place of departed spirits to await the final resurrection of the wicked at the Great White Throne judgment of God (Rev. 20:11-15). Peter could say that the Lord preached to 'spirits in prison' for when he penned these words, the spirits of these people were confined" (Barbieri, p. 70).

Before Christ's return, people will be just like they were in the days of Noah (Mt. 24:37-39).

"Were saved by water" - lit. were brought safely through *(dia)* water; were delivered safely through water.

The same water that destroyed the unbelieving world delivered Noah's family.

TAKE COURAGE!

III. Realize how Christ's resurrection saves our lives when we go through the

waters of death (v. 21)

"Baptism" - This word is used in three major ways in the New Testament:

1. Immersion into <u>water</u> (Mt. 28:20)
   (Water baptism)

2. Immersion into <u>Christ</u> (I Cor. 12:13)
   (Spirit baptism)

* 3. Immersion into <u>death</u>
   (Suffering baptism)

   Mt. 20:22-23 - *"But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."*

   Luke 12:50 - *"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"*

   (cp. Mark 10:39)

   Whatever Peter means by baptism, it is a baptism that saved "*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* Hence, it can't be water baptism because water baptism does not connect us in any way to Christ's resurrection.

Major proof that the word "baptism" is speaking about suffering and death and not water is obviously seem by carefully looking at the context. The theme of I Peter centers around suffering for the faith and in particular chapters 3 and 4. (note the context surrounding this passage - 3:13-17; 4:1).

"Figure" - Their deliverance from destruction through the waters <u>corresponds</u> to our deliverance from destruction through the "waters of death."

Just as being in the <u>ark</u> saved from death, so being in <u>Christ</u> saves from death (because of His resurrection).

"Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" - Peter is not speaking of a baptism which ceremonially cleanses a person or removes some fleshly dirt, but of the response of someone who is enduring the "baptism" out of a good conscience toward God.

The ***"good conscience"*** talked about in this verse has the same meaning

as verse 16 (which referred to maintaining a good conscience in the face of suffering).

TAKE COURAGE!

IV. Realize how Christ was exalted and received glory when His suffering was finished (v. 22-4:1)

"Right hand" - the place of power and authority

"The Christian who is persecuted at the hands of others should take heart. There is suffering, but there is also glory [Rom. 8:18 - *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*]

"Others will supply the affliction but. . . God will supply the glory. Therefore be ready to suffer for righteousness sake" (Feinburg, p. 336)