

• *Jesus suffered badly while He brought sinners to salvation*

Jesus suffered badly at the hands of sinners, yet even while He was suffering He was bringing sinners to salvation! Peter emphasizes the word 'Himself'. *'He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to God. By his wounds you have been healed'*¹. *For you were straying like sheep, but now have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls'*¹.

1 2:24
2 2:25

4. Jesus' sin-bearing breaks the power of sin over us

4. Peter tells us **how Jesus' sin-bearing breaks the power of sin over us**. He bore our sins 'that we might die to sin and live to God'. This happens in more than one way. First, it involves a transfer of kingdoms. We are put into God's kingdom. It is a **legal** matter. At first, it is not a matter of feeling.

• *A transfer of kingdoms – a legal matter*

There are many aspects of salvation that involve our feelings and our experiences. The sense of forgiveness is a conscious experience. The 'Spirit of adoption' in whom we cry 'Abba, Father' is a conscious experience of the Holy Spirit. But this matter of being transferred from the kingdom of darkness and so 'dying to sin', is not at first an 'experience'. It is something that happens to us whether we are precisely aware of it or not. It is like being asleep at the time when the sun rises. The sun rises whether you feel it or not! It is like being on a train or plane travelling from one country to another. Perhaps you rest while you are on the train. You cross the border without even being aware of it. You wake up and find yourself in a different country. This is why Paul says we 'reckon' ourselves¹ to have died to sin and to be alive to God. The reason why we 'reckon' it is because at first it might not be something we feel. We take it by faith that sin is defeated and we are 'alive unto God'. If you have faith in Jesus Christ, you are plugged in and switched on to God's power whether you feel it or not.

1 Romans 6:11

• *First we 'reckon' it*

• *Then later we feel it*

• *Collaboration with the fact – worked at in our experience*

But then this objective fact becomes something that we cooperate with, and so becomes an experience. We collaborate with this fact that we have died to sin. We mortify the deeds of the body, in order that we might live. We are alive to God so that we are able to 'walk in newness of life'. It is first a matter of fact, and then the fact is worked out in our experience. But believing the facts about ourselves comes first. We are 'alive to God' as a fact, then we start actually in our experience, living for God.

5. Jesus' sin-bearing provides healing

• *Jesus was injured by the lashes He endured from the Roman soldiers*

5. Peter tells us **how Jesus' sin-bearing provides healing**. He again emphasizes the substitutionary aspect of this matter. 'By **His** wounds **you** were healed'. Jesus was injured by the lashes that He endured from the Roman soldiers. The cords had small pieces of metal or broken bones attached to them; then the whip was used to beat the prisoner until he was badly wounded. The wounds fell on Him that they might not fall on us. The Lord Jesus Christ took my place and was lashed so that I might not suffer, was injured so that I might not be injured in God's judgement.

• *My sins were reckoned as His sins, so my punishment fell on Him*

My sins were reckoned as His sins, so my punishment fell on Him. The result was that the anger of God against sin was lifted away from me, at the very second when I believed in Jesus. He was ill-treated so much, yet He was engaged in healing us.

• “Healing” more a matter of healing our relationship with God

• Jesus’ healing miracles are a sign of inner healing

6. Despite ill-treatment, Jesus has won us to Himself

• Sympathetic language – it stresses our foolishness rather than our wilful rebellion

• Jesus’ suffering achieved something

• We can expect our sufferings to have a part to play in the kingdom of God

• Added to that, Jesus’ sufferings qualify Him now to be a sympathetic Guardian of our lives

This healing is not purely a matter of physical healing of bodily sicknesses. Bodily healing is nowhere mentioned in the surrounding words of Peter; it is not his theme. 1 Peter chapter 2 has only mentioned sin. The ‘healing’ Peter has in mind is more a matter of healing our relationship with God. It is first and foremost the healing of a broken fellowship. Jesus’ healing miracles are a sign of inner healing, and a foretaste of the healing of the body at the resurrection. Of course God can heal physically at any time, but the cross first heals our relationship with God.

6. Peter tells us **how despite ill-treatment, Jesus has won us to Himself**¹. Even while being terribly ill-treated Jesus was putting His life down entirely for the benefit of the very human race that was ill-treating Him. Peter uses the language of Isaiah 53:6. ‘You were straying like sheep’. It is sympathetic language. It stresses our foolishness rather than our wilful rebellion. You would expect Jesus to despise such folly but instead He was laying down His life to save us. The result of what He did has been gloriously successful. Now, says Peter you ‘have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls’. The suffering of Jesus was not wasted. It achieved something. It was through suffering that He brought wandering sheep back; it was through suffering that He became a well-qualified ‘Guardian’ or ‘Overseer’.

We must remember the starting-point of this paragraph in verse 18. He began with a word to house-servants and warned the Christians that suffering was likely to come for them, since the suffering Saviour is the one whose steps we shall walk in. But Peter’s last line at this point reminds us that Jesus’ suffering was purposeful and successful. It qualified Him to be our Saviour, our Guardian. We can expect our sufferings to have a part to play in the kingdom of God also. Since we are following in Jesus’ steps we to are likely to be qualified to help others by the things that we have suffered. For house-servants – and any Christians who face ill-treatment – Peter gives the assurance that our troubles will be purposeful as were the troubles of Jesus. Added to that will be the assurance that Jesus’ sufferings qualify Him now to be a sympathetic Guardian of our lives.

¹ 2:25



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