

“THE SUFFERING SERVANT SAVIOR”

HOLINESS

1 Peter 2:21-25 Lesson 16

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Bruce: Good morning, men!

Men: Good morning!

Bruce: Don, do you want to set the tone for us, brother? (*Music.*)

Lord Jesus, it is with great anticipation that we assemble to sit at Your feet, trusting that Your Holy Spirit will fulfill His job description, and guide us into all truth. And would You be pleased, in all of Your faithfulness, Lord, to open our eyes, that we might behold You more clearly, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: For the last several weeks, we've been talking about submission. People say, "Why do you spend so much time on submission?" Well, the Scripture spends a lot of time on it, so we will. But the idea of submission is coming under the protection of. It always has to do with a chain of command. What the Father ordained the Son accomplished, and the Holy Spirit applies.

Now you never see the Holy Spirit trying to be Jesus, or Jesus trying to be the Father. We know that in the Trinity they are one and the same. However, as you look at their job descriptions, they are totally different. What the Father ordains the Son accomplishes, and the Holy Spirit applies. And you never see One trying to over-extend the Other. There is a wonderful picture of submission.

Why is it that submission is so important? Peter has been teaching us, in the context of our passages, reasons for righteous living. Righteous living means this: right wiseness. It means making the right decisions.

Now we don't always make the right decision, and that's why we do the best we can and trust Christ with the rest. But Peter is giving us some wonderful insights about how it is that you and I are to respond when we suffer unjustly.

Now there are times when we suffer justly, because we're idiots, (*Laughter*), and we do dumb things. And so you can't talk about those times and say that it's not fair.

What we're talking about, and what Peter is teaching us, friends, is this. What about the times when you're doing good things, and you still suffer? What about when you're the most just person in the room, and you're the one who suffers? Why is it that it is fair, if you want to use that word,--is it really fair that you and I suffer unjustly while we're doing good?

Let me give you the big picture. Turn with me to Ephesians chapter five. I want to show you why submission is so important.

Let's go to chapter five of the book of Ephesians, beginning at verse 15, reading through to verse 21. Paul writes to the church of Ephesus and writes these powerful words.

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“Look carefully, then, how you live, not as unwise, but as wise.” He’s setting up for a wonderful precept here. “Not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”

“Therefore,” (in other words, because the days are evil), “do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery. But be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Now notice the contrast. “Do not get drunk with wine, ... but be filled with the Spirit.” “Submit to one another.” There is a huge contrast here. He’s saying, in effect, “Don’t be run by the emotional feelings that you have when you’re drunk.” That’s the way the world operates. Rather, we are to be filled with the Spirit.

Now we’ve talked about this before. This phrase “be filled with the Spirit” does not mean a second blessing after your salvation. Literally, in the Greek text, it means this: “be being kept filled.” In other words, you’re in the constant position of always being led by the Holy Spirit, because moment by moment you are in the condition of being kept filled.

Notice that one of the evidences of being kept filled on a daily basis is what? Submitting to one another. Submission is evidence of being kept filled. It’s an indication that you are being led by the Holy Spirit. And somebody who is not submissive has a problem with God, because they have not submitted themselves to His Lordship, to His leadership.

So Paul is telling us this. The contrast is this. The world gets drunk in debauchery. They operate on their emotions, and high feelings, all of the things that they do, and they lose control. He says, “Don’t live like that.”

You’ve got to understand this. When you’re “be being kept filled,” you’re going to understand what it means to be submissive, and you do it out of reverence for Christ.

Now some people say, “Well, that’s unfair,” that you and I suffer unjustly. But it’s an indication of being led by the Holy Spirit. You cannot be submissive if you’re not led by the Holy Spirit.

What does he say next in verse 22? Notice what he says. “Wives, submit to your husbands.” He then goes in and talks about the husbands submitting to Christ. He gives illustrations, practically, of what it means to be kept filled.

And so submission, dear friends, is evidence of being led by the Holy Spirit. You can’t do it, you can’t be submissive, unless you live by the Holy Spirit. The contrast is don’t be like the world! Be different! Be being kept filled all the time. And one of the evidences of the difference that you will make is that you’ll understand what it means to “be submissive to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

You see? What a marvelous way we demonstrate the fact that you and I, as followers of Christ, being one in Christ, are being led by the Holy Spirit is because we are submissive. You come under the protection of God’s grace, when you and I are submissive.

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Now let's go to 1 Peter, to our chapter today, and see what Peter has to say about what it means for us to suffer, and to suffer unjustly. So let's go to 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 21-25. Let me start at verse 18.

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and the gentle, but also to the unjust.” Our response is the same, regardless of how people treat us. And that is that we're submissive because we are being led by the Holy Spirit. And you can't do that apart from God's grace.

“For this is a gracious thing when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if, when you do good and suffer for it, and you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God,” because what is that saying? You're being led by the Holy Spirit. It's evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit filling your life in a moment by moment existence of the maturation that you have in your faith in Christ. It's a demonstration of the fact that you're being led by the Holy Spirit that you can suffer unjustly, because you can't do that in your own human strength. Try it sometime. I've done it. You've done it. We've all failed. You cannot do that. It gives evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. And what is that? That's witnessing. That's how we witness, how we suffer unjustly out of reverence for Christ.

So we read on in verse 21. “For to this you have been called.” What does that mean? You and I have been called to suffer unjustly, out of reverence for Christ.

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. For He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds we have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

Peter teaches us that, in those moments when you and I are treated unjustly, unfairly, in the situation when you suffer for doing good and you endure it,—look at verse 21—this is commendable to the Lord because it gives evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life, because you're being kept filled.

It's during those times when we are submissive citizens and workers that we really reveal our heavenly citizenship, that our citizenship is in the heavens, and not in this earth.

Peter has learned that God's people serve through suffering correctly when they are treated unfairly, because it calls attention to Christ.

Now here is what I want you to see. It calls attention to Christ as our Suffering Servant Savior. That's what you see in the verses that we just read.

Peter has already taught us in chapter one that, because we are in Christ, we are citizens of the Kingdom as a result of our glorious and gracious salvation that God planned and the Holy Spirit applies because Christ accomplished it. He says that this is one of the ways in which you and I reveal our heavenly citizenship, that we have learned

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how to suffer unjustly for the cause of Christ. And it calls attention to our suffering, sacrificial Savior. And that is what we see in those verses.

So in anticipation about our complaints about submission and suffering correctly, he reminds us that suffering correctly is part of our calling. We just read that. It's part of our calling, that in different situations we are to consider Christ's example, as we have just read, of His suffering more than we should consider our own circumstances.

You see, when we're suffering unjustly, and we do it out of reverence for Christ, that means that our focus needs to be where? On Christ and the cross, not on our circumstances. Now that is impossible to do, apart from being led by the Holy Spirit. That is impossible to do apart from being kept filled. That's the point of the correlation between Ephesians five and 1 Peter chapter two. You can't do what Peter is suggesting apart from being kept filled by the Holy Spirit.

Who knows that better than Peter? No one. No one knows it better than Peter, because he's speaking from his point of failure.

One of the things that interests me so much about reading the New Testament epistles is that the apostles are always speaking about their own failures, and saying, in effect, “Look! I did this; you don't have to.” They are always reminding us that we don't have to do the things that Peter did because of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

So, in those difficult situations, we're to consider His example of the cross, and not our own circumstances. I want you to consider three things in our passage today, looking at these verses, beginning at verse 21. I want you to see Christ's *exemplary* suffering. I want you to see His *substitutionary* suffering. And I want you to see His *expiatory* suffering, His atoning suffering. His exemplary suffering, His substitutionary suffering, and His expiatory suffering, meaning atonement.

So let's take a look at these in verses 21-23. First of all, His *exemplary* suffering. Look at verse 21, please. “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving us an example, so that you might follow in His steps.”

Follow in who's steps, for what? Learning how to suffer unjustly, how to suffer correctly when we've been treated unjustly. That's the model that we're saying. That's exemplary suffering.

The word *example*, here in our passage in the text, literally means this: an outlined sketch which is to be filled in or filled up. It literally means “a writing under.” It has the idea of copying letters as a means of learning.

If I had a chalk board up here, and I put the letter b on it, and you did not know how to write the letter b, you would take that b that I had on the white board, and you would take a piece of chalk, and you would cover right over it, because that's how you learn. That's what it means. That's the example. You learn through copying. You learn from doing the same thing. It means to press letters on top of a sheet, to have them printed on the sheet underneath it.

That's what you do, and that's how we take Christ's suffering. He has given us this example, and you and I put our fingers and our lives right in that same suffering mentality, and we copy it, because He is the example of how to suffer correctly when treated unjustly. It's the idea of tracing to get the exact pattern. We're to follow his copy

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of learning how to suffer correctly when treated unjustly, because that calls attention to the suffering Savior, and that is called a witness in our own lives.

So we are to follow. We are to take the same road. We follow in His footprints.

Now there is a difference between precept and example. You need to understand this. A precept or command says, “this is what you do.” It says, “Do it.” A precept or command says, “Do it.” But an example says, “this can be done, because it has been done before.” This can be done! You can suffer correctly when treated unjustly because it’s been done before, and done in the sacrificial life of Christ.

Example goes further than precept. The precept or command says, “Climb this mountain.” But the example says, “Place your foot where my foot is, and you’ll be able to climb the mountain.”

You see, one says to do it. The other one says that this is how you do it. That’s the difference.

You see, Peter is saying, in effect, “Look! This is what you’re to do.” But it’s not your idea to create the mechanism to get it done, because it has already been done for you. Put your foot where My foot is, and that will teach you how to climb the mountain. That’s what it means by having an exemplary suffering model for us.

That is what Peter says about our suffering. We have a Model to be traced. We have a Model to be copied. We have a Model who has already accomplished suffering correctly in an unjust world, and we know how to do that, because we’re tracing the suffering ministry of Christ.

And just as a child painstakingly traces with his pencil the letters to learn how to write, we’re to take painstaking efforts in copying how Jesus suffered, so we can learn how to suffer correctly.

This is a word example that is only used once in the New Testament. This is the only place that it’s ever used. It means a reflection of the original.

When you and I, brothers, understand what it means to suffer correctly, out of reverence for Christ, what we’re really doing is saying that we’re a reflection of the original suffering. And who does that call attention to? It doesn’t call attention to us! It calls attention to Him! That’s the whole point that Peter is saying. It calls attention to Christ, not to yourself. It’s not about the circumstances you’re in. It’s about the demonstration of calling attention to the Person and work of Christ, His sinless perfection and perfect obedience, because you’re modeling how to suffer correctly in an unjust world. It’s an evidence of being kept filled by the Holy Spirit. Submit to one another. Come under the protection of one another. You can’t do that apart from being kept filled, in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Try it sometime in your own strength, and watch what happens. It’s happened over the years, and it’s just abject failure.

Sometimes, brothers, when you’re being treated unjustly, the best thing you can do is do the best you can and trust Christ with the rest.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Just do the best you can, and trust Christ with the rest, because He has made the difference.

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We’re to imitate Christ in His love, His forgiveness, in our being committed to His way of suffering. You see, the way of suffering is demonstrating His conduct and His conversation.

Look at verses 19 and 20. Go back to 19 and 20 of chapter 2. “For this is a gracious thing when, being mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if, when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.”

Jesus was an example of how to suffer correctly. He had no example. Now let’s take a look at this, and put ourselves in and understand Jesus’ situation.

We have an Example, a great encouragement to teach us how to do that—to use the time wisely, because the days are evil. We have an example of how to do this, in the suffering ministry of Christ. He had no example. He had to create the example. Listen! He knew this was going to happen, and yet look at His response. He knew in advance that there was no deliverance to look for. He knew that in advance. No one was going to deliver Him. (*Paraphrase*): “If You can’t remove this cup from Me, let it be Your will.” He knew, going in advance, that there would be no deliverance.

And yet what did He do? He suffered correctly while being treated unjustly. Jesus also knew that Judas and his companions would betray Him. He knew that. Going into His Incarnation, he knew that was going to happen. There was no example for him. Yet we have such a great and powerful example in how He suffered correctly while being treated unjustly.

He knew that the princes and rulers would condemn Him. He knew that going in, and yet what did He do? He gave us an example of how to suffer correctly. He knew that people would reject Him. And He knew this. “They are going to free Barabas. They’re not going to free You.”

Can you understand what that means? He knew that going in, and yet He gives us the example of how to suffer correctly.

He also knew this, that God would curse Him. Galatians 3:13. Anyone dying on a cross would be cursed. Can you believe that the Son of God says that God would curse Him? “There is no example. What am I to do? Who can I trace? Are there footsteps I can put My feet in, who have gone before Me?” No one had gone before Him. Yet you and I have the privilege of looking back upon His life, and how He suffered correctly, so that we have a Model. We can trace it. We can follow in His steps, because He has given us that model.

Yet He committed to suffer this way. He did so that all after Him could follow in His steps, and have the comfort of knowing God’s deliverance. Jesus never knew that. He knew there would be no deliverance.

The Scripture tells us, and you and I know this, that there is deliverance because of the cross, because we have an Example to follow.

His holy life brought about reviling, insults, and personal suffering. Notice the word *entrusted* in verse 24. It’s a very wonderful word. We’ve talked about this. But “He continued entrusting Himself,” in verse 23, “to Him who judges justly.”

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Now in the life of Christ, you’ll never see Him entrusting Himself to mankind, or to authorities. He submits to authority, but He entrusts Himself to a holy God who judges justly.

Notice the word *but* in verse 23. “When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.” You see, there is a contrast. He entrusted Himself.

Here’s what that word means. Here’s our deliverance, brothers. It means to deliver something to someone else, to keep, use, to take care of and manage for you. That’s what it means to entrust. It means to give it to somebody else to manage for you.

When you and I submit to authority in those difficult situations, and we entrust it to God, you’re taking your act of submission and giving that to someone else to manage for you, and that Person is God Himself. He will manage your action of submission, because you’re being kept filled by the Holy Spirit. There is our point of deliverance. Our deliverance is in trusting Him. We submit it to other people, but we entrust it to Him. We turn it over to Him to be the One who will manage our actions of suffering correctly while being treated unjustly. He manages that for us, and that is our point of deliverance. Jesus did not have that. Yes, please?

Participant: There are some obvious situations where we know that we’re suffering in Christ’s name. But what I’m not clear on is, can you give an example of what some of the men here in the room would face on a daily basis—examples of being persecuted for what we may be doing in our everyday lives.

Bruce: Does anybody have any examples? That’s a good question. I’m sure you’ve got some examples. Look at it honestly

Participant: You don’t get a promotion.

Bruce: Excuse me?

Participant: We don’t live in a meritocracy. We live in a political environment, and oftentimes we’re passed over and neglected because it’s not our merit, it’s just the way politics are.

Bruce: there are all sorts of ways. Let’s be honest, brothers. Have we ever really suffered?

A few men: No.

Bruce: We have no idea what it means to suffer! We have complaints, because I didn’t get that promotion. I didn’t get the job I wanted. Those are examples of what you would call minor suffering. But have we ever been called to really suffer like Christ suffered? Don?

Don: I think that, you know, more and more, in the news for example, with this whole homosexual movement, you know there are businesses which have been forced to shut down because they wouldn’t make cakes, or that kind of thing, for gay weddings. I think that we’re seeing that a little more now than we used to. They happen more and more.

Bruce: that’s a good example. There are all sorts of ways in which we are being subjected to the rules and conditions of this world, and that puts us in a position to have to live out our convictions rather than our preferences. Yes, Ted?

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Ted John, my companion here, just said that a hundred and forty-four martyrs die every day. So being forbidden to make cakes for gay weddings is a small item.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Ted: with your livelihood, basically, you can do something else.

Bruce: Right.

Ted: I’m just saying that we are clueless. We have a very soft life.

Bruce: Yes, we do.

Ted: It is reflected in the anemic nature of the Christian church.

Bruce: Yes. It’s interesting. Years ago, I had the opportunity to teach Christ and the New Testament to a group of pastors and lay persons in China. All of these people were in house churches that were underground. And they came together for a meeting, and I had the privilege of teaching them at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in China.

One of the things that we talked about, as I listened to these men—I mean, I just stood in awe at the fact that they were listening to me! They had gone through things, men, that I could never, ever, ever conceive of in the United States. And yet, the one thing I asked them was this. “When you pray for the church in America, what do you pray for?”

They basically said this. “We pray for suffering and persecution, because that is what has caused the church in China to grow.”

And one man even said this. “The best thing that ever happened to the cause of Christ was Communism.”

I said, “Now wait a minute! That’s an anti-Christ system.”

He said, “Exactly! It’s the contrast between them and us! That is what has caused the sheep to come out of the fold, to identify the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the chaff. All of a sudden, we’ve got people coming out of our churches who are growing! They’re growing not only in the depth of grace and their understanding, but they’re expanding in their numbers!” It’s because of one thing. It’s because of the system in which we’ve been called to operate. We’ve learned how to suffer correctly, while being treated unjustly, and people’s lives are being changed because Christ’s life is being put on display as a suffering Servant Savior. He said that this is what we pray for America.

Participant: They didn’t pray that we would have a Muslim leader, did they?
(*Laughter*)

Participant: That might be good.

Bruce: How do we respond to that? That’s the issue. Not if, but how do we respond to that?

Participant: We already have such a leader. (*Mixed reactions.*)

Bruce: Well, wait a minute. Ted. Hang on a minute.

Ted: I mean, we get so worked up about Barak Obama. What an evil person! Hilary Clinton. I mean, we get so worked up! We are clueless! I mean, there are Christians. As an Anglican, there are Christians being murdered in northern Nigeria who are having their churches burned down, who are being killed, murdered, kidnapped! We’re clueless! It makes Barak Obama and Hilary Clinton, and any other liberal you want to name, look

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like small potatoes. And because Barak Obama is the biggest enemy we have, that’s what we get worked up about.

Bruce: Right.

Participant: You respond by submitting to authority.

Bruce: Correct. We respond by submitting to authority, and it’s in this that you demonstrate being kept filled by the Holy Spirit.

Now guys, we’ve got to be very honest. We don’t know how to suffer.

Participant: No, we don’t.

Bruce: We don’t know how to do it. We have complaints and things, but we really don’t know how to suffer for the cause of Christ. We suffer for the cause of inconvenience, perhaps.

Participant: Right.

Bruce: Out of inconvenience, but not for the cause of Christ. Yes, please?

Participant: I think, in regard to learning to suffer, and learning to entrust ourselves to Christ, like this passage talks about, it starts with the little things, like being passed over for a promotion. You entrust yourself to God the Father. You entrust yourself in all the little things, and those lead up, eventually, to some day, here in this country, to the big things.

Bruce: Exactly right. We’ve got to learn how to do it in the little things.

Participant: And being wise as to what’s going on around us day by day, and entrusting yourself to Christ every minute.

Bruce: amen. The idea for us is this. Yes, Carl?

Carl: Bruce, what we have to do, and what we have to understand more than anything else, we have to understand that Romans 13, verse 1, tells us that God is going to appoint who shall lead. And sometimes our suffering comes from the very fact that we don’t understand how to pray for one another. We don’t understand how to get along with one another. We don’t understand how to come together as a culture, as a people. We’ve got people over in countries that are suffering, real suffering. They are dying for the work of the gospel, and we have it free. Yet we choose not to have faith, because we can go to our refrigerator, and we can see food there, and we can choose what we want to eat. We can look in our closets, and we can choose what to wear. And so there’s no reason for us to have faith. Instead of us lifting up Christ, and saying, “Lord, help us to understand You better,” we look at each other, rather than looking to Christ.

Bruce: Amen.

Participant: Preach it, brother, preach it!

Bruce: That’s it. That’s what Peter is saying. Yes, please?

Participant: We submit to authorities. (*Unclear.*)

Bruce: We submit to it, but we’re not conformed to it, because our deliverance point is what? It’s entrusting ourselves to a holy God who judges correctly. That’s what we do. We submit ourselves to authority, but we entrust ourselves to God.

Now I can give you some crass examples of what I would consider American suffering. But they’re so crass compared to what the world is going through in the cause

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of Christ. Let’s just leave it at that. Let’s just try not to pat ourselves on the back and think that we’re doing so well.

What I’m trying to say, brothers, is this. Be prepared! We need to prepare ourselves. My whole point in teaching this series on 1 Peter is to teach us to be holy.

When you study the doctrine of eschatology, the doctrine of the end times, whole denominations have been formed by one particular position. Even pastors are selected for their churches based upon their pre-mil, a-mil, or post-mil status. We’ve made such a big thing about the *when!* The Scripture never teaches us about when He is going to return. It teaches us that He *will* return. The real issue is this—not the when, but how do you live until then? That’s the issue. You teach eschatology to teach people to become holy, not to figure out when the end times are going to come. So whether or not you’re pre-mil, a-mil, or post-mil, I’m pan-mil. Everything is going to pan out all right.
(*Laughter.*)

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: But see, the issue is this. We make such a big deal of this, and say that you’ve got to be this, or you can’t be my pastor. We’ve had whole denominations based on this or that particular position on the return of Christ. The Scripture never teaches about the *when!* It says, “This is how you live until then.” That’s holiness! That’s the book of 1 Peter! Peter is preparing us!

Now brothers, I can’t give you examples of American suffering that are even close to what’s going on in the world for the cause of Christ. All I’m saying is this. Let’s be prepared and committed to Him, should it come. We need to rally around ourselves and stick together, and should it come, let’s be prepared to suffer as the example of Christ did, because He did this. He submitted to authority, but entrusted Himself to God. That’s our Model. That’s our Example.

Jesus didn’t have a model. He created the model. And now we have Somebody whose footsteps we can trace, and say, “this is how you do it.” Not only does the precept and the command say, “Do it,” but you and I have been given the privilege of saying, “Put your foot where mine is.” That’s how you’ve got to cross the mountain.

Brothers, we’re being prepared. Let’s just be prepared and committed to Him till the Lord returns, and it may be a longer time when we’ll have to go through the suffering. May we do it for the cause of Christ.

Remember this. It’s evidence of being kept filled by the Holy Spirit, because you can’t live like this apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. What the Father ordained the Son accomplished. The Holy Spirit applies it in your life. Yes, Don?

Don: You know, I think of all of the resources that we in this country have, that many of us don’t use. And yet the people who are being persecuted in Islamic countries have so little, and yet their faith is probably so much stronger than ours.

Bruce: Don, that’s a great point. Let me just give you a recent letter from Tin, our friend in Vietnam.

They have had a three hundred percent expansion and increase in their membership, in a Communist country. And here are the rules of Communism. You can do whatever you

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want inside the church building. But once you step outside the church building, you can't do anything. And they've had a three hundred percent growth in their numbers.

Do you know what he wants from us? I've just sent him some money from the Servants' Fund. He wants Bibles, because these new converts don't have the Word! A three hundred per cent increase in the past year!

What's your church expansion rate herein America? Do you have a three hundred per cent growth in your church? Of course not! What's the deal? He says, "all we can do is go outside the church and just live our lives, and be submissive to our authorities, and do what we're told to do and entrust that to Christ, because when we do that, the Holy Spirit is going to do something, and that's our witness."

I said, "Tin, what do you do?"

He said, "All I can do is invite people to church. Our program is this: come and see. Come inside the building. See who we are. Watch how we live. See how we take care of each other. That's all we can do."

And I'm saying that I wish we could even start doing that. When was the last time you invited somebody to come to your church? You see, we've got all these wonderful evangelistic programs. Let's do this. Let's pass out this tract. Let's have this event. Let's have this speaker. We do all that stuff. What we need to be doing is to invite somebody to church and say, "come and see how we live."

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: You see, brothers, we need to get serious about our commitment to being prepared to suffer. That may come one of these days. If it does in America, then we need to be prepared. Yes, Carl?

Carl: Bruce, you're only speaking what you've already taught us, and that's not what would Jesus do, but what has He already done?

Bruce: Amen to that.

Carl: When we become not earthly examples, but His divine example, then we will know what it is truly to suffer.

Bruce: Amen. Just be prepared. Yes?

Participant: I'm sorry if my question took us way off.

Bruce: No, no. It's a good question.

Participant: At the same time, though, I didn't really hear a good answer in here when I asked for examples, other than being passed over for a promotion, and most of the time it's probably because of our own performance. So in the end, what I really should be asking is, what kinds of situations should we put ourselves into, to be persecuted, because I feel that, if we're not being persecuted, we're not stepping out of our comfort zones.

Bruce: but we should not put ourselves in a position to be persecuted. Persecution should be the natural consequence of who we are, where we are.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: that's what it is. Ministry is who you are, where you are. The natural consequence of our being kept filled is going to be what? We may be persecuted. It's a consequence, not a cause. Let it be the cause of your conduct.

“THE SUFFERING SERVANT SAVIOR”

Participant: Bruce, I heard someone who spoke the other day, and he reminds me of truth, justice, and the American way. I don't think he had phone booths, so I don't see how that's going to work. (*Laughter*) But you know, as you've said, that what God ordains, the Son accomplishes, and the Holy Spirit applies. Now what hurts, and should hurt us, is any time we see interruptions in the work of the Holy Spirit. And that's a persecution just to watch us misrepresent Christ around us, if we don't step up to the plate. (*Unclear*)

Bruce: Amen. Thank you.

Participant: Yes. I've heard the question and I've heard the answer, and we've just studied this in a study of 2 Timothy. The persecution that I see in my life, and I find it a lot, is to be the head of my family. I find persecution right in my own household, with the division between husband and wife. I find persecution even in my workplace, trying to be a good servant in the workplace. And I find that it's all around me, as long as I'm trying to submit to what God wants me to do. I find those who oppose me. At that moment, I'm persecuted, and in order to get through that, I have to be steadfast, and I understand that. But I don't think persecution for me, right now, is anything political. I don't think it's anything outside of me. I think it's really inside, where I'm at, in the world where I walk, and I find it. There is persecution in my life.

Bruce: I think we'll all agree to that. There is persecution at different degrees and levels in our own lives, and the responsibility is this. When that happens, what are we to do, according to Peter? Do good! Don't figure out why. Figure out what. Not why am I being persecuted, or what is the persecution for, but what is my response? And Peter says this. "If you're doing good." You see, in the midst of persecution, we need to be doing good. Yes, sir?

Participant: I'd like to say that I think that persecution begins with us, and the fact that we truly want to have a part with Christ, and there are not very many people who want to do that.

Bruce: That's correct.

Participant: That's what the Lord calls you to. It's a battle.

Bruce: That's right.

Participant: It's hard to find people that you can be around that want that. They don't want that. They want to be mediocre Christians.

Bruce: No, you're right.

Participant: And they don't want to go toward Christ.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Participant: If you want that, you've got to let go of that stuff, and go toward Him.

Bruce: Remember this. The point of our deliverance is that word *entrusting*. We're giving that to God to manage, on our behalf. That's why submission means coming under the protection of. Whose protection do we come under?

Participant: Christ.

Bruce: The protection of a holy God, who judges justly. That's the critical issue for us.

“THE SUFFERING SERVANT SAVIOR”

So, whatever the Lord is pleased to take us through, Peter is just saying, in effect, “Be prepared to do it correctly.” Paul says that you do it correctly “because the days are evil.” And when you do that, you’re demonstrating the fact that you’re being kept filled by the Holy Spirit. And that causes us to give attention to what? To the sacrificial ministry of Christ, to the suffering, sacrificial, servant ministry of Christ. We’ve just talked about the fact that we have an Example of how to suffer correctly, in the life of Christ. He had no example to create. He created that for us.

Next week we’ll come back, and we’ll talk about the substitutionary suffering of Christ. Today, we talked about the exemplary suffering of Christ. What about His substitutionary suffering?

Participant: Come on, sir.

Bruce: We’ll talk about that next week. May God be pleased just to help us understand and prepare us to submit to authority, and entrust ourselves to a holy God who judges justly. May it be so, for Jesus’ sake.

Let’s pray. Father, we’re treading on thin ice here, because we always think that we have to have all the answers. And the great joy of the Christian faith is that we’re not the answer! You are. You are the answer alone, heavenly Father. May our minds be focused upon the Example You give us. Let’s not worry about what’s going on around us. Just let us have the insight to know that, should it come, we have an Example, where I need to put my feet, because those footprints have already been made for me. And as we do that, Father, may we entrust ourselves to You, the God who judges justly. Manage this for us, for Your glory. And all the Brave Men said: “Amen.”