



First and Second Peter Lesson 6 2Q 2017 Suffering for Christ

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” 1Pet 2:21

What does it mean that we were called to suffer? Why?

It says because Christ suffered for us—why did Christ suffer for us?

What was the cause of Christ’s suffering?

Were any of the following the cause Christ’s sufferings:

- Physical mistreatment and abuse?
- Failure of people to recognize and respond to truth?
- Seeing His creation ravaged by sin?
- Rejection by people—especially those claiming to be His followers?
- Rejection and abandonment by His disciples?
- Betrayal by Judas?
- Going without food in the desert, physical fatigue and exhaustion?
- The human condition that He assumed and came to cure?
- The separation He felt from His Father during crucifixion weekend?
- The fear of dying and the agony and temptation to stop death from taking Him?
- The fear He might never rise again?

Can we categorize the various types of suffering?

First, all suffering only happens because sin exists in the world, yet is all suffering due to some act of sin by the one suffering? No!

So what categories can we break suffering into?

- Suffering of righteous people who are being attacked by unrighteous forces, whether people or demonic agencies.
 - This is what Peter is referring to in our memory text—being mistreated by people
 - Jesus suffering this way, as have many righteous people throughout history
 - Why did Jesus say when this happens we should turn the other cheek?
 - When is it proper not to turn the other cheek but to act to prevent the attack?
 - Parents whose children are trying to hit them—why is it better to intervene to stop the child? Because love seeks what is best, and it is greater love to



- discipline the child to prevent the formation of such unruly character traits. Note the act to intervene here is obviously not an act to retaliate, to destroy, to injure, but to protect the child and promote healthy development.
- Psychotic patient who is seeking to hit you—why is it better to intervene to stop them? Because they are incapable of comprehending right from wrong and need protection from themselves and the witness of love would do them no good. Note the act to intervene here is obviously not an act of vengeance, retaliation, or to destroy, but to restore to mental wellness.
 - So, when does Jesus' directive apply? When the action of turning the other cheek exposes the evil of unjust violence and exploitation and serves to promote the principles of love and respect for all human beings. The non-Christian Gandhi perhaps demonstrated this principle most effectively on a societal basis.
- Suffering that occurs because of disease and decay in nature
 - disease, aging, poisons, toxins, accidents, injuries
 - Suffering that occurs because of sin destroying that which we love
 - see animals suffer
 - see loved ones rebel and destroy themselves in unhealthy living
 - Suffering that occurs because of our carnal nature tempting us and God's healing solution being applied?
 - Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. 1Pet 4:1
 - What does this mean?

What caused Christ the greatest suffering?

He went a little distance from them--not so far but that they could both see and hear Him--and fell prostrate upon the ground. **He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father.** The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. **This agony** He must not exert His divine power to escape. **As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression.** {DA 686.3}

Again the Son of God was seized with **superhuman agony**, and fainting and exhausted, He staggered back to the place of His former struggle. **His suffering was even greater than before.** As the agony of soul came upon Him, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The cypress and palm trees were the silent witnesses of His anguish. From their leafy branches dropped heavy dew upon His stricken form, **as if nature wept over its Author wrestling alone with the powers of darkness.** {DA 689.3}

...a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. **The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love.** He came to give power to the divine-human



suppliant. **He pointed Him to the open heavens**, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved. {DA 693.3}

Christ's agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face. **He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man.** {DA 694.1}

Why did Christ experience it?

- He experienced the agony of being disconnected from God the source of love, life, and truth
- He experienced the full weight of what the carnal nature does—it tempts with fear and selfishness and Christ's humanity felt this terrible fear and agony

Why didn't Christ put a stop to it?

- If Christ's uses His divine power to stop death from taking Him, who does He save? Self, this would be exactly what Satan would like, for Christ to use His power in self-interest. Satan claims that love is not real and that God is selfish, thus God's character would have been undermined and misrepresented had Christ chosen to save Himself.
- Second, the infection of selfishness in the heart/mind of humanity would not be overcome and a new human character/nature would not have been developed if Christ chose to save Himself

The foe who in the wilderness had confronted Christ assailed Him now with fierce and subtle temptations. **Had Jesus yielded for a moment, had He changed His course in the least particular to save Himself, Satan's agencies would have triumphed, and the world would have been lost.** {DA 486.1}

If Jesus suffered in our place why do we have to suffer?

Once there is brokenness there are no pain-free options! If you have a broken leg and do nothing you don't avoid pain, and you have permanent disability. If you go to the orthopedic surgeon, get a pin, and then physical therapy there is pain, but the process leads to healing, resolution of pain and restoration of function. But, there are no pain free options.

Is it any different for humanity broken by sin?

Christ achieved the Remedy to sin that no other human could achieve, however, that Remedy still must be applied into the lives of every person who is saved. The application of that Remedy results in



suffering when love confronts selfishness, when truth confronts the lies we have cherished, when destructive habits are resisted and overcome by the presence of God's indwelling Spirit.

We will all suffer because we are all damaged by sin—the only question is will our suffering be in harmony with God's healing plan, which leads to restoration and eventual freedom from all suffering, or not?

SUNDAY

The lesson is about the first couple of centuries after Christ and the persecution of Christians by the various civil governments. What is your understanding of why this happened?

Were Christians being persecuted because they were inciting rebellion, like the Jews who constantly sought to overthrow the Romans and which led to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70?

Were Christians carrying out acts of terrorism?

Were Christians desecrating pagan worship centers and painting graffiti on Roman statues?

Were Christians calling for boycotts of Roman businesses?

What were Christians doing? They were preaching Christ—and in an empire with many gods—12 primary gods: Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Venus, Minerva, Neptune, Ceres, Vulcan, Diana, Bacchus, Mercury, Vesta, and minor household spirits that were worshipped, who the Romans believed protected each home and later other gods such as Isis, Pan and Mithras came to be worshipped.

So in a culture with so many gods, why were Christians persecuted for adding another God to the mix?

Because there is a Great Controversy between God and Satan and there are only two versions of God—the truth of God who is love as Jesus revealed, who is Creator and whose laws are design laws, and gods who function like Satan alleges, with Satan's characteristics, like sinful beings. And how do sinful beings govern? Impose rules that require punishment and/or some form of payment or appeasement.

Christianity presented a God that stood in marked contrast to all the other gods in the world—a God who was not merely powerful, but who was selfless love and whose laws were design laws! This, Satan could not allow—so Satan inspired his followers to try and eliminate the knowledge of the true God.

Jesus said those living in darkness don't want to come into the light lest their evil deeds be exposed. Love and truth is offensive to those operating on lies and selfishness.



MONDAY

Read first paragraph “When Peter says...” What is the blessing we received when we suffer for righteousness sake?

How do we overcome selfishness? Can we overcome selfishness by acting selfish? Can we drive out sickness with disease?

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”—Martin Luther King Jr., Strength to Love (1963)

Why should Christians not fear those who are attacking them?

What can prevent Christians from being afraid? Three elements I have thus far identified overcome fear:

- Love
 - Perfect love casts out all fear—what is the truth here and how does it help us overcome fear?
 - Neurobiologically when our love circuits fire our fear circuits calm.
 - In your life when you are acting in love toward others, what happens to your fear?
 - Do we see evidence of this in the death of Stephen and the martyrs?
 - Christian de Chergé, was a French Catholic monk and the Trappist prior of the Tibhirine monastery in Algeria, and in 1993, with the rise of radical Islam, Father Chergé knew that his life was in danger. But rather than leave Algeria, Father Chergé chose to stay and continue his witness to the love of Jesus Christ. On May 24, 1996, Father Chergé was beheaded by Muslim radicals. Anticipating his death, Father Chergé had left a testament with his family to be read upon the event of his murder. The testament reads in part:

If it should happen one day—and it could be today—that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to encompass all the foreigners living in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church, my family, to remember that my life was given to God and to this country. I ask them to accept that the One Master of all life was not a stranger to this brutal departure. I ask them to pray for me: for how could I be found worthy of such an offering? I ask them to be able to associate such a death with the many other deaths that were just as violent, but forgotten through indifference and anonymity.

I should like, when the time comes, to have a clear space which would allow me to beg forgiveness of God and of all my fellow human beings, and at the same time to forgive with all my heart the one who would strike me down. . . .



My death, clearly, will appear to justify those who hastily judged me as naïve or idealistic: “Let him tell us now what he thinks of it.” But these people must realize that my most avid curiosity will then be satisfied. This is what I shall be able to do, if God wills—immerse my gaze in that of the Father, to contemplate with him his children of Islam just as he sees them, all shining with the glory of Christ, the fruit of his Passion, filled with the Gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to establish communion and to refashion the likeness, delighting in the differences.

For this life given up, totally mine and totally theirs, I thank God and you also, the friend of my final moment, who would not be aware of what you were doing. Yes, for you also I wish this “thank you”—and this “adieu”—to commend you to the God whose face I see in yours. And may we find each other, happy “good thieves,” in Paradise, if it pleases God, the Father of us both. Amen¹

- One factor which enables us to overcome fear is love.
- Where do we find such love?
- How do we experience it?
- What prevents us from experiencing such love?
- Truth
 - First truth is the truth about God—do you know Him for who He is such that you genuinely trust Him—with your wealth, life, family, future? Do we believe God really has our best interest at heart? Or is our view of God one that many of my patients have when they ask:
 - Why did God take my child in a car accident?
 - Why did God give my child cancer?
 - Why didn’t God prevent my husband from cheating?
 - Why did God give me bipolar?
 - If we believe God does such things can we truly trust Him?
 - What kind of emotions do such beliefs cause? Fear and what does fear cause us to do? Watch out for self—which is the opposite of love!
 - What did Jesus mean when He said: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Mt 10:28
 - What is the truth here and how can this reduce fear?
 - By realizing that our individuality, our personhood, our software, cannot be corrupted by others, and if we trust God while our bodies can be destroyed our individualities are safe with Christ in heaven
- Purpose –the third element that protects against fear
 - If we understand our suffering serves a purpose, does it help us endure it?

¹ Christian de Chergé, “Last Testament,” Eternal Word Television Network,
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/MARY/LASTTEST.HTM>.



- Did you hear in the *Desire of Ages* quotation above what that author describes that the angel of heaven did who came to Christ in Gethsemane? The angel pointed Christ to the purpose of His suffering, what it would accomplish, which further invigorated His love for us!
- Does our suffering for righteousness serve a purpose?
- If you knew your suffering would be useful in protecting someone you love, would that help give your courage?
- In my book, *The God-Shaped Brain*, I write about a patient dying of esophageal cancer and his struggles to understand why he wasn't healed, despite prayer for healing. He came to understand God did not cause the cancer, but allowed it for a higher purpose. through his dying process as he continued to demonstrate trust in God, experience peace, showed love and kindness toward others, and wasn't afraid—he saw his two siblings give their heart to God. He died, but he died with the comfort that not only would he rise again, but his brother and sister would be in eternity with him.

The third paragraph states, “Clearly there is no merit in suffering for being a wrongdoer.”

What is meant by “merit”? Do they mean benefit, there is no benefit in suffering for wrongdoing? Or do they mean something else?

Is there a disciplinary benefit in suffering for wrongdoing? In other words, can the suffering of wrong doing work to lead someone to reevaluate their actions? Did the prodigal son find himself suffering as a result of wrong doing? Did his suffering lead him to go home?

When people suffering for wrongdoing, while they might learn something and change their ways, when such suffering is imposed by law enforcement, rather than the natural results of sin, such suffering actually perpetuates the lie that God's government works this way.

Do the lesson authors mean that merit is a benefit for the advancement of God's kingdom, for the healing from sin?

What is the benefit to God's kingdom when we suffering for right-doing?

The revelation of truth which advances the knowledge of God and helps promote the methods and principles of God to those who don't already know them.

Additionally, those who suffering for doing right experience further healing, solidification, transformation of their character as they choose the right and reject the wrong.



WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “In all these passages...” When you hear the concept of judgment what comes to mind? To you think through judicial or medical lenses? Do you think through imposed law or design law?

What is judgment through judicial lens? It is a legal process, focused on behavior, the dos and don't and ultimately resulting in the judge making a ruling which determines the fate of the one being judged.

Through design law—what do we realize?

First, who is the one who is the focus of the judgment? Who is the one who was lied about in the beginning? What was the cause of the spread of sin in the universe? What did Satan do to get 1/3 of the angels and later humanity to fall?

What did Paul mean when he wrote:

God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” Rom 3:4

What is the first message of the 3 angels of Revelation 14?

“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

The hour of whose judgment has come? The hour in which God can be seen in His true light and people, who have had their minds shrouded in the grossest darkness about God can make a right judgment about Him and finally worship Him who made the heavens, earth, and sea. It is a call to worship the designer and reject the dictator views of God.

So, why does judgment start with the house of God? Because God's people are the first to recognize the truth about Him and reject the lies of Satan and then go out and tell others!

What about the idea of standing before God, i.e. the Great White Throne judgment?

What is judgment through the medical lens? The accurate diagnosis of the condition of the one being examined, and then the medical judgment of what is the appropriate treatment to resolve, heal and thus save the one who has been diagnosed.

When you think of God acting as judge which view do you choose and why? Which is most accurate with Scripture? Which is more consistent with design law and how reality works?



In the second paragraph it states, “Sin has brought evil into the world, and God’s people throughout the ages have long waited for God to make things right again.”

What does it mean for God to make things right? What is another work for making things right, or doing what is right? Justice!

Is making things right, justice, the same as inflicting pain and suffering upon those who persist in sin and refuse salvation?

What about Bible texts that speak of vengeance being God’s?

- Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and **avenge myself on my enemies.** ²⁵ I will turn my hand against you; **I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.** Isaiah 1:24,25
- Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; ⁴ **say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.”** ⁵ Then will the eyes of the **blind be opened** and the **ears of the deaf unstopped.** ⁶ **Then will the lame leap like a deer,** and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Isa 35:3-6
- The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,** ² to proclaim the year of the **Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,** ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— **to bestow on them a crown of beauty** instead of ashes, **the oil of gladness** instead of mourning, and **a garment of praise** instead of a spirit of despair. Isa 61:1-3

What is God’s vengeance? It is God taking vengeance on sin, NOT SINNERS, by destroying all deviations from His design and thereby healing all who let Him!

Is this right or just for God to do? Then what does it mean for God to set things right?

Read bottom pink section, “Think of all the evil in the world that has gone, and still goes, unpunished. Why, then, is the concept of justice and God’s righteous judgment so crucial for us as Christians? What hope do we get from the promise that justice will be done?”

What is revealed in these questions?

- That the authors do not understand God’s law, nor character nor the nature of sin, and therefore do not understand the plan of salvation



- Worse, it reveals that the infection of Satan's lies about God's government have deeply infected Christian thought and the infection is being promoted as the cure.
- These ideas present the problem with sin as one of inflicted punishment coming from God. This false view of justice makes God out to be the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death. Thus, people end up teaching theologies which are designed to hide us and protect us from God, rather than deliver and heal us from sin!

What do I mean?

- What is the difference between God's law and man's law? How are they functionally different?
- What happens if one breaks God's law? What will happen to the one who breaks God's law if God does not act?
- What action does God take and why?
- What happens to the one who breaks man's law? What will happen if human law enforcement does not act?
- What action do human governments take and why?
- What did Lucifer allege in heaven regarding God's law?
 - In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4}
- What does the Bible and the founders of the SDA church teach regarding what happens for transgressing God's law?
 - The **wages of sin is death.** Romans 6:23
 - **Sin when full grown brings forth death.** James 1:15
 - The one who sows to please his sinful nature, **from that nature will reap destruction.** Gal 6:8
 - Sickness, suffering, and **death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer.** {MH 113.1}
 - **God destroys no one.** The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. {FLB 58.7}
 - **Read the Scriptures carefully,** and you will find that **Christ spent the largest part of His ministry in restoring** the suffering and afflicted to health. Thus He threw back upon Satan the reproach of the evil which the enemy of all good had originated. **Satan is the destroyer; Christ is the Restorer.** {MM 240.1}
 - **Satan is the destroyer.** God cannot bless those who refuse to be faithful stewards. **All He can do is to permit Satan to accomplish his destroying work.** We see calamities of every kind and in every degree coming upon the earth, and why? **The Lord's restraining power is not exercised.** {6T 388.3}
 - Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. Soon **God will show that He is indeed the living God. He will say to the angels, "No longer**



combat Satan in his efforts to destroy. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. **I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work.**" {RH, September 17, 1901 par. 8}

- **Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds** when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge, which meant disobedience to God. {16MR 247.2}
- **We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin.** The sinner brings punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a **change of character**, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, **men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {FLB 84.7}

What is justice?

It is doing what is right or just, as defined by what? The law, what law? The law of love, which emanates from God's character. So, with the law of love as the standard, which is design law, what is justice?

Justice – Bible definition is to do right in helping others, show compassion and mercy – no concept of punitive infliction of punishment, that is a human definition, which definition does PSM use? Here is the Biblical evidence:

- “Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice (*tsadaq*) to the afflicted and needy” (Psalm 82:3 NKJV).
- Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. See that justice (*mishpat*) is done--- help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows. (Isaiah 1:16,17 GNB)
- This is what the LORD says to the dynasty of David: ‘Give justice (*mishpat*) each morning to the people you judge! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.’ (Jeremiah 21:12 NLT)
- ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Enough, O princes of Israel! Remove violence and plundering, execute justice (*mispat*) and righteousness (*tsadaq*), and stop dispossessing my people,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘You shall have honest scales....’ (Ezekiel 45:9,10 NKJV)
- The LORD is waiting to be kind to you. He rises to have compassion on you. The LORD is a God of justice (*mishpat*). (Isaiah 30:18 GW)



- “This is what the LORD of Armies says: Administer real justice (*mishpat*), be compassionate and kind to each other.” (Zechariah 7:9 GW)
- “He executes justice (*mishpat*) for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:18 NASB)

THURSDAY

Read bottom pink question, “Why is knowing the character of God for yourself, knowing His goodness and His love for you personally, such a crucial component for a Christian, especially one who is suffering? How can we all learn to come to know the reality of His love better?”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 2



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available.

Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcsummit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

September 15,16 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

October 12-16, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

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October 27, 28, 2017: Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>