

***Jesus' Suffering and Our Suffering***  
***1 Peter 2:18-25***

**Introduction:** We are taking a break from our Galatians series the next couple of weeks for Palm Sunday and Easter. Today, we are looking at a passage in 1 Peter in which Peter urges us to follow Jesus' example of suffering. None of us will suffer unjustly in the way Christ did, however, we do at times suffer. And at times we suffer unjustly. There is a way to suffer that finds favor with God and which ultimately allows us to be a beautiful fragrance of Christ in this world.

**Opening Discussion:** Have you ever felt like you were suffering unjustly? If so, what was the situation?

**Read 1 Peter 2:18-25**

1. What are Peter's instruction to servants?
2. What finds favor with God?
3. How would you described Jesus' example of suffering (vv. 21-24)?
4. What might it look like to keep entrusting ourselves to God in our suffering (v. 23)?
5. How would you summarize Paul's teaching about how we are to deal with suffering?

Steve said:

Evaluate how you tend to respond when you feel insulted or misunderstood or mistreated in everyday life. Let's put on hold the extreme cases of being persecuted or oppressed. Let's begin by evaluating how we tend to respond to people in everyday life. Are you patient and kind when somebody says something that rubs you the wrong way? Or do you tend to be indignant and irritated at all the incompetent and uninformed people you encounter?

6. How do you tend to respond when you are mistreated in everyday life?
7. Do you find it hard to "patiently endure" (v. 20) suffering or being treated unjustly? Why or why not?

Steve said:

***Desire: Do I honestly desire to be like Christ in His sufferings?*** I know that the good Christian answer to the question, “Do you want to be Christlike?” is “Of course I want to be like Christ.” But being Christlike includes suffering like Him when we’re wronged and when unreasonable people treat us unjustly. I really want you to be honest with yourself on this issue. Ask yourself, “Do I honestly desire to be like Christ in His sufferings?”

8. Do you honestly desire to be like Christ in His sufferings? What makes it hard to fully say "yes" to this?

Steve said:

***Prayer: “Lord, teach me to follow Jesus’ pattern when I’m mistreated.”*** Don’t underestimate the impact of praying a prayer like that from the heart. If you invite God to teach you to follow Jesus’ pattern of suffering, you might find yourself “in the classroom” more than you imagined. You will begin noticing how you react to people in your workplace, to people in your family, to friends, and to people in the church.

9. How do you feel about praying this prayer? Why?

10. What do you sense is the main point of application for your life right now based on this passage?

## Steve's Comments about Slavery in the NT:

***A Few Comments about the Context of 1 Peter 2.*** In this passage Peter addresses servants/slaves who might be mistreated by their masters. He tells them to respond the way Jesus responded when He was mistreated. When we read a passage that addresses slaves, we naturally think about slavery as it existed in the first centuries of the United States. We may even think, “How can Peter tell slaves to submit to their masters and patiently endure when they’re mistreated? Isn’t Peter implicitly acknowledging the validity of slavery?” Those are valid questions; passages such as this one has at times been used to justify slavery. But it’s quite a bit more complex than that.

For starters, Peter and the other apostles (or Jesus for that matter) didn’t challenge directly evil social structures of the Roman Empire. To do so would have reduced Christianity to one more political faction. As we’ll see, their approach was much more covert and much more subversive.

Another factor to consider was that slavery in first-century Roman Empire was quite different from institutional slavery as it existed in the United States. Slavery in the Roman Empire wasn’t based on race. Slavery didn’t necessarily mean a low station in society; slaves could be “doctors, teachers, writers, accountants, agents, bailiffs, overseers, secretaries, and sea captains” (cited in McKnight, p. 166). While most slaves were born into slavery (because their mothers were slaves), some chose slavery voluntarily because it provided a stable household and a steady income. After a period of time there was the prospect of being freed and granted the full status of a Roman citizen. For some slavery was a temporary condition “on the path to freedom.” It may well be that Peter had this prospect in mind when he wrote this passage. At the same time - as this passage reflects – there was also great opportunity for masters to mistreat their slaves/servants. Due to the evil tendencies of the human heart, power tends to be abused.