

TITLE: "Satisfaction in Suffering" (Part 1)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:18a

THEME: *Every believer is a servant who is to suffer patiently and justly even as Christ suffered patiently and justly for him.*

NUMBER: 04071PE2.18a(55)

DATE: April 15, 2007

Read Passage

We finally turn a corner of sorts -

We come to passage that will bring us to t/very doorstep of chapter three.

There is so much in this passage . . .

- * Issues related to 1st c. slavery (relationship between slaves & their masters).
- * Passage that speaks of suffering (really 1st direct reference to S. in 1 Pet. since 1:6. We've noted many times that t/theme of t/epistle revolves around S. ("Hope for the Hurting") & no doubt some of you may have been disappointed that we haven't spent much time since delving into that very subject). We return to it here.
- * Passage that brings us back to JC as t/Cornerstone, rejected of men & precious in His Father's sight (2:6-8). So in vv. 21-24 we will be encouraged by fastening our minds upon his suffering for us.

In fact, that entire section echoes what must have been vivid in Peter's memory. He witnessed 1st-hand X's intense suffering; The blows with fists, the spit & t/scorn. His Master's humble submission to the Father as He endured t/scourging, t/cross & t/ultimate pain of embracing our sin.

- * It's a passage that opens in application as a flower opens in springtime. It's a passage that begins by addressing household slaves.

It doesn't end there. By t/time Peter is finished he's talking to each & every one of us. {Illust. point by means of t/applic. triangle in t/notes}

Here's t/basic idea of this entire passage ==>

We are slaves of the Suffering Servant who are to strive for satisfaction in our sufferings since He suffered for us. {restate}

Let's go to v. 18 Keep in mind that t/relevance of this passage will broaden as we progress through it. But 1st of all, we need to start where Peter does.

I. Servants are to submit themselves to their masters (18)

This is a call to 1st c. slaves/servants, believing servants, to submit themselves in obedience to their masters even as they have submitted their souls to X.

Servants, submit yourselves to your masters with all fear. Not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are perverse.

A. Go back to the first word ==>

Servants . . .

1. One principle word in the NT that is used of slaves

a. Word δουλος (comes from the verb δεω meaning to tie-up or bind)

Common word used 130x. Sometimes translated servant, slave, bondservant or bondslave. Was a basic word for a 1st c. slave. Word that's often used of t/believer's relationship to JC.

b. That's not the word that's used here

(1) οἰκετης (comes from the noun οἶκος - a house)

This word is used only 4 times in NT & it has t/idea of a household servant. A household servant was a specific kind of slave.

2. We're no doubt familiar with the history of slavery in America

a. This year is the 30th anniversary of the epic miniseries, Alex Haley's "Roots"

Will either show my youth or my age => I vividly recall watching this series on TV (as many of you did). I was in t/8th grade. I remember watching it // t/kids on t/bus & at school talking about it. For many of us, "Roots" was 1st time we'd come "face to face" w/the reality of what slavery was like in America.

b. Slavery was actually introduced to the colonies in 1619 as black slaves were first brought to Jamestown, Va.

From there S. spread t/o all t/colonies. But it was in t/South that S. flourished due to t/need for cheap labor in t/fields harvesting crops like tobacco & rice.

By t/time t/Amer. Rev. broke out, 3/4 of t/black pop. lived South of t/Mason Dixon Line. Interesting that after t/Rev. War, slavery became quite unpop. By 1804 seven of t/Northern most states had abolished it.

c. Just as Slavery seemed to be dying it was suddenly revived

Its resuscitation came by way of modern invention: Eli Whitney's cotton gin which suddenly made t/harvesting of cotton very profitable.

T/South was transformed into t/greatest cotton-growing region in t/world. In 1810 cotton production was shy of 200k bales. 50 yrs. later, 1860 it

jumped to nearly 4 mill. bales. Within t/same time frame of 50 yrs. t/# of slaves jumped from about 1.2 million to 4 mill.

(1) Some slaves were treated well

They were cared for, were taught to read, encouraged to read t/Bible, And thousands came to saving faith in JC.

(2) Many of course, were not treated well

In fact, they were treated like animals . . . & worse. They were whipped, males emasculated, forced to live in filth, they had no rights and many were ruthlessly killed.

d. We must remember that it was the influence of Christianity that ended slavery

Yes, I know some Xns (real or not) used t/Bible to justify slavery. They did so in spite of t/Bible, not because of it. I also know that t/Civil War was as much about state's rights as it was slavery. Robert E. Lee, who had freed slaves he had inherited by marriage, once wrote that t/Civil War was needless bloodshed in terms of ending slavery as he contended it would have eventually withered away under t/influence of Xnty.

(1) It's historical fact that Xnty was t/axe that felled slavery

(a) Began first in England under Wilberforce

England in t/19th c. was rich w/reformation Xnty. We talk much about t/Reformers (Wycliffe, Hus, Luther, Calvin). Let me tell you, W. was a Reformer. H was a member of Parliament & a Xn who devoted his life to JC & to t/abolition movt. in Britain.

In 1787 he formed his Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Over t/years he tirelessly fought to bring t/horrors of slavery to an end.

It wasn't until March 25, 1807, that he saw his 1st success when a bill to abolish t/slave trade became law. There was 1 exception, however, t/law did not free those who were already slaves. So he began to work for t/freeing of slaves who remained in t/British W. Indies.

His Anti-Slavery Society was founded in 1823 & W. retired from Parliament in 1825. He died 1 mo. short of this 74th B-day on 29th of July, 1833. A mo. after his death, t/Slavery Abolition Act was passed. [Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia, 1998]

(b) American followed in England's footsteps

Unfortunately, we were running a generation behind them. But it was t/influence of Xns that eventually brought about abolition.

Going back to 1835, 2/3 of t/members of t/abolition society in were pastors & CH leaders. Many of t/leading practitioners of t/underground railroad were Quakers.

One historian writes that==>

[“In eastern and midwestern Unites States the evangelicals were often drawn into the struggle against slavery. Calvinists and Methodist alike were giving spiritual support to the abolition movement in the 1840s and 1850s.”](#) [Wirt, cited in Kennedy, [What if Jesus Had Never Been Born](#), 21-22]

A. Go back to the first word ==>

Servants . . . (or "slaves" as some translations render it).

What I just said about slavery in England & especially t/horrors of slavery that are forever ingrained in our own history is not t/same thing that we are talking about here. Slavery in Peter's day was significantly different.

As Wayne Grudem notes ==>

[". . . the horrible degradation of slaves in 19th c. America gives the word 'slave' a far worse connotation than is accurate for most of the society to which Peter](#)

was writing. Although mistreatment of slaves could occur then too, it must be remembered that 1st-century slaves were generally well-treated and were not only unskilled laborers but often managers, overseers, and trained members of the various professions (doctors, nurses, teachers, musicians, skilled artisans). There was extensive Roman legislation regulating the treatment of slaves. They were normally paid for their services and could expect eventually to purchase their freedom." [Grudem, 124]

1st c. slavery was not based on race. Many, if not most, were indentured servants who had sold themselves into slavery as t/only employment option they had.

Not to say that they weren't bound to serve, that they didn't have the same rights as freedmen, & that they weren't mistreated, sometimes horribly. In many circumstances they had no rights & were considered nothing more than a living tool whose job it was to work.

But overall they were in a much better social situation than t/slaves of recent Europe & America were.

2. Slaves were abundant in the first century

In t/First c. there were about 60,000,000 slaves in Rom. Emp. (or ½ of t/pop) 1 reason why there were so many was that over a period of time Roman citizens adopted t/attitude that work was beneath their dignity, & t/entire empire began to function largely by slave power.

3. They weren't entirely second-class citizens (not totally)

Many were very well educated (more than their masters) & worked as doctors, teachers, musicians & actors. They accrued wealth & even owned their own slaves!

4. Others lived lives of misery ==>

Particularly those who were forced to work in t/mines. Bottom of t/rung.

These slaves worked nearly non-stop in horrible conditions & commonly died before age 30.

5. Throughout the ancient world there were great differences between how slaves were treated and viewed

Depending, I suppose, on t/time and region. (confusing in that my research shows 2 sides of slavery in antiquity - a mild side & a severe side.)

a. Severe

Going back to t/4th c. BC, Aristotle wrote:

"There can be no friendship nor justice towards inanimate things; indeed, not even towards a horse or an ox, nor yet towards a slave as a slave. For master and slave have nothing in common; a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave."

The Roman nobleman Varro spoke of a three-fold division of t/tools of agriculture: the articulate, the inarticulate and the mute. The articulate were slaves, the inarticulate were beasts like oxen/cattle, and the mute were tools like shovels, pics & wagons.

First c. BC The Roman statesman Cato suggested that ==>

"Old slaves should be thrown on a dump, and when a slave is ill do not feed him anything. It is not worth your money. Take sick slaves and throw them away because they are nothing but inefficient tools." Augustus crucified a slave who accidentally killed his pet quail, and a man named Pollio threw a slave into a pond of deadly lamprey eels for breaking a crystal goblet. Juvenal wrote of a slave owner whose greatest pleasure was "listening to the sweet song of his slaves being flogged." (The previous material is cited in William Barclay, *The Daily Bible Study Series: The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958], 212-14.)

(b) On the other hand ==>

By 1st c. AD cruelty to slaves was becoming increasingly more unacceptable. In many cases, slaves had legal rights. In Egypt, for example, t/death of a slave was subject to a coroner's inquest.

In Rome, freed slaves automatically became citizens.

(c) BUT ==>

It still was involuntary servitude // slavery // demeaning // was a blight on t/fact that all men are created equal in God's sight, even as Paul notes in Gal. 3:28: ". . . There is neither slave nor free man . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

6. Eventually, thru the influence of Jesus Christ social barriers and inequalities began to fade away

Perpetual, a well-do-do aristocrat & Felicitas, a slave girl met martyrdom for their common faith together, hand-in-hand.

It was quite possible that a slave could serve as an elder in t/congregation w/spiritual authority & oversight over his believing master.

7. Why doesn't the Bible simply forbid slavery?

Why doesn't it w/o equivocation // clearly // w/o exception condemn t/practice?

a. For one thing we have to compare apples to apples!

The slavery that immediately comes to our minds from t/19th c. is no where condoned by t/Bible. For t/most part, t/slavery referred to in both t/OT & t/New was very much different.

(1) The OT regulated the practice of slavery within the nation of Israel with strict guidelines In some cases slavery was a good thing.

(a) It was a way for criminals to make restitution

Say you're a thief in OT Israel and you are caught stealing.

The Law demanded restitution (sometimes you were required return to your victim 2x amt. of what you took from him).

Say you didn't have t/money to do that. You became an indentured servant, a slave of t/person you sinned against & worked for that person until t/debt was payed. In t/end you literally payed for your crime & hopefully restored some dignity in t/process, even if thru t/hum. of it all.

i. Israel didn't have prisons

Were capital offenses for which you were put to death. Otherwise, you made restitution or were banished from t/nation itself. Far better than t/laxity of our modern system of jurisprudence.

(b) You could not kidnap someone into forced servitude

To do so was punishable by death (Ex. 21:16). Joseph's bro's. were guilty of doing just that, 1 reason why they were terrified when their crime was discovered.

In contrast note that t/European & American slave trade WAS based on kidnapping & capture & therefore was in clear violation of Scripture.

(c) Israelites were allowed to buy slaves from the pagan nations around them (Lev. 25:44)

BUT those pagan slaves were not to be abused & were given their freedom if seriously injured by their master (Ex. 21:26–27). Plus, their slavery became an entrance into t/worship of YHWH.

(d) Fellow Israelites could not be bought or sold, although they could voluntarily indenture themselves until the year of jubilee

During their time of service they were to be treated as hired workers, not as slaves. They could not be used as a slaves for more than 6 years. After

that they were to be given liberal provisions as a form of severance pay (Ex. 21:2; Deut. 15:13–14).

(e) Every fiftieth year, the year of jubilee, all Hebrew slaves were to be freed and returned to their families (Lev. 25:10)

In that way, family unity was established & Jubilee itself looked forward to t/freedom that would be found in JC.

(f) If a slave fled from an oppressive master he was to be given asylum and protection according to Deut. 23:15–16

That was in contrast to 1st. c. Roman law where runaway slaves were to be returned to their masters at once.

(g) A slave who loved his master and preferred to remain with him could voluntarily indenture himself for life by having his ear pierced by his master

Exodus 21:5-6 5 “But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,’6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

That looked forward to X ==> t/ear was a hieroglyphic (pictograph) of obedience. The piercing thru it to t/doorpost represents intimate obedience. Obedience of t/heart. Remember, during Passover t/blood was applied to t/doorpost of t/house.

JC, dear Xn, JC has pierced your ear to t/doorpost. You are His bondservant & out of joy you forever serve him.

{Pause}

So, t/slavery regulated in t/OT was quite different. As one writer notes==>

"The kind of slavery controlled by scriptural teaching was a blessing to both employer and employee and was a rewarding and fulfilling relation between them." [John MacArthur, Ephesians {commentary on 6:5-8}, Libronix Digital Library]

By t/time we get to t/NT (and the New Covenant), we've moved o/s t/scope of a theocracy & t/application of t/gospel resulting in transformed hearts eventually transformed society.

8. While the Bible didn't outright forbid slavery, it was Christianity that abolished it

MacArthur writes ==>

"Where Christ's love is lived in the power of His Spirit, unjust barriers and relationships are inevitably broken down. As the Roman empire disintegrated and eventually collapsed, the brutal, abused system of slavery collapsed with it—due in great measure to the influence of Christianity. In more recent times the back of the black slave trade was broken in Europe and America due largely to the powerful, Spirit-led preaching of such men as John Wesley and George Whitefield and the godly statesmanship of such men as William Wilberforce and William Pitt." [John MacArthur, Ephesians {commentary on 6:5-8}, Libronix Digital Library]

a. The NT nowhere commends slavery

It's not rooted in t/created order, as marriage is. God ordained marriage & he ordained t/headship of husband over wife. Slavery was a by-product of sin, not God's holiness. [cf. Schreiner, page 136]

The NT regulates an existing practice with an eye toward its abolition person by person, heart by heart over a period of time.

Writing in t/1800s, t/great Scottish Baptist expositor, Alexander Maclaren: "The institution of slavery was one of the greatest blots on ancient civilization. It was twice cursed, cursing both parties, degrading each, turning the slave into a chattel, and the master, in many cases, into a brute. Christianity, as represented in the New Testament, never says a word to condemn it, but Christianity has killed it. . . . Do not aim at institutions, change the people that

live under them and you change them. Girdle the tree and it will die, and save you the trouble of felling it. But not only does Christianity never condemn slavery, though it was in dead antagonism to all its principles, and could not possibly survive where its principles were accepted, but it also takes this essential immoral relation and finds a soul of goodness in the evil thing, which serves to illustrate the relation between God and man, between Christ and us."

[Maclaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture: The Epistles of St. Peter and St. John, 215]

That's the point. "Do not aim at institutions, change the people that live under them and you change them."

b. This whole issue dovetails right into what we studied in the last section as it related to civil obedience

It would have been contrary to t/spirit of t/New Covenant, not to mention impractical, for t/NT writers to demand that all masters release their slaves & all slaves rebel against their masters if they fail to do so.

Biblical Xnty is not about being subversive; it's not about anarchy.

(1) Attempts at insurrection would have been fresh in the minds of Peter's readers

The Romans had put down slave revolts in Sicily several times in t/first c. BC. In 73 BC a great slave revolt broke out against the Romans that lasted nearly 2 yrs. That was t/famous Gladiatorial War, called so because it was led by an escaped slave & gladiator, Spartacus.

Spartacus gathered together a large band of fellow slaves, & led them in overrunning most of S. Italy. Their # eventually grew to 90,000. They were soundly defeated in 71 BC by 2 of Rome's outstanding generals, Marcus Licinius Crassus & Pompey==> 1000s were killed. [Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia, 1998]

No ancient slave war was ever successful. [so Keener, 714]

Forgive me for being so pedantic this AM.

"[The overthrow of slavery] was completely unrealistic for the fledgling New Testament church in the Roman Empire. The young churches would be fighting the consensus of the Greco-Roman world, and hence any such attempt would be doomed to futility. Why was there not criticism of the practice? Again we must remember that New Testament documents address readers in the situation in which they live. Railing against slavery would not be of any help to ordinary Christians, for, as noted, the dissolution of slavery was out of the question. Furthermore, New Testament writers were not social revolutionaries (cf. 1 Cor. 17:17-24). They did not believe that overhauling social structures would transform culture. Their concern was the relationship of individuals to God and they focused on the sin and rebellion of individuals against their Creator. . . . If enough individuals are transformed, of course, society as a whole benefits and the Christian faith begins to function as a leavening influence. . . . History demonstrates the impact of Christian faith on social structures. One of the consequences under Christian influence, was the eradication of slavery."

[Schreiner, 136]

9. Jesus Christ Brought Value to the Lives of Slaves

1000s of slaves, like Onesimus in Philemon, found worth & freedom in JC in spite of t/fact that they remained in slavery.

1 Corinthians 7:21-22 **Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.** IOW - You may think you're free but you're not - you're X's slave; you may think you're a slave, but you're not, you're free in X.

That's t/paradox of t/whole thing. Each one of us is free & yet none of us is as we are all bondservants of JC (that's where true freedom really is).

I. Servants are to submit themselves to their masters (18)

Servants, submit yourselves to your masters with all fear. Not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are perverse.

Preview . . .

I. Servants are to submit themselves to their masters (18)

We will finish this point next week.

II. God blesses us when we suffer well (19-20)

III. We have been sovereignly called by God to suffer well (21-25) Four ways we can be satisfied in suffering . . .

A. We can be satisfied in suffering because Christ suffered for us (21b)

B. We can be satisfied in suffering because Christ left us a living example (21c-23)

C. We can be satisfied in suffering because Christ died for us (24)

D. We can be satisfied in suffering because Christ is shepherd over our souls (25)

I'm looking forward to moving ahead . . .