

The Sanctifying Power of the Cross

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[0:00] And this is what he says in his first epistle, chapter 2, verse 18. Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it?

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats.

Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree. So that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

[1:14] By his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray. But now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

For this fellowship meal with our Savior. Thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ and to make them real to us.

And so we ask Holy Spirit that you would take us back to that green hill far away. Outside of Jerusalem's wall where our Lord Jesus was crucified to save us.

And make him more precious to us. And send us away with greater love for him who has loved us to the death. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Be seated.

A diamond sparkles from any angle that you look at it from. And so is the cross of Christ. And it never wears out in terms of how we look at it. We always see something new.

[2:15] Something fresh. Something glorious. And we're going to be taking another look at the Savior's cross this evening. And I trust we'll see something of its sanctifying power tonight in our lives.

Our text tonight is just really one verse. Verse 24 of 1 Peter 2. There's really just two parts to the verse.

It's what Jesus did for us and then why Jesus did this for us. So let's look first at what Jesus did for us. It says he himself bore our sins in his body to the tree.

The translation accurately reflects the emphasis that's being made in the verse. It's he himself. He his own self. In other words, Peter's saying it was none other than him.

And you follow it back to verse 21 and you see it's Christ that he's speaking of here. None other than the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed of God.

[3:36] And so we're meant to be struck by who it is that hung on the tree. Because it was an accursed tree. As Deuteronomy said, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.

And so if we understand anything of who he is and what this tree is, we wonder what is someone like him doing in a place like this? He is the eternal son of God now here on earth in a real body.

He is the sinless son of God who is tempted in every way like us and yet without sin. And now here he is nailed to a tree. A tree for cursed people.

Look, there's one on his right and one on his left. Cursed criminals who deserve what they're getting. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

It was he himself. It was no Old Testament Levitical priest coming with another, yet another animal as an offering for sin.

[4:41] To bear sin. No, it's he himself. He offers himself. He is the sin bearer. There were times, weren't there, in the Bible when we read of the Lord sending a man to accomplish some important task for him.

When his people needed to be brought out of Egypt, he sent Moses to bring them out. When they needed deliverance from the Midianites, he sent Gideon. When the Ninevites needed to be warned of impending judgment, he sent Jonah.

But when the sins of his people needed to be atoned for, he himself takes in hand to accomplish it. This was no task for mere men.

There were other times in the Bible that we read of him sending angels to accomplish his purposes. When Daniel is thrown into a lion's den.

It's an angel that is sent to keep the lion's mouths closed. And when Lot and his family need to get out of Sodom before the brimstone falls, it's two angels sent to whisk them out of the city.

[5:59] When Peter was locked up in prison and awaiting execution at the hands of King Herod. It was an angel that was sent to break open the prison and set him free.

But when our sin and guilt brought us under God's wrath and made us ripe for hell, he himself, the Lord of glory, comes and personally undertakes the work himself.

He saw me plunged in deep distress. He flew to my relief. For me he bore the shameful cross and carried all my grief.

He himself bore our sins. There was no angel in heaven that could do it. None but God could bear this awful load. You remember in the garden three times Jesus prayed, If it be possible, Father, let this cup pass from me.

But heaven's silence meant that it was not possible in any other way for the sins of his people to be atoned for. Indeed, if some angel or any of the fallen sons of Adam could have done it, God would not have sacrificed his own son.

[7:14] But as we just sang, there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.

So he himself bore our sins because he alone was qualified to die as a substitute in our place. And note, believers, it was our sins that he bore.

Peter is writing to the elect of God, strangers in the world scattered throughout the Roman Empire. And he says it was our sins he bore.

Notice how Peter includes his own sins. We know of some of them because we have them recorded in the Bible. So we remember Galatians chapter 2 and how Peter of all men, who had had the sheet let down three times and told to rise and kill and eat and not to call anything unclean that God has called clean.

And yet, that Peter. We find that before the Jews from Jerusalem had come down to Antioch, Peter was hobnobbing and eating with the Gentile believers just fine, sitting at table with them.

[8 : 26] But then when these Judaizers from Jerusalem came to town, he separated himself from the Gentile believers. And his hypocrisy was such a stumbling stone that Paul had to rebuke him publicly to his face.

And then there was countless times when he spoke when he shouldn't have. He didn't know what to say, so he just said what came to his mouth.

And even idle words are sinful words. He rebuked the Son of God. This will never happen to you, he said to Jesus.

This dying, that won't happen to you. And then, of course, there was his arrogance in saying that, I love you, Lord, more than all these other disciples.

They might abandon you, but never me. And then we remember his three times saying he didn't even know Jesus. And taking the very holy name of God, calling down curses on himself if he did know him.

[9 : 32] Misusing the name of the Lord. Yes, Peter says, he himself bore our sins. Our sins. Be gone with this idea of Peter as the sinless pope.

Our sins. I am a sinner. I need a Savior. And this one, Jesus Christ, he himself bore our sins. And brothers and sisters, we will never enter into the wonder of Calvary unless we see our sins there.

Unless you see your sins there tonight. Unless I see my sins. Those sins which I am so embarrassed of that if I knew that you knew them, I would go and hide.

My sins of thought and motive and word and deed. Sins of omission. Things that I should have done that I left undone. Things that I did that I shouldn't have done.

Sins of youth. Sins of yesterday. Sins of today. Sins of tomorrow. Sins that would have sunk me into unspeakable torments of hell forever. As we sing, my sin.

[10 : 40] Not in part, but the whole. Was nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. And why do I bear it no more? Because he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

Now that's something Isaiah says two times in chapter 53. That precious chapter on the cross of Christ. He says, By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many and he will bear their iniquities.

And again, Therefore I will give him a portion among the great. I will reward him, Jehovah says, for he bore the sin of many. He bore our sins.

Not just all my sins. Not just all your sins. But all the sins of all his people. Of all times and places. No wonder he staggered.

As he looked into the cup of God's wrath that was to be drunk for our sins. It's the language of sacrifice.

[11 : 44] This idea of bearing sin. So here comes an Old Testament Israelite. And he sinned against God and he is now repentant and he is seeking forgiveness from God.

So he's brought a sacrificial lamb. And he lays his hands upon the head of the animal. And confesses his sins upon his head.

Symbolically transferring his sin and guilt upon the head of the sacrificial animal. So that he no longer bears them.

Now they're being born by this lamb. And then the lamb is treated as he deserves. And he goes free. He bore the sin.

Our sin. So on Calvary there was a real transfer of sin. Our sins were transferred. Our sins were laid on Jesus.

[12:42] The spotless lamb of God. He bore them all and freed us from the accursed load. And so he stumbled under the load of the cross. But even heavier than the cross was the load of sin that he bore on the tree.

It was our sins. And the cross makes no sense apart from sin. And if we're to glory in the cross tonight as we are we must remember our sins.

Never was a heavier burden carried than when the Father laid on him the iniquities of us all. And he having those sins placed upon them bore them to the place of punishment.

The cross. The only other place besides hell where sin is effectively punished and done away with. There was hell to pay for our sins and Jesus paid it all.

Hell came to Calvary that day as he bore our sins in his body on the tree. And so the curse of God fell upon him. Christ was in for us.

[13:51] He was our substitute. He had gone in for us into the place of punishment bearing our sin and so he got what we had coming what we would have experienced for all eternity the full punishment for our sins the darkness the outer darkness the forsakenness by God the wrath of God unspeakable sufferings of body and soul.

There was infinite wrath in the cup for him to drink. You know our sin was an infinite offense because it was against an infinite God.

That's what makes sin so serious. It's not just against another like us it's against God our maker the infinite one.

And so infinite wrath must be suffered to satisfy for our sins against him. Well that would take a finite being like you and me for all eternity to atone for that infinite offense and we would never get done atoning.

We would never pay the last farthing. We would ever be drinking the cup of wrath and never reach the bottom. The cup of infinite wrath is as bottomless as the pit of hell itself and we'd never get to the end of punishment.

[15:13] That's why hell is forever. But in three hours in one afternoon he drank the cup to the dregs and salvation was accomplished.

It is finished he's able to cry in triumph. It is finished. Now who can satisfy the demands of infinite wrath in three hours?

Only a sacrifice of infinite worth. It was the infinite Son of God. the eternal one. And he bore our sins.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree. So we've come tonight to remember what he did with humility, with love, and with wonder.

But then secondly we see that this verse also tells us why Jesus did this for us. what was the purpose result? What was the aim in view?

[16:09] What was the end result of why he would bear our sins in his body on the tree? Well there are many right answers that could be given from the Bible and you know many of them.

He did it to save us that we might not perish but have everlasting life. He did it to pacify God's wrath so that God's wrath and justice would be perfectly satisfied.

He did it to reconcile us to God making peace by his blood so that we're right with God. He did it to forgive our sins. He did it to free us from Satan's tyranny and power.

It's a great salvation Hebrews talks about. So great a salvation and yes Jesus bore Jesus bore our sins in his body on the tree for all these reasons and more but that's not what Peter says here and I want you to see what he says here in verse 24 he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that there's the purpose so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness by his wounds you have been healed.

There's a so that to Jesus cross a purpose for which he died for us and it's this he died so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness.

[17:38] That's the end result that was accomplished for everyone for whom Jesus died that having died to sin's reigning power we might now live for righteousness.

You know you are serving one or the other master. You're either serving sin or righteousness and we're all born serving sin. We are its willing slave but we are its slave no less.

We are under its bondage its rule its power we had no strength of our own just to say no to sin and yes to righteousness. We had said with everything in our being no to God and his righteousness and yes to sin.

But Jesus died. He bore our sins believers. He bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we having died to sin might now live for righteousness.

And that's a reality that is true for everyone for whom he died. There is a sanctifying power in the cross. It's much the same of what Paul says in Romans 6 when he speaks of the believer being united to Christ joined to Christ so that when he died we died.

[18:48] His death is counted our death and his resurrection to newness of life is counted as our resurrection to newness of life. So shall we continue in sin so that grace might abound?

God forbid. How can we who have died to sin live any more for it? We can't. This is impossible because when we're joined to Christ we have died to sin that we might now live for righteousness.

And that's what Peter is saying here. The same thing that Paul is saying in Romans chapter 6. We're set free from the old master. Sin will not have dominion over us anymore.

Why? Because Jesus died. And when he died I died to sin's rule. I don't have to obey it anymore. I now have a new power to say no to sin and yes to righteousness.

We're under the reign and power of grace. We're now alive to God. We have a new heart and daily supplies of grace to live for righteousness. We now hunger and thirst for righteousness.

[19:51] That's true of everyone in the kingdom of Christ. as he says in the Beatitudes. How do you know the people who are in the kingdom of God? Well they hunger and thirst for righteousness.

We live for righteousness whereas we once lived for sin. We now seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And that was the purpose for which Jesus bore our sins in his body to the tree.

It's not only Peter who says that. As we said Paul says much the same in Romans chapter 6. He speaks the same way in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 14 and 15.

Let me read those verses for you. For Christ's love compels us because we're convinced that one died for all and therefore all died. all those for whom Christ died died.

One for all and all died. When Jesus died they died. You see we're joined to Jesus we too died to sin. and he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

[21:09] Again we're just seeing that the great dying act of Christ's love on Calvary has a power to break the bondage of sin and compels us it holds us in his grip and it controls us such that we no longer live for ourselves for sin but we now live for righteousness for him who died and was raised to life.

Paul says the same in Titus 2 when speaking of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ in verse 14 he says who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness that's living for sin and to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good.

Why did Jesus give himself for us on the cross? Titus 2:14 says not just to forgive us our sins and to take us to heaven when we die yes that but far more to redeem us that is to set us free from sin's power by the price of the ransom.

He died to actually free us from continuing in a lifestyle of wickedness of sin and to make us a purified people of his own who are eager to do what's good and what's right here and now to say no to wickedness and yes to godliness.

You see this is not imputed righteousness this is imparted righteousness and both are taught in the scriptures. By faith in Jesus we have his righteousness imputed to our account in heaven but through the death of Jesus he also died so that we might have righteousness imparted into our hearts by the work of his spirit set free from sin that we might now live for righteousness.

[22:58] Imputed imparted righteousness both are emphasized throughout the gospel it's the sanctifying effect of cross upon our very hearts and lives.

He died that we might be forgiven imputed righteousness he died to make us good imparted righteousness. righteousness. So by the death of Christ on the cross we died to sin that we might now live for righteousness to which Peter adds by his wounds you have been healed for you were like sheep going astray but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

He's clearly drawing heavily upon Isaiah 53 by his wounds we have been healed. Healed from what? Well from the straying heart because we all like sheep have gone astray Isaiah says and that's what Peter is saying here in verse 25 you were all like sheep going astray he's thinking of that text but now something's happened you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls we didn't like the shepherd we sing that song I did not like my shepherd's voice I would not be controlled I didn't like his fold and I left and I wandered off why?

why do we have wandering feet? because we have wayward hearts we have wayward hearts hearts that are always going astray from God and going our way going sin's way going the world's way going the devil's way know how we needed to be healed from a wayward heart and Isaiah says and Peter quotes it by his wounds you have been healed you have been healed what strange medicine he's wounded and I'm healed he's wounded I'm healed he takes the terrible medicine the cup of God's wrath and I'm healed healed from what?

from my wayward heart Hosea chapter 14 verse 4 I will heal their waywardness and love them freely for my wrath has turned away from them there is the healing of a wayward heart accomplished by the cross of Jesus by which we have died to sin that we might live for righteousness for you were like sheep going astray but now you've returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls now I love my shepherd's voice I love I love his fold you see why because Jesus bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live for righteousness now pastor Jason has been preaching through the book of Joshua on Sunday night and recently in chapter 8 we saw that the people were gathered together at different times to renew the covenant that God had made with the

[26:12] Israelites at Mount Sinai and that that covenant renewal there were sacrifices that were to be made there was the reading of the law in which they recommitted themselves to the law of the covenant that was set before them and then there was the eating with joy in the presence of their covenant Lord joyful fellowship with him that old covenant was to be renewed every seven years Deuteronomy 31:10 tells us they would have a covenant renewal ceremony and they were to gather together the children everyone in Israel and they were to have sacrifices burnt offerings fellowship offerings and then they would have the reading of the law and then they were to eat in the presence of their gracious covenant Lord recommitting themselves to the covenant that was made with him at Sinai well now we're here tonight to remember a different covenant a new covenant a better covenant

Hebrews says far better covenant a covenant of which Jesus is the mediator of this covenant a better covenant founded on better promises established by a better sacrifice of richer blood than the old covenant even the blood of Christ shed on the cross this is a covenant renewal ceremony that we're coming to tonight we're remembering that new covenant in Jesus blood we're remembering what it costs in order for us to enter into this relationship in which God says you are now my people and I am now your God and I will write my law upon your heart and your minds and put it in your heart and you all will know me you will experience a relationship with me and your sins will be remembered no more those are the promises of the new covenant and it was all secured for us through Jesus blood and so on the night that Jesus was arrested there in the upper room he sets aside he eats the

Passover meal for the last time with his disciples and then he institutes the new covenant ceremony the new covenant meal the Lord's supper by which we will keep on remembering the Lord's death until he comes we'll keep remembering the blood of the new covenant and what it costs to bring us into this relationship with God in which his law is on our hearts and we know him as our God and we're his people and our sins are blotted out and remembered no more so we stand before the elements of that new covenant the bread reminding us of the body given for us the juice reminding us of the blood of the new covenant that was shed for us and we give ourselves afresh to him we renew our commitment to be his people to walk in his laws to gladly serve him and so it is that Peter says he died that we might die to sin and live for righteousness let's remember that tonight as we come to remember our Lord's death as we renew the covenant we determine afresh to die to sin and live for righteousness because of what Jesus has done for us

Spurgeon says nothing is so killing to sin as a believing look at Christ crucified and that's why Jesus wants us to do this over and over until he comes so that we will consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God and live for righteousness the sight of Christ on the cross is meant to make us hate our sin what was it that slew our blessed Lord well it was our sin wasn't it it was you my sins Spurgeon had a had a meditation on the cross in which he asked that question what was it that slew our blessed Lord it was our sin it was you my sins my cruel sins and when we discover that our iniquities put our dearest and best friend to death we vow revenge against our iniquities and hence forth hate them with a perfect hatred again

Spurgeon let me illustrate this very simply here's a knife with a richly carved ivory handle a knife of excellent workmanship yonder woman we will suppose has had a dear child murdered by a cruel enemy this knife is hers she's pleased with it and prizes it much how can I make her throw this knife away I can do it easily for this is the knife with which her child was killed look at it there's blood still on the handle she drops it as though it were a scorpion she cannot bear it put it away she says it killed my child oh hateful thing now sin is such a thing that we play with until we are told it was sin that killed the Lord Jesus who died out of love to us pure self sacrificing love then we say hateful thing get you gone how can

[32:18] I endure you see there the wounds of the son of God behold the crimson stains which mark his blessed body mark the thorn crown gazed upon the pierced hands weep over the nailed feet see the deep gash which the lance made in his side sin did this cruel work this bloody deed down with our sins away with them drag them to the cross lay them at calvary let not one of them escape for they are the murderers of Christ he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree it was our sins that put him there therefore let us hate our sins let us be dead to sin and live for righteousness that's the so that of the cross that we've looked at tonight from 1st Peter 2:24 let's sing of that in number 192 we sing of our savior stricken smitten and afflicted and know that it was he himself none other than the son of

God dying and it's here that we gain a true hatred for sin and want to be done with it and to live for righteousness 192 holy