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I Peter 2:21-25

21. “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

22. WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

23. and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

24. and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

25. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

Note first of all, that this passage is written to Christians specifically. When verse 24 says, “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,”--He means the sins committed by a Christian. And when the Scripture says, “For by His wounds you were healed,”--he’s talking about Christians being healed.

In the King James Version, the word “stripes” is used instead of “wounds,” and so reads: “By whose stripes ye

were healed.” For those who have seen the film “The Passion of Christ,” the word “stripes” probably brings a very vivid picture to mind regarding the scourging of Jesus. The whip marks on Jesus’ body are a testimony to the price paid for our sins. Each blow of the rod, each sting of the whip represents one of our sins.

For this reason, God takes our sins--as Christians--very personally. When we sin, it is like a whip laid across His Son’s back, or ripping around His chest. For this reason we must take His call to holiness very seriously. Therefore: “You shall be holy, for I am holy,” God says in I Peter 1:16.

As this morning’s Scripture teaches, Jesus bore our sins in His body “that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.”

Christians are to die to sin. God’s purpose for Jesus’ suffering and dying for us, is to empower us to stop sinning. That’s what the phrase “die to sin” means.

Many today say this can’t be done--and in so declaring they are denying the Savior Who purchased their redemption with His own blood. In many, many cases I have found that people who sincerely believe they can’t overcome sin in their lives have never obeyed the gospel, and so don’t have the power to overcome. Many of these people don’t even know the Biblical definition of “the gospel” of Jesus Christ as stated in the Word of God.

But even more important than dying to sin, I Peter 2:24 says that Christians are to “live to righteousness.”

This is the resurrection part of the gospel. We are raised up by the Father to walk as resurrected men and women; in newness of life.

Ephesians 4:25-32 gives several examples of life changes that must be made: liars are to speak truth, thieves are to go to work and become generous givers, scoffers are to become encouragers, and the angry are to become kind.

So the suffering and death of Jesus was to radically change our lives--my life and your life. Just as Jesus' suffering and death on the cross would be senseless without the resurrection, so our being forgiven of our sin is vain if we do not follow-up with holy lives. We must die to sin, and live our lives to righteousness in His sight.

