

The Sufferings Of Christ

Introduction. Right after Peter made his confession of Jesus as the Son of God in the region of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus began to teach His disciples that He would suffer and die (Luke 9:22, 44).

We are going to examine, in John 18-19, the sufferings of Christ at the hands of men. The chilling fact is that many of the attitudes that allowed Christ to be put to death can still reside within us even though we are children of God. It is necessary then to identify and purge these so that we can be upright before our Lord.

I. Betrayed By The Hypocritical (John 18:5)

- A. He who accompanied Christ and shared the fellowship of His disciples, now takes his stand among His enemies and lends his influence to His downfall.
- B. In John 6:64-71, the Lord knew there would be one who would betray Him. He was identified by John as Judas. In John 12:6, it was stated that Judas carried the “bag” or the collection for the disciples. He furthermore was described as a “thief” in this passage. In John 13:2, Satan entered the heart of Judas and in vv. 21-30, Jesus again said that one would betray Him. Judas sold the Lord for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:13-16; cp. Zechariah 11:12).
- C. The Lord pronounced seven woes on the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23, mentioning hypocrisy numerous times. The New Testament teaches us to be without hypocrisy (Luke 12:1; 2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Timothy 1:5; Titus 1:16). We cannot “play the part” when it comes to God or our brethren.

II. Defended By The Passionate (John 18:10)

- A. The Lord had as little need for Peter’s passion as for his sword. The wrath of man works not for the praise of God.
- B. The Lord’s zeal was demonstrated when He cleansed the temple (John 2:17). But there is a zeal for Christ and His cause that must be more painful than pleasing to Him. Zeal without knowledge is damning (Romans 10:2). Paul had a zeal for God and the Law, yet he was wrong (Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:6).
- C. The zeal of many “religious” people today consumes them. But they are so far off into error that they cannot see the true nature of the Lord and His church. Their zeal has blinded them to the limits of God’s will.

III. Smitten By The Unreasonable (John 18:23)

- A. It is easier for pride and prejudice to sneer and to smite than to face the truth. Self-seeking men are always ready to justify themselves even if it means striking the character of the Savior. But the clouds that occasionally hide the face of the sun cannot hinder its progress.
- B. In Isaiah 53:4-5, the prophet stated that the Lord would be “stricken”, “smitten”, “afflicted”, “wounded”, “bruised”, and “chastised” all for us (cp. Psalm 22:14-18). Furthermore, His “wounds” would heal us from our sins. To think that the innocent Lamb of God underwent this cruel and inhumane treatment should anger us. But when one considers that this was purely for our benefit, it should

humble us and make us want to obey (Acts 8:35-36) or make us that much more devoted if we have already obeyed (Colossians 3:1-4).

IV. Denied By The Cowardly (John 18:25-27)

- A. The Lord prophesied that Peter would fall away (Luke 22:31-32). Peter denied that he would leave the Lord's side (Luke 22:33). Jesus then told Peter that he would deny his Lord three times before the cock crew twice (Luke 22:34; cp. Mark 14:30). Peter wept bitterly when the prophecy came true (Matthew 26:75).
- B. The Lord and His cause still suffers through the cowardice of His professed followers. Those who are too cowardly to stand up for Jesus to anyone deny Him (Matthew 26:56). Those who are too cowardly to stand up to false doctrine will have their reward (Revelation 21:8). Those who have a profession of godliness that have conformed to the world more than with the Bible have denied Him (Romans 12:1-2; cp. Hebrews 10:23).

V. Shunned By The Self-Righteous (John 18:28)

- A. The Jews had to preserve their supposed ceremonial holiness. The Praetorium was the Roman headquarters in Jerusalem. As a dwelling place of the Gentiles, it was unclean. Considering that they would kill the innocent Son of God but would not go into a Gentile dwelling demonstrates their foul hypocrisy.
- B. In Luke 18:11-12, a Pharisee was concerned with only what he had done above others (cp. Matthew 23:24). While I may have control over a lot of temptation, I had better not become self-righteous (Proverbs 16:18; Romans 1:22; 1 Corinthians 10:12). An old proverb says, "The smallest package I ever saw was a man wrapped up wholly in himself." Eugene Peterson wrote, "The greatest errors in the spiritual life are not committed by the novices but by the adepts."

VI. Questioned By The Selfish (John 18:33, 38; 19:9)

- A. Pilate asked these questions and profited nothing by them. By such questions Christ was "oppressed and afflicted," so He "opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). In allowing the Lord to be crucified in spite of His innocence, Pilate showed his willingness to sacrifice truth to accomplish his own selfish goals (John 19:4, 6). He gave in to the crowd rather than damage his career.
- B. Men animated by selfish and impure motives still oppress Him. Selfishness can cause us to not obey the gospel. It can cause us to be unfaithful to Christ. It can cause us to treat others unrighteously. The scriptures contain various warnings against selfishness (Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 10:24; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:4). Some examples of selfish behavior would be the Gadites and Reubenites (Numbers 32:6) and the early Christians (Philippians 2:20-21). On the other hand, some examples of unselfishness would be Gideon (Judges 8:22-23), Jonathan (1 Samuel 23:17-18), and, of course, Jesus (Romans 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Philippians 2:5-8).

VII. Mocked By The Frivolous (John 19:2)

- A. These men of war treated the Prince of Peace with contempt (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 23:11). To them the kingdom of Caesar is everything, but the kingdom of God is

nothing; material possessions are everything, but spiritual matters are worthy of mocking and scorn. They were not serious about the most important One who ever lived kneeling before them.

- B. Those who do not treat the Lord with respect do not know what they do (Revelation 1:10-18). Will you mock the Savior? Will you treat Him with contempt? The Lord will judge those who have trodden underfoot the Son of God (Hebrews 10:29-31). We do this when we fall away and become hardened. It is like we crucify Jesus all over again (Hebrews 6:6).

Conclusion. Which one will you be? If you have any of these attitudes in you, then you need to get rid of them! The suffering of crucifixion made Christ the perfect sacrifice and the perfect “propitiation through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:25). If you have the faith to obey Christ’s gospel today or if you have the faith to come up and return to God, we pray you will while we sing our invitation song.