

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 4/4/93
I Peter 1:10-16 "The Pain and Gain of the Christian Life"

Intro:

Illust: Several years ago, when I was a teenager, I developed an in-grown toenail on my big toe. I was miserable. Putting a bandaid on it didn't help. I realized I needed to see a doctor. As I lay on the examining table, Dr. Wise came in. He looked at it, then looked at me, and said, "I could numb this but the shot would probably hurt as much as what I'm going to do anyway..." I knew I was in trouble! He took a pointed, surgical instrument, stuck the end of it under my toenail, and yanked the nail out of its in-grown position. I thought I was going to go through the roof.

As much as I hated to admit it, I learned something that day. PAIN and GAIN often go hand in hand. What Dr. Wise was painful initially, but his goal was healing. A bandaid wouldn't do. Salve wouldn't do. He had to inflict some temporary and momentary pain. The pain resulted in great gain.

Q: Did you know that pain and gain go together in the Christian life?

This Friday is Good Friday. Why do we call Good Friday "good"? Certainly in human terms it was the worst day in the life of Jesus Christ. He was mocked. He was beaten. He was scourged by treacherous Roman soldiers. Calloused men drove spikes through His hands and feet to attach Him to a splintery cross. It was on Good Friday that the perfect, sinless Son of God took the weight of our wretched sins upon Himself. He suffered the eternal consequences for our disobedience. On Good Friday, Jesus Christ took our hell.

Q: Why do we call Good Friday "good"?

I Pt 3:18 "For Christ also once suffered for sins...that He might bring us to God."

It was for OUR good that the Savior went to the cross. His PAIN resulted in our GAIN. His suffering resulted in great glory!

It's no different in the Christian life. Living for Christ involves both pain and gain.

Objection: "How can that be? How can suffering and glory go together? Isn't suffering an evidence that God's Plan has gone haywire?"

That's the question God answers for us this morning as we turn to I Peter 1.

Proposition: In I Peter 1:10-16, Peter addresses the issue of the relationship between suffering and glory in our salvation.

I. The Explanation (10-12)

- A. The Old Testament Prophets prophesied (10-11).
- B. The Church must preach (12a).
- C. The Angels ponder (12b).

II. The Exhortation (13-16)

- A. Be holy in our Thinking (13).
- B. Be holy in our Living (14-16).

Let's set the stage for our study. Peter was an apostle of Jesus Christ (1). He followed Jesus for 3 years, and then was commissioned to take the good news of Christ to the world. He did just that. By about 30 years later, the church of Jesus Christ had impacted the world of the Roman Empire. Not everyone was supportive. Namely Nero, the Emperor of the world. In the mid 60's AD, Nero started a smear campaign against Christians. As a result, the church endured great affliction. Many were forced to leave their houses, their businesses. Some even would lose their lives.

Peter wrote I Peter to these suffering Christians. He reminded them of their God-given identity. They were sojourners (1).

Q: What was the first thing Peter addressed for these hurting Christians?

A: In vv 3-12, Peter charged them to learn to live with the right perspective.

This section is a benediction. If we're going to live as Christians in a non-Christian world, we need to learn to bless God. For what? For our salvation, which involves 3 facets:

1. God is to be blessed for what He did for us in the past (3a).
2. God is to be blessed for what He will do for us in the future (3b-5).
3. God is to be blessed for what He is doing for us in the present (6-9).

Q: How do we reconcile the fact that Christians suffer? Isn't suffering evidence that God's salvation is deficient?

A: No. That's the issue Peter tackles for us in vv 10-12.

I. The Explanation (10-12)

V 10 "Of which salvation"

If I said to you, "Tell me about your salvation experience." What would you do? You'd tell me about the day you received Christ into your life. A past experience. That's great! But we tend to think of "salvation" only in the past tense.

Remember, when Peter uses the term "salvation," he has in mind something broader than the conversion experience. Salvation involves both a past event and future event.

v 5 "unto salvation ready to be revealed"

v 9 "receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls"

Q: Does the fact that we are "saved" mean we'll always understand "why"?

A: Certainly not. We're not the first ones who have struggled...

A. The Old Testament Prophets prophesied (10-11).

V 10 "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired..."

The prophets were God's spokesmen to the Israelites. Men like Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and others. These men gave us the Old Testament scriptures. But notice something about how these men gave us the OT.

1. The prophets inquired and searched diligently (10).

The doctrine of inspiration does not mean that God dictated His Word to passive men, who then wrote down the words they heard. Now God did use dictation at times. But quite often, He used the personality of the prophets. That's why when you read Jeremiah it sounds so different from Amos which is different from Haggai. These were different men. They had different vocabularies and styles.

But don't get the idea that the OT is the mere product of creative men.

2. The prophets were guided by the Spirit of Christ (11).

V 11 "Searching what, or what manner...the Spirit of Christ..."

In his second letter, Peter explains in greater detail about inspiration.

II Pt 1:20-21 "Knowing this first, that no prophecy is of private interpretation..."

Q: Did the prophets have a complete understanding of what they wrote?

A: No they didn't. In fact, Peter says they were baffled and puzzled.

About what? Three things...

1. God's Grace

V 10 "...who prophesied of the grace that should come to you."

We tend to have a small view of "grace." Grace was no static concept for Peter. In fact, when Peter got to the end of this letter do you know what he said?

5:12 "I have written...that this is the true grace of God."

I Peter is all about grace. What's more when Peter finished his second letter, he said, "But grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior (II Pt 3:18)."

The OT is filled with the anticipation that God would one day extend His unmerited favor, His grace, upon His people. The prophets prophesied of that grace.

2. God's Timetable concerning the Messiah

One truth resounds time and again in the OT. The prophets announced that God would send His Messiah. That Messiah would come to bring salvation to His people.

Here are some examples:

Dt 18:15 "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee."

Ps 2:2 "The kings of the earth set themselves...against the Lord and His anointed."

Isa 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me...to proclaim liberty to the captives."

But how would He do it? That's what caused the prophets to scratch their heads in amazement. Peter says they "inquired and searched" (10). What puzzled them the most? God's Timetable. V 11 "searching what, or what manner of time..." The prophets were baffled by the chronology of the Messiah's coming.

Take Daniel for example...

God: 12:4 "Shut up the words, and seal the book to the time of the end."

Daniel: 12:6 "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?"

Daniel: 12:8 "And I heard, but I understood not..."

God: 12:9 "Go thy way Daniel, for the words are closed till the time..."

3. The Relationship between the Suffering and Glory of the Messiah
V 11 "when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory..."

Here's what the prophets couldn't grasp. They saw the sufferings of the Messiah. And they saw His glory. But they couldn't fathom how the two were connected. How did the pain relate to the gain?

eg--Isa 52:13 "Behold, my servant shall...be exalted and extolled."

eg--Isa 52:14 "As many were astounded at thee--his visage was marred"

Warren Wiersbe describes this tension, "The OT believers looked ahead by faith, and saw, as it were, two mountain peaks: Mount Calvary, where Messiah suffered and died (Isa 53), and Mount Olivet, where He will return in glory (Zech 14:4). They could not see the valley in between, the present age of the church." (395)

That was one of the biggest hangups the first-century Jews had with Jesus. When Jesus came to earth, the Jews were waiting for a military Messiah, someone who would break the yoke of the Romans, and set up an earthly kingdom. They longed to see David's Kingdom restored to Israel.

The chronology baffled them.

Let me ask you. What would you say?

Q: Why did Jesus suffer? Why did His suffering have to precede His glory?

A: Listen to what Jesus Himself said after His resurrection...

Lk 24:25-26 "O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter His glory?"

What'd Jesus say? His suffering had to precede His glory. Without the cross, there could be no Kingdom. No cross, no kingdom.

Why not? Listen. Our greatest problem is not economic or political. It's spiritual. Jesus Christ could not reign as King until He had dealt with our sin problem. And there was only one way for our sin problem to be solved. The Messiah had to suffer, in our place, on our behalf. There could be no gain apart from His pain.

Q: Have you come to grips with your spiritual need? Have you?

Illust:

Tran: The OT prophets prophesied of both the sufferings and glory of the Messiah.

B. The Church must preach (12a).

V 12 "Unto whom it was revealed...the things which are now reported unto you..."

We have a job to do. God told us to spread the news. The OT prophets prophesied of the coming suffering and glory of the Messiah. They looked ahead. We look back. And as we do, we must preach.

Did you notice God's method for communicating the message of salvation?

1. The prophets revealed His Word.
2. The church is to preach His Word.

You see, that's what the church is all about. It's our privilege and obligation to communicate to the world the message of Jesus' suffering and glory.

Illust:

Tran: The prophets prophesied. The church must preach. And all the while...

C. The Angels ponder (12b).

V 12 "which things the angels desire to look into"

I don't understand this very well. But it's true. God is educating the angels through His Church. Angels are not omnipresent. They are creatures. And they are curious creatures.

Q: About what are the angels curious?

A: I would suggest they ponder 2 things...

1. Angels ponder HOW God would save us.

Q: Pastor, why are you so serious when you preach? Why not tell stories...?

A: There's no room for triviality in preaching for 3 reasons. There are 3 audiences looking on even now...

--You are the audience. Your time is precious.

--There is an angelic audience.

I Cor 4:9 "...for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

God is educating His angels through the church.

--The greatest audience is God Himself.

2. Angels ponder WHY God would save us.

God's salvation is amazing, not only to us, but to the angels.

"look into" = to stoop over to look; the same word is used of Peter in Lk 24:12, when he stooped down and looked into the empty tomb of the Risen Christ. The verb is present tense, indicating that it's not merely a casual glance, but a longing look, a gaze, a pondering.

The angels are absolutely amazed at the salvation of God. Remember, they serve in the very presence of God. They look at us, and wonder, "Why would God have so loved rebellious people like us, that He would have become one of us, that He would suffered in our behalf? Why? Why would He save us?"

The angels ponder. And too, the angels rejoice...

Lk 15:10 "There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repents"

Illust: Michael Deiterich came to me Wednesday, "I trusted Jesus..."

Tran: So there's Peter's explanation. But in the Bible explanation naturally leads to exhortation. Doctrine always leads to duty. Our creed must always influence our conduct. And so Peter moves from words of explanation (10-12) to words of exhortation (13-16).

II. The Exhortation (13-16)

Peter explained that Christ's ministry involved both suffering and glory. Listen. It's no different for us. The Christian life involves both pain and gain. That's Peter's point.

1. We know the Gain will come in the future (3-5).
2. We know that Suffering is the norm for the present (6-12).

Q: Therefore, what's the appropriate response?

A: Holiness (13-16)

We devoted an entire message to vv 13-16 a month ago during our series on "The Holiness of Christ." We won't rehearse that study. We can sum up Peter's exhortation with one statement: Since we are the heirs of God's salvation, we are to be holy.

- A. Be holy in our Thinking (13).
- B. Be holy in our Living (14-16).

Conclusion:

Q: How can suffering and glory go together?

They did for Christ. And they do for the Christian as well. Notice again the vivid order in v 11.

V 11 "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory THAT SHOULD FOLLOW."

Glory follows. Do you know what our problem is? We want it now. We want heaven now. We want prosperity now. But that's not God's order. The pain precedes the gain. It is our privilege to suffer with Christ in this age, that we might be exalted with Him in the age to come.

O friends, we need to look to Jesus this morning. He endured suffering for us. The glory followed.

Q: Are you willing to suffer for Christ? Are you willing to trust your life totally to Him today? He loves you.

Illust: