

# CHRIST HAS JOINED OUR SUFFERING | PART I

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 19 December 2021

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

## Introduction

Good morning, everyone. We will start from the notes, 'Christ has joined our suffering' to focus towards the section that I'm going to speak from. For your information, I will start from page one. The heading there is, 'Our sin was laid on Christ.'

You will be able to see how this works in the example of Peter's life and the way that Christ has come alongside Peter, in relation to dealing with Peter's iniquity, and priesting to Peter his participation in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. We will speak about the priesthood of Christ.

## Christ learned priesthood

To orient us toward our content, turn to Philippians Chapter 2, where there is a verse that we know well. We often use it in understanding the Godhead model.

I will connect it to Christ's priesthood, and how He learned priesthood.

'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.' Php 2:5-6.

He did not grasp for equality nor consider equality with God a thing to be grasped. 'But He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.' Php 2:7-8.

## Two phases to Christ's obedience

So there are two phases of obedience that He entered as a man. He came as a son of man and became obedient; and then the cross was 'even the death of the cross'.

There was another element of death that He touched, which He became obedient in. We will turn now to Hebrews Chapter 5.

'So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You".' Heb 5:5.

We know that this refers to the Everlasting Covenant.

The Son emptied Himself to reveal the Father, and the Father emptied Himself to proclaim the word, through which the Son was born by the Spirit. He is Yahweh Son, who did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped. Rather, He humbled Himself and was born by the word of the Father. "You are My Son, today I have begotten You".

'As He also says in another place [or in relation to this Covenant initiative]: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek": who, in the days of His flesh [so, He has humbled Himself and become a man], in the days of His flesh, when He'd offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience.' Heb 5:6-8.

He became obedient, even to death, and even to the death of the cross.

## The death of the cross if a curse

When we refer to 'the death of the cross', we are referring to the death that is associated with a curse. When Jesus was crucified on the cross, He was hung on a tree.

This passage is outlined in the notes. 'Cursed is every man who hangs on a tree.' Deu 21:23. That is the specific death that Paul spoke about. 'He humbled Himself to the death, even the death of the cross.' Php 2:8.

Even the death by which He is experiencing the full implications of the curse on all of humanity. There is a progression here, and He learned it. So, what He learned, we are to learn from Him, as He comes alongside us. That is our premise.

## Understanding what Christ is learning

We will now 'walk through' these points and I will make some comments as we go.

We do need to take our time to understand what Christ learned, and how He teaches us, because He has compassion on us, and we need to understand how He expresses that compassion. It is not even that He 'feels sorry' for us. Rather, He has learned

what we are to learn, and then He priests to us a unique participation in what He suffered. That is the implication of His coming alongside us.

### **The death of the cross encompasses all the injuries of His offering journey**

We will start with this heading in the notes, 'Our sin was laid on Christ', and with our first dot point.

*Jesus Christ defined all of our sin and suffering in the seven wounding events that He endured for our sake.*

When He was lifted up on the cross - this was 'even the death of the cross' - everything that He suffered from Gethsemane through to when He was lifted up, was gathered up to the cross. So the death of the cross encompasses all of the injuries of that offering journey.

The blood that He shed in Gethsemane, the blood that was shed in the court of Caiaphas, the blood that was shed in the Praetorium - all of it was carried on His body up to the cross, where He was lifted up and cursed.

He defined all of our sin and suffering in the seven wounding events that He endured for our sake.

*The measure of our eternal death, both now and for eternity, was in the seven wounding judgements that befell Christ.*

This is the full and complete judgement that belongs to every person - every individual, and the whole of humanity. All of the sufferings of death that every person will ever experience are fully gathered up into those seven wounding events.

### **The sufferings that Jesus experienced encompassed the whole human condition**

*The sufferings that Jesus experienced as a son of man were not only physical; they were also psychological and relational.*

In fact, they encompassed every dimension of human suffering - every dimension of it; emotional, spiritual, physical, psychological.

*They commenced with His humble birth in an animal stall, where He was placed in a feed trough as a makeshift crib. In this regard, we note the words of Paul, who wrote, 'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich'.*

He humbled Himself and came in the form of a man, and became obedient. So there was a *priesting* element that He learned, even from His birth; the poverty of His birth.

Now, it is interesting that, as we were actually writing this, I went out to feed our own dog. The bowl was clear, or clean, or empty, and I went to put the dog food in the bowl, and I thought, 'How disgusting is that! I wonder if anyone cleans their dog bowls.' And don't tell me if I'm supposed to, because I don't think I've ever done it. Anyway, it was filthy!

And, in a moment, I thought, 'That's where they put Jesus!' - in an animal's food trough. Talk about poverty. It is so romanticised; it is so glamourised. The whole nativity scene is such a farce! Imagine the grief of a mother, with her first child, after suffering all of the abuse for having a bastard child, as the claim was, to then not have anywhere to put the child, except into a feed trough.

I don't know about you, but when I had my first child, I carried it down, put it into the car seat, and drove at about 20 kilometres an hour home, giving the next car about 100 metres distance from me.

This is 'poverty from the beginning'. This was Someone who was *learning*, so that He could be a faithful High Priest. He became poor, so that through His poverty, you and I might become rich.

So we had better learn what the riches that He is ministering to us through His poverty, are, because He comes alongside the *poor*.

### **Christ humbled Himself to come alongside the human predicament**

*For the whole of His life on earth, the consequences of our sin were being laid upon Jesus for our sake. He was becoming obedient.*

*For this reason, even before He commenced His offering journey in Gethsemane and was crucified on the cross [even the death of the cross], Jesus was identified by John the Baptist as 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'.*

John the Baptist did not say, 'Behold the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world.' He said, 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.' Joh 1:29.

When we think of Jesus in all these interactions, He was coming alongside the human predicament, in all its muck; in all its tragedy; in all its pain. Moreover, He was experiencing the rejection associated with that. Isaiah said that 'He was despised and rejected by men'. Isa 53:3.

This did not refer only to when He was on the cross. It refers to Him growing up as a human being.

‘Despised and rejected by men. He had no form or comeliness, and when we see Him, there is no beauty there that we should desire Him.’ Isa 53:2-3.

Human ‘excellence’ is not where the blessing, or riches, are.

*In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ was made to be an offering for sin. He became the full embodiment of sin when the Father made every son and daughter of man to be a member of His body. This happened when Jesus drank the cup that the Father gave to Him in Gethsemane.*

There was humility here; humbling, humbling, humbling, as One who was set apart as a priest, and now was becoming an offering for sin. *Although Christ became the embodiment of sin, He was not made a slave of sin.*

### **Understanding the difference between the curse of the Law and the law of sin**

In the coming weeks, we will define and describe the distinction between ‘the curse of the Law’ and ‘the law of sin’.

The point to note is that when Jesus was made to be the embodiment of sin, He was not living by the law of sin.

A person who lives according to the law of sin has been cut off from the life of God, and they operate in ways to preserve their life. Jesus was completely the opposite to that.

The law of sin is the indicator or the outcome of our disobedience, causing us to be cut off from life, so we fight for it.

But Jesus’ death, as a sin offering, was because of His obedience. He did not live by that self-preserving drive, at all.

Now, when we use the term ‘law’, we are referring to a principle of life. For example, think about the law of gravity. You have a ball, and you drop it. It always goes down. It’s a principle, or a law.

The law of sin describes the way in which someone will always live if they are in *bondage* to that principle.

Jesus was not a slave of sin. For this reason, *He did not die as a consequence of living by the law of sin. The law*

*of sin is the way of life that belongs to the sons of disobedience. The death that Jesus died was because of His obedience. Jesus Himself testified, ‘No-one takes [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.’ Joh 10:18.*

*Through His offering, Jesus gathered up all of our sin, dysfunction and the death that results from sin. He destroyed the law of sin.*

### **Christ turns the curse of the Law into chastisement**

When we talk about ‘the law of sin’, Paul, in Romans Chapter 7 personified it. He described it as though sin is a person, which is very helpful, because the law of sin is the spirit of Satan.

That is why, when Jesus was lifted up on a cross, He said that this was the serpent on a pole. He was the embodiment of this spirit. So everything that happened to His body was killing that law.

*Through His offering, He gathered up all of our sin, dysfunction and the death that results from sin, and destroyed the law of sin which holds mankind in captivity because they fear death. In His mortal body He experienced the sufferings of death resulting from every person’s bondage to the law of sin, under the curse of the Law.*

He did not live by the law of sin, but we all do! And, because we are all in bondage to sin, we are dying under the curse of the Law. The wages of sin is death.

We have all been *joined to Him*. He was now the Head of the body of sin, and He was living it. He was dying under the curse of the Law, by a *different principle*. He turned this curse, or this death, into something else - the sufferings of death into chastisement!

*In His mortal body He experienced the sufferings of death resulting from every person’s bondage to the law of sin, under the curse of the Law. The curse of the Law is God’s judgement on sin. As Jesus journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary, He was being progressively cursed and cut off from God.*

### **Christ disempowered sin by fulfilling the Law**

He was progressively being cursed, as all the implications of the curse of the Law assailed Him, who is the embodiment of all our sin. *He was being progressively cursed and cut off from God. By this means, sin and death were being destroyed in His flesh and in our flesh.*

We have all been joined to His body, which is the body of sin. As He was being abused, He suffered the judgement of the curse of the Law on sin.

Everything that happened to His body, happened to sin! It was destroyed and it was cut off.

*By this means, sin and death were being destroyed in His flesh and in our flesh. In other words, sin and death were being ended as He was dying under the judgement that belongs to us. Sin was brought to nothing and forgotten. In each wounding event, Christ overcame the law of sin and death. He disempowered sin by fulfilling the Law [which was love].*

He laid down His life for His friends. And we have been hearing about friendship in this season. He demonstrated what that friendship looks like.

*It was eternally lost and forgotten by God. As sin was destroyed, death was ended by being cast into the sea of God's forgetfulness. It was eternally lost and forgotten by God. Once the darkness of sin and death came to their end, nothing was left but life, light, and immortality.*

### **Christ brought life and immortality to light**

I find it wonderful that, as He took on the full condition of an old creation that was under the curse of the Law, and as His body was beaten and abused, everything that is under, or in, bondage to sin, was being destroyed and lost.

And all that was left, as He came back from that death, was life and immortality. Sin and death are gone. Life and immortality have been 'brought to light'.

*Concerning this outcome of Christ's offering on the cross, the Lord said, 'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

So it is all forgotten in the sea of God's forgetfulness; but the whole new heavens and earth were created on that cross, at that moment.

*Through His offering, Christ's life is multiplied and given to every person who will fellowship with Him in each of His wounding events.*

The life is in His blood and, obviously, as He was wounded, the blood was being shed on His body. And it was being multiplied and given to every person who will fellowship with Him in each of these wounding events.

*By this life, we are able to endure our sufferings, which He made His own and now shares with us as a fellowship. By this*

*means, we can be delivered from our sin to live only by His life.*

### **How is Christ's priesthood exercised toward us?**

We will look now at understanding what Christ has done as One who learned this priesthood.

We will consider how this priesthood is now exercised toward us.

'He became a merciful and faithful high priest' is the heading we are up to in the notes.

*The apostle Paul made the profound statement that, in order for Jesus to become our great High Priest, it was necessary for Him to be made like us, and to experience our sufferings and temptations. So, to become our great High Priest, it was necessary for Him to be made like us, and to experience our sufferings and temptations. Specifically, Paul wrote, 'Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.'*

We will see this acutely in the way in which Jesus and Peter interacted in the court of Caiaphas. Now we will look at the next point in our notes.

*In the covenant fellowship of Yahweh, before the creation of the heavens and the earth, Yahweh Son did not consider equality with the Father a thing to be grasped. He emptied Himself of His glory so that His end was in the Father, and He was begotten as the Son of God by the word of the Father and designated as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.*

The One who birthed Him is also the One who designated Him to priest Himself in this way.

*The Son offered Himself further, being made lower than the angels as He was brought forth as the Man, from the womb of Mary. As the Son of Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death as a sin offering, in Gethsemane*

### **Christ learned to priest redemption**

*In all of this [from before the Everlasting Covenant, through to this point] Jesus was faithful to the Father [faithful to Their covenant; faithful to that fellowship], who appointed Him as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. However, there was another aspect of priestly service to which Christ became obedient. As Paul noted, He 'became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross'. This was the death by which Christ redeemed the whole world by becoming a curse for us.*

*Through the things that Jesus suffered, He obtained the human and spiritual experience that was essential to achieving our redemption.*

Remember, that is what Paul said in Galatians – ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’. He said, ‘Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.’ Then, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.’ Gal 3:13-14.

That is the priesthood which He learned through this offering journey. He learned how to priest redemption. And then He learned how to priest this blessing of Abraham. It is knowledge that He gives to us.

*As Paul noted, He ‘became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross’. This was the death by which Christ redeemed the whole world by becoming a curse for us. Through the things that Jesus suffered, He obtained the human and spiritual experience that was essential to achieving our redemption, and to ministering His life to us through His offering. Paul made this point clear, writing, ‘Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected [or matured], He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek”.*

It was not that Jesus was not a priest before that – before He offered Himself as an offering for sin; or that the Father made Him an offering for sin, and now He is priesting Himself.

Rather, it was that He had to experience the condition of sin, or the human condition, and to satisfy God’s judgement, in order to atone for it, by ministering participation in it. That is what He did.

He ministers *exanastasis* life to those who are dying under the judgement that He satisfied. In this, is deliverance from their sin and the other law, and it also grants to them the knowledge of their priesthood.

Then they can priest themselves as a living sacrifice as part of a kingdom.

*Because Jesus was subject to weakness, He is able to have compassion on those who are ignorant and are going astray through iniquity.*

## **The nature of Christ’s compassion**

Now, Christ’s ‘compassion’ on you is not that He understands and compensates for your disobedience. That is not the compassion of Christ.

Nor is it that He has taken away the penalty of your sin.

What is the compassion?

*His compassion is revealed as He priests to them a participation in the outcome of His offering and sufferings for them. This was a key implication of the sufferings that Jesus experienced for us in the course of His offering journey. As we respond in repentance and faith to the word of the cross, the sufferings that we experience are a chastening upon us. A primary purpose for this chastening is to deal with our immaturities.*

## **We are learning priesthood from Christ through chastening**

This is another amazing point. We recognise that we would suffer as a consequence of our sin. But the first thing that He teaches us, as we are being delivered from our sin, is that the sufferings are part of our maturing, so that we too know how to priest the life that we are receiving to one another.

*A primary purpose for this chastening is to deal with our immaturities. By this means, we are able to obtain the human and spiritual experience that is necessary for our priesthood in the temple of His body. This is fundamental to our spiritual service of worship as living sacrifices, and to our capacity to minister reconciliation to others as ambassadors of Christ.*

*As we considered earlier, the sufferings that we experience in life are the consequence of our sin, and of the judgement of God upon us. That is, sin is endeavouring to kill us, and we are also under the [condemnation or] judgement of God. When Christ was made sin in the garden of Gethsemane, He joined us in our suffering under the judgement of God.*

Remember, the judgement of God is the communication of a curse; ‘Cursed is the ground’. But, as He comes alongside us, that is how it is becoming *for our sake*.

*He joined us in our suffering under the judgement of God. Whereas our sufferings were the consequence of disobedience, Christ’s sufferings were the fruit of His obedience to the Father. By this means, He added offering to our judgement.*

### **Christ adds offering to obedience**

So, obedience is adding offering to this judgement, in which He is a companion with us.

Something *new* has been added to it.

He has come alongside us, through obedience, and He is adding offering to this condition in which He is completely engaged and now familiar with.

*He added offering to our judgement, multiplying resurrection life to us. Paul coined the term 'exanastasis' to describe this life, which is received in our mortal bodies. By offering, Christ came alongside each one of us to carry the judgement of God upon us, because of our sin. He picked it up and made it His so that we might obtain the salvation that He authored through this offering initiative.*

### **The fruit of fellowship in the cross**

*To this end, we recognise that Simon of Cyrene was not pressed to assist Christ with carrying His cross. Rather, Christ was carrying the cross that belonged to Simon of Cyrene.*

This is a massive mindset shift from the understanding that Christ struggled along with the cross, and Simon needed to get alongside Him. That is crazy!

Rather, the cross *belonged to Simon*, and Jesus was carrying it; and Jesus gave Simon the opportunity to join Him. Jesus came alongside Simon.

And what was on that cross? It was the blood that Jesus was shedding that was being given to Simon as a blessing.

*Through his fellowship with Christ, Simon obtained the life that Jesus was multiplying to him as He carried Simon's cross. It appears that this life was for the establishment of Simon's family in the fellowship of the body of Christ, who were later well known among those who were part of the New Testament church.*

It is wonderful to see how Paul wrote in his letters, particularly to the Romans, identifying Rufus. Simon had two sons - Alexander and Rufus. Paul wrote to Rufus, and to Simon's wife (Rufus' mother), as one of the brethren, or one of the 'firstfruits', of the New Testament church.

This, then, was the fruit of Simon's fellowship in the cross that Jesus carried for him.