

# Christ has joined our suffering

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## Introduction

- In his letter to the Galatian Christians, Paul wrote, 'For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them".' Deu 27:26. Gal 3:10. He continued, 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "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.
- There has been a redemption from the curse of the Law. The curse of the Law is the result of the seven actions of judgement, with their accompanying condemnation and punishment, that culminated with Christ dying on the cross because of our failure to keep the Law. This redemption, which Christ has accomplished for *all men*, has given them access to the promise of receiving the Spirit of Christ as their personal possession.
- The promise of the Spirit was given to Abraham and his descendants, by Christ, through what was proclaimed in the Scriptures (also called 'the oracles of God'), written down by Moses in Genesis 15:1. Abraham believed and received what Christ said, and it was 'accounted to him for righteousness'. Gen 15:6. This same oracle is being proclaimed to us today so that we can believe and receive the Spirit of Christ. This promise of receiving the Spirit is called, in Scripture, 'the adoption', and was given to Abraham. Rom 9:4. Gal 4:4-7.
- The parable of the sower, sowing seed on wayside, stony, thorny and good ground, is an illustration of how Christ plants the seed of His own life, which is the divine nature, into our hearts. This parable declares to us the terms and conditions that are necessary for receiving the adoption, and becoming a son of God.
- 'Faith obedience' in, and to, the word of God, is the necessary prerequisite to demonstrating the culture, or fruit, of sonship. Faith obedience is the fruit that springs from the seed of the Spirit of Christ that we have received into our hearts.
- A son of God fulfils the works of priesthood that the Father planned for them to do before the creation. This way of living, as a son of God, is called their 'sanctification', and results in everlasting life. Rom 6:22.
- We were disconnected from the Law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 'The law of sin' became the law by which mankind endeavoured to live. The law of sin describes the way of living that belongs to fallen mankind, who now compete with each other for the limited resource of life. This gives rise to all manner of sinful and destructive

actions. Rom 7:7-8. Because life has become a limited resource for mankind, they are kept in bondage to the law of sin because of their fear of death. Heb 2:9,14.

- By giving to us His Spirit to become the seed and life of our new creation identity as sons of God, Christ has reconnected us to the Law of the Spirit of life. Rom 8:2. He has given us access, again, to the tree of life. Rev 2:7.
- As long as we walk according to the directions that are given to us each day by the Spirit, we are delivered from the judgement and condemnation of the Law of God. 1Co 11:28-32. The Law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin and death. Rom 8:2. We are no longer in bondage to the law of sin because of our fear of death. This is so because the resurrection life that is in Christ Jesus sustains us in our mortality. Php 3:11.
- The other law, which Satan fathered within us, is our biggest problem. It is the source of our iniquity, which is our idolatry. Eze 14:4. Our self-centredness is our 'other law'. Our self-centred desire to have life from, and according to, our own knowledge of good and evil is contrary to the law of love and life that describes the fellowship of Yahweh. 1Jn 4:7.
- Paul, in his letter to the Romans, explained that the law of sin manipulates this self-centred other law within us, by which we seek to control our lives. Rom 7:7-14. Sin, through our fear of death, motivates us to covet life. Life is good, but our covetous motive is evil. What is good becomes death to us because of our covetousness. We break the Law of God, which says, 'You shall not covet'. Exo 20:17. This action brings us under the condemnation of the Law, resulting in sickness and death. In this action, sin, and its motivation, is seen for what it is.
- The desire of sin, motivated by its own intrinsic law, seeks for the destruction and death of mankind. The mode of sin is deception. It appears for what it is by using what is 'good' to produce death in us. The destruction of mankind has unmasked Satan for who he is, and his power and works have been destroyed by Christ in the cross. Life and immortality have been brought to light by Christ, and the word of the cross gives mankind access, again, to the life and fellowship of God.
- Let us now look at how this redemption was given to Peter.

### The example of Peter

- The experience of Peter helpfully illustrates the implications of Christ's initiative to come alongside us and to bear the judgement of our sin so that we might obtain the salvation that He accomplished for us through His offering.
- At the last supper, Jesus said to Peter, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.' Joh 13:36. In response, Peter said, 'Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.' Joh 13:37. Jesus prophesied, saying, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.' Joh 13:38.
- This interaction demonstrated Peter's self-righteous zeal. He professed to love Jesus as His friend, yet he would not receive, nor believe, Christ's words. Peter's reliance on the sight of his own eyes, and his readiness to act according to the dictates of his own heart, were iniquity within him. His iniquity was an idol in his heart, which made him

vulnerable to the oppression of Satan. Eze 14:4. Notably, Jesus said to Peter, 'Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' Luk 22:31-32.

- On account of his iniquity, Peter was in bondage to the law of sin and death, and under the judgement of God. Death was the ultimate implication of this judgement. The same was true for the rest of the disciples and, indeed, for the whole of humanity.

### *In the garden of Gethsemane*

- Jesus first came alongside Peter and the disciples to bear God's judgement on their sin, in the garden of Gethsemane. This happened when the detachment of troops and officers came to arrest Jesus and His followers. Jesus delivered Peter and the other disciples from the hands of the Jewish council, saying to the cohort, 'I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way.' Joh 18:8.
- Instead of accepting Christ's initiative to bear the sufferings of judgement that were about to be effected in the court of Caiaphas, Peter took it upon himself to combat those who sought to do injury to Christ. Having a sword, he struck Malchus, the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus was prompted to intervene, healing Malchus, and addressing Peter by saying, 'Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?' Joh 18:11. Peter then followed the cohort from a distance as they brought Jesus before Annas, and then before Caiaphas, the high priest.

### *In the court of Caiaphas*

- In the presence of the chief priests, elders and scribes, Jesus was questioned by Caiaphas, who asked, 'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' Mar 14:61. Jesus answered him, saying, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' Mar 14:62.
- Caiaphas tore his own garments and condemned Jesus to death. In doing so, the Aaronic priesthood, of which Caiaphas was the high priest, was replaced with the Melchizedek priesthood. Jesus' face was then brutally marred as He was blindfolded, repeatedly struck, and His beard was plucked from His cheeks. His back was also beaten with rods. Mar 14:64-65.
- When Jesus had been made the sin of the world, He became the zealot in Peter's place. Those who beat Jesus, under the direction of the Sanhedrin, endeavoured to break this zeal within Him so that He would bow to the high priest.
- However, with every vicious strike upon Christ's face, the *exanastasis* life of the Father, which was in His blood, preserved His bones so that not one was broken. Psa 34:20. Joh 19:36. Instead of breaking Him down so that He bowed before Caiaphas, Jesus fully suffered and exhausted the judgement of God upon Peter's zealous iniquity, and the iniquity of each one of us, *so that it was destroyed*. As Isaiah prophesied, 'He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him.' Isa 53:5.
- The beating that Jesus endured, which caused such significant marring of His face, revealed the 'long-suffering of the Lord' that is salvation. 2Pe 3:15. The long-suffering of the Lord was illustrated in the marring of Christ's face. This was prophesied by

Isaiah, who said, 'His visage [face] was marred more than any man'. Isa 52:14. The adequacy of Christ's long-suffering, revealed through this element of His offering as the antidote to our iniquity, is made known to us in this statement.

- It is notable that it was the apostle Peter who wrote that 'the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation', for he observed Christ's long-suffering in a very personal way. The blood that was shed through the reproaches that Christ endured in the court of Caiaphas was speaking to Peter. By this means, the love of God was expressed to Peter, through *exanastasis*, giving to him the opportunity to turn from his iniquity and to the righteousness that belongs to those who are in Christ.
- As Peter witnessed the attempts of the Sanhedrin to break Christ down, the religious zeal within him was also being broken down. Progressively, his self-righteous resolve to lay his life down for Jesus deserted him as he became more ardent in his denial of Jesus. For example, as he denied Christ a third time, he cursed and swore at those who queried him, saying, 'I do not know this Man of whom you speak' Mar 14:72.
- This response revealed that Peter was weak in faith and psychologically and spiritually distressed, or sick. The blood that was speaking to him was bringing him under judgement; however, this was for the purpose that Peter would not be condemned with the world. 1Co 11:30,32.

### *The conviction of the Spirit*

- The distress that Peter experienced as Jesus was being abused in the court of Caiaphas was the beginning of his mourning under the influence of grace and supplication.
- The spirit of grace and supplication, which is ministered by the Holy Spirit, brings the conviction of sin. Joh 16:8-9. This conviction is the capacity to see one's guilt and to begin to repent.
- Peter began to mourn in the court of Caiaphas because of conviction. Under the conviction of sin, which accompanied the blood of Christ that was speaking to him, Peter looked on Christ whom he had bruised through his iniquity and idolatry. Peter experienced acute psychological and spiritual pain as he looked on Christ in this manner.
- As he suffered, Peter was joined to Christ *through repentance*. This was the beginning point of Peter's deliverance from iniquity. He began to cease from sin in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Peter explained this point in his first epistle, writing, 'Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God'. 1Pe 4:1-2.

### *The priestly ministry of Christ*

- The sufferings that Jesus experienced as the High Priest who was offering Himself to God caused Him to mature as Peter's great High Priest. Heb 5:8-9. Because of what He had learned through the things which He had suffered, Jesus was able to minister to Peter with compassion. Heb 5:2. He could now sympathise with Peter's weaknesses. Heb 4:15. Jesus met Peter as his great High Priest after Peter had denied Him for a third time. Mar 14:72.

- As the rooster crowed a second time, the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Peter remembered the words of Jesus, foretelling his denials. Luk 22:61. Mar 14:72. The Scriptures teach that 'the eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, but He overthrows the words of the faithless'. Pro 22:12. Having endured the sufferings associated with God's judgement upon Peter's iniquity, Jesus had brought the zealous and faithless words of Peter to nothing. Peter literally ceased from speaking. Now, with compassion, Jesus brought to Peter the knowledge of his sonship so that he would no longer be ignorant, and could be joined to the priestly ministry of Christ as an apostle. Heb 5:2.
- Furthermore, as Peter held Christ's gaze, the love of God broke his heart so that he was able to meet Christ broken heart to broken heart. The power of the law of sin within Peter was broken, and he began to weep bitterly. Luk 22:61-62. 'Regeneration' was now being ministered to Peter. By this means, he received a new heart as he was delivered from his iniquity.
- Through his fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, the other law was being cut from Peter's heart so that he would no longer go astray. Heb 5:2. The circumcision of the other law from Peter's life was now an operation that would continue for the rest of his life on earth. All of his future sufferings were joined to Christ's present sufferings, and were now circumcision and chastening for his sake.
- Christ's priestly initiative towards the recovery of Peter was the first phase of the directive that Jesus had given to Peter at the last supper. Jesus had said to him, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' Luk. 22:31-32. Because Jesus had prayed for Peter, his faith had not failed in the midst of the trauma of this event. Rather, he had met Christ eye to eye, and was beginning to obtain his salvation.
- Peter fully returned to Jesus on the shore of the of the Sea of Tiberias, when Jesus renegotiated the issue of friendship with him. By the word of Christ, Peter was established in the works that belonged to his name as a son of God, and in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' Joh 21:17-18. The apostle John noted that Jesus was speaking to Peter concerning the death by which he would glorify God. Joh 21:19.
- Through Peter's fellowship in Christ's death, he would be able to strengthen others with the life that was being multiplied to him. This was now his priestly work as part of 'a chosen generation and a royal priesthood'. 1Pe 2:9-10.

### **Our sin was laid on Christ**

- Jesus Christ 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.
- The sufferings that Jesus experienced as a son of man were not only physical; they were also psychological and relational. They commenced with His humble birth in an animal stall, where He was placed in a feed trough as a makeshift crib. Luk 2:7. 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'. 2Co 8:9.

- For the whole of His life on earth, the consequences of our sin were being laid upon Jesus for our sake. Isa 53:4. For this reason, even before He commenced His offering journey in Gethsemane and was crucified on the cross, Jesus was identified by John the Baptist as 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'. Joh 1:29.
- In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ was made to be an offering for sin. 2Co 5:21. Isa 53:10. 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. Luk 22:42.
- Although Christ became the embodiment of sin, He was not made a slave of sin. Accordingly, 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, and destroyed the law of sin which holds mankind in captivity because they fear death. Rom 5:17,21. 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 was God's judgement on sin.
- As Jesus journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary, 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. 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. 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. 2Ti 1:10. 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.' Isa 65:17. Rev 21:4.
- Through His offering, Christ's life is multiplied and given to every person who will fellowship with Him in each of His 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. Php 3:10-11. By this means, we can be delivered from our sin to live only by His life.

### He became a merciful and faithful high priest

- 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. 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.' Heb 2:17-18.

- 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. Php 2:5. He emptied Himself of His glory so that His end was in the Father, and was begotten as the Son of God by the word of the Father. Heb 1:5. The Son offered Himself further, being made lower than the angels as He was brought forth as the Son of Man, from the womb of Mary. Heb 2:7. Php 2:7. As the Son of Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death as a sin offering, in Gethsemane. Php 2:8. In all of this, He was faithful to the Father, who appointed Him as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Heb 2:17. Heb 5:5-6.
- 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*’. Php 2:8. This was the death by which Christ redeemed the whole world by becoming a curse for us. Gal 3:13-14. Through the things that Jesus suffered, He obtained the human and spiritual experience that was *essential* to achieving our redemption, and 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, *He became* the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek”.’ Heb 5:8-10.
- Because Jesus was subject to weakness, He is able to have compassion on those who are ignorant and are going astray through iniquity. His compassion is revealed as He priests to them a participation in the outcome of His offering and sufferings for them. Heb 5:2. 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. 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. Rom 12:1. 2Co 5:18-21.

### Christ joined us

- 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 judgement of God. Rom 2:12.
- When Christ was made sin in the garden of Gethsemane, 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*, multiplying resurrection life to us. Paul coined the term ‘*exanastasis*’ to describe this life, which is received in our mortal bodies. Php 3:11.
- 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. 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.* Mar 15:21.

- 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. Mar 15:21. Rom 16:13.