

The Book of I Peter – Part Ten

March 6, 2011

By Jeanne Alley, with small excerpts from John Herbert's notes

1). We are picking up today in I Peter chapter 2, verse 18, but it would be negligent of me to begin reading right there without first setting the context for where we have already been in this letter. So allow me to Cliff Note it for you before we jump into today's section:

- Peter is writing to faithful Christians scattered throughout various cities and countries, possibly the very ones who witnessed the events of Pentecost in the year of the Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Peter reminds them that they have been born again for a reason – to receive an inheritance that is reserved in heaven for them (which he calls our “living hope”).
- He reminds them that they are protected only through their faith (an active participation on their part) – and that if they remain faithful they will receive this inheritance, which he equates with the salvation of their soul.
- He reminds them how awesome and exciting this is, even though they are presently being faced with severe trials that are almost overwhelming. He reminds them that the trials are simply tests of their faith, and if they overcome these trials they will receive the salvation of their soul and will be praised and glorified once Jesus returns.
- He reminds them that the prophets of old spoke about this salvation, and of *them*, the very recipients of this salvation.
- AND BECAUSE OF THIS, he tells them to gird up their minds and be sober amidst their trials, since they are being called to be holy, just as the God who calls them is holy.
- Peter tells them to be fearful of what could happen to them if they do not obey, and he again reminds them that they were purchased with the very blood of God Himself.
- He reminds them that love for one another is crucial, for the word of God lives and abides forever, and their faith and hope is in God.
- He reminds them that this age, this life, is passing away and is fleeting. But God's Word is not; therefore, they need to desire this Word so as to live and grow by this Word.
- And they are to come to this Word, which is Christ, as to the Cornerstone that was rejected (implying that they too will be rejected as He was) and that they, if they so choose to live according to God, will be built up as a spiritual house for the Lord.
- So Peter reminds them to abstain from all fleshly lusts that war against their soul, and to behave in an excellent manner - not only for their own benefit but for the

benefit of those who are witnessing their behavior. Doing so will silence the ignorance of the foolish men around them.

- And then Peter gives examples of what this “excellent behavior” would look like in their present circumstances. Keep in mind that in the year 64 AD, when Peter wrote this letter, the atmosphere for Christians in these areas was hostile, for it was during this year that the Roman Emperor Nero blamed the Christians for setting the fire that burned through Rome, irreparably setting for them a negative reputation that would for many of them end in torture and death.
- So Peter says, “Submit to....”

1Peter 2:13

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps...

a). Last week was difficult because, although we read through the scripture passages contained in Peter’s letter, we came away from the reading a bit shortsighted, with an incomplete view of this concept of slavery and submission. I am not apologizing for what the Scriptures say, and I would still challenge each one of us to set aside our biases and worldly filters as we come against some of these hard sayings, but what I will try to do today is to give a more rounded scriptural viewpoint of this concept of “suffering for Christ” as presented by Peter to his beloved brethren – brethren who were undergoing severe mental and physical persecutions and challenges on a daily basis.

b) What comes to mind before we delve into that is a passage from Hebrews that gives us a real practical example of what faithful obedience amongst trials looks like (a broader view, if you will). Hebrews 10 and 11 tell us specifically that faith *that leads to the salvation of the soul* (Heb. 10:39) is about being convinced of the things that we can’t see but believe to be true (reference Peter and the inheritance reserved in heaven for us)

and being assured of those things... and then acting upon that belief. When we do this it brings about God's commendation, which brings about the receiving of the reward.

c) And in Hebrews 11 we find a list of folks who are commended for their actions, and we are actually given a real example of what they did that gained them that reward. So if we are to try to figure out what faithful obedience looks like then we really need to dive into this and see what an overcomer really looks like. Let's start with the anonymous list of overcomers in vv. 35-40 -

Hebrews 11:35

Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

d) First, notice that these people obtained a good testimony *through their faith* (reference 1 Peter 1:5, "who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.") And if you'll notice specifically in v. 35, those mentioned as being tortured *did not accept deliverance*, though it appears as if they could have. The idea presented here is that there was an opportunity for them to take the world's way out of the circumstance that they found themselves in (literally, the worldly "redemption").

e) Taking into account the full list of people mentioned in Hebrews 11, do you think these folks willingly searched out a horrific circumstance in which they could prove their faith by martyring themselves? Of course not, because the list contains such folks as Abraham, Sarah, Noah, Moses, Joseph, Rahab, etc... people who found themselves in situations where they were presented with a choice - respond to God's test of their faith either with faithful obedience or with worldly deliverance. So why didn't they accept the worldly way out? Because, as Peter and the author of Hebrews tells us, they had eyes of faith and they were looking for and *embracing* the reward which they couldn't see with their physical eyes. Their physical eyes told them that the situation they were in could possibly end in death, yet they chose the "better resurrection." Foolish, you say? Re-read Hebrews Chapter 11 and see if you can figure out the worldly deliverance each person could have chosen (which would have alleviated their suffering), decided not to, and then was commended as being worthy of the reward of God.

f) Before you get yourself all twisted up over the heavy focus on physical sufferings in v. 35ff, back up in Hebrews 11 and look at the verses that immediately precede the ones that talk about the torture and sawings-in-two and imprisonment of these worthy saints-

Hebrews 11:32

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

f) Quite a different picture for this group of folks, don't you think? Instead of being sawn in two, we see "subduing kingdoms" and "stopping the mouths of lions" and "quenching the violence of fire." Now that's more like it, right? That's the overcoming we'd like to take part in, right? Heroic, valiant, *mighty*.

g) How about verse 34 - "escaped the edge of the sword"? This speaks of overcoming in the way of *escaping* physical death and sufferings, doesn't it? Then how does that jive with what immediately comes after it? I think this is the key to understanding Peter's call to the Christian slaves to simply "submit" to their masters, and even to understanding the idea of "submission" in general, as is presented in Peter's letter. *Go beyond the circumstance and take a look at how each person viewed their current situation in relation to what better situation awaited them.*

h) Let's go deeper and more specific, still using Hebrews 11 as an example -

- Noah - he gained approval by building an ark, because by his very act of building an ark he showed God that he believed (had faith in) what God said about the future. And by him building the ark, he "condemned the world." Notice that Noah doesn't run around telling everyone that how wrong they were in not preparing for the coming flood, and he didn't set about "righting" the violence and evil that had overtaken the world... he simply obeyed God when presented with the next step of action. It was a solitary action that no doubt appeared foolish to those within witness of it. His *action*, which concerned only him and his family, condemned the world...not his words.
- Abraham - he left his home when God called him, simply following the next step that God presented to him, because he believed what God said about establishing his seed and giving him a land (I would even point out that to our eyes it appeared as if Abram was only partway obedient in this, because he was

told to leave his family and then go, but he instead brought them with him... yet still, God commends it). He was really actually looking for a heavenly city, so he considered himself – even while dwelling in the land that God would be giving him – an alien and a sojourner of this world. As he journeyed, he wasn't told to convert those along the way, nor was he told to pass judgment on the cities along the way (burn them down, free the slaves, set up altars and sacrifices, etc.). He was brought out of his land in order to be given another land, and God was working on Abraham's faith while he journeyed... God wasn't working on how Abraham could effect a change in the man-made systems along the way, *although that change most assuredly would be the end result of Abraham's obedience to the promise...* it would just be a loooooong way off.

- Then Abraham is commended for offering up Isaac, because it fully showed how much he believed in God following through on His promises regarding his innumerable descendants coming through Isaac. Abraham figured that God would raise Isaac up from the dead if need be.
- Isaac simply gave a blessing to his sons, and is commended for it.
- In the same way, Jacob is commended for blessing his sons.
- Joseph is commended for making a proclamation about his bones.
- Moses' parents are commended for not being afraid of the king's edict, and by extension this means that they were commended for *disobeying* the king's edict (ref. Ex. 1:22-2:3)
- Moses is commended for leaving his life in Egypt behind and for choosing to endure ill-treatment with his people. He is commended for not fearing the wrath of the king.
- Joshua and his faithful men are commended for their faith which brought down Jericho's walls, and in this way you could say they did get themselves involved in the neighboring governments, didn't they? But for purposes of overthrowing it and establishing a new one, not for the purpose of changing the laws therein. But don't forget the context – it was for the establishment of the kingdom of God, wherein God's people would take part in a theocracy, ruling with justice and mercy and righteousness.
- And Rahab is commended for welcoming and hiding the spies, an act that required her to lie to the messengers of the king of Jericho (civil disobedience?). She gained approval for this action of faith.

i) Have you noticed how each person listed here had an individual response to an individual work that God was working in each of their lives, all with a view to the future promise and reward? The commendations were not based on how each person changed another person's life (although their faithful acts had consequences which affected those around them, in both positive and negative ways); the approval was gained by the person's response to the situation God had them in, regardless of the situation. I'll say that again in a more direct way – approval is gained by responding righteously to the situation that God has you in, regardless of the situation.

2). Now, with all of that in mind, let's go back to I Peter 2 -

1Peter 2:13

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

a) Remembering that the Lord wants us to focus on our response to the situations He has us in, and NOT on the situation itself (how unfair it is, how unrighteous it is, how everything in our life would be so much better if only our situation were different, how we could be so much more obedient if only we didn't have to endure such unrighteousness at the hands of the unrighteous, etc. etc...), He has Peter write about the importance of putting yourself under man's system of government (literally, all of man's creations/institutions), in an attitude of respect, for the Lord's sake.

b) Can it be so simple to understand this as a call to simply refrain from using our freedom in Christ (remembering that we are NOT citizens of this world, but are citizens of the world to come) to act on the desire to *make right* what we know to be wrong? What could we possibly do on a corporate level in the here and now that could ever bring this system of government (I am speaking on a worldwide scale) anywhere close to where it should be, when Christ is King and true justice and true righteousness and true mercy are the laws that govern it? We cannot bring the kingdom here, now, and we cannot force others to obey the Word of God if they don't want to. Free will still reigns, and always will reign.

Can you submit to that... to other people having free will? Or does it make you indignant when someone doesn't know and follow the righteousness of God's laws, and do you take as personal insult their disobedience to God, because unfortunately sometimes it brings you smack-dab in the middle of it?

c) Furthermore (and Peter expounds on this), if Jesus Himself, in the flesh, chose not to challenge the governmental system of His day when that very system broke its own laws in order to unfairly and unrightly condemn Him to death... why are we to focus on the grand scale of our governmental situation? (Note that I said He didn't challenge the system, though He challenged the individuals within that system to make the right choices within that system.) We're not, but we are to respect it and we are to live under it and we are to follow its rules and regulations. Dare we even honor it, this system that the Lord allows to be in place in order to bring about His purposes? Yeah, *honor* it.

d) Don't miss my point, and don't misconstrue my point. I am not saying not to vote; I am not saying not to exercise your rights as an American citizen. But where is your focus? On the unrighteousness of everyone and everything around you... or on your own unrighteousness?

3). So now let's get back to the slave/master relationship that Peter mentions. The slave, no doubt, finds himself in a not-so-desirable situation - whether the master is good and gentle or whether he is harsh almost doesn't matter, he is still owned by another human being. This is an unfair and unrighteous and ungodly situation, *especially* for the one who is free in Christ and a citizen of the heavens, no less.

18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

a) One human being owning another is not the way that God would have things be, for slavery can in no way be compatible with the Gospel, for ultimately we are bought and owned by ONE MAN - Jesus. However, it is the way of the world under Satan's control and it is the way that man, who desires to gain power and control that is to be reserved for the Lord alone, dominates and gratifies himself. It is the outworking of the flesh.

b) And so is child abuse...and spousal abuse..and murder... and idolatry... and lying... and on and on and on. It exists and it's wrong.

c) But can we see that, within the economy of God and His presentation of the Scriptures, the focus is not on the rightness or wrongness of slavery (or any of man's concoctions, because ALL of man's concoctions fall short of the glory of God), but on the rightness or wrongness of the individual's response, whether slave or master or husband or wife, to whatever circumstance they find themselves in.

d) This isn't saying that you must endure the rest of your life in this exact situation – because God may very well give you an opportunity for situational change. And this isn't saying that by submitting you are somehow acknowledging that the behavior is right. Just take the focus off of the other person, and put it back on yourself.

4) A great example of this very thing playing out within the master/slave relationship can be found in the Book of Philemon (written approximately 3 -4 years prior to Peter's first letter). The dynamics of this situation is quite interesting –

Philemon 1:10

I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, 11 who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.

a). Onesimus is Philemon's runaway slave, who has now become a Christian under Paul's ministry, with Paul identifying him as his spiritual son.

b). Philemon, the slave owner, is a Christian who is supportive of Paul's ministry –

Philemon 1:4

I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, 5 hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, 6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. 7 For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

c). Onesimus, the slave who ran away from his master (for reasons unknown), is to be sent back to his master, even though Paul would like to keep him –

Philemon 1:12

I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel.

d) Paul wants to keep him so that Onesimus could minister to Paul on Philemon's behalf, but Paul, acknowledging the legitimacy of Philemon's ownership of Onesimus, is compelled to send him back. The rightness or wrongness of Philemon having Onesimus as his slave is never addressed.

d). Paul even says that he could command Philemon's obedience with regards to how Onesimus is to be treated, but he doesn't -

Philemon 1:8

Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, 9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you.....14 But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.

e). Paul recognizes the authority that exists in this relationship... right or wrong, Philemon is the master and Onesimus is his slave, and Paul respects/honors this. It is interesting to see Paul make note of his desire to see Philemon act voluntarily, rather than compulsory, as this would be the very way that God deals with us on most occasions. God pleads with us (remember in 1 Peter He *begs* for us to do the right thing?) to obey Him... but He never *forces* us to do so.

f). Paul is confident that Philemon will do what is scripturally correct, that he will free Onesimus as his slave and allow him to serve the Lord, unhindered by his situation -

Philemon 1:15

For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever, 16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave--a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

g). But the choice to do what is correct is Philemon's choice. Whether he chose to do so or not we don't know, and that remains between him and God. Regardless of what he would choose, though, Onesimus is going back to his master.

h). Now Onesimus, being a Christian slave in pursuit of the Kingdom, that which Peter writes concerning a slave's behavior comes into play as he returns to the master. And we could assume that he is going back willingly because of his new found faith.

i). And Philemon, being a Christian master, has the opportunity upon Onesimus's return to extend forgiveness, grace and mercy to his slave, just as Christ would to His repentant bondservants. Philemon also has the opportunity to free Onesimus, which

would be the proper thing to do – and additionally to support Onesimus once he is freed. I think it's important to focus on the fact that Paul does not command Philemon to do so, but he instead urges him to do so.

j) I'd like to read from an article that I found on the Net, that seems to be sound in regard to this topic of slavery in the NT –

“One of the implications of this has to do with the NT authors' strategy on slavery: Should Paul tell the slaves to rebel? Could he write an emancipation proclamation? When we think through this issue, it is plain that the NT writers simply could not outright condemn slavery (the disastrous results of Spartacus' rebellion would have been etched in their minds). Further, to whom would such a directive be pointed? To the pagan masters? They do not place themselves under God's law and are not part of his kingdom program. Paul's exhortations to them would be meaningless. To the slaves? They are powerless to bring about their own freedom apart from overt actions (e.g. rebellion, running away). Further, such actions hardly comported with the gospel: change is to take place from the inside out, not from imposition on social structures. (The one exception to this had to do with ultimate allegiance and worship: civil disobedience was always encouraged when it came to having to choose between Christ and Caesar.)”

“Is the NT about social change first or is it about change of the heart? As much as I believe that Christians should become involved in several aspects of society (we are, after all, “the salt of the world”), when we exchange the gospel for a merely social agenda we contaminate our mission. I believe there are social implications of the gospel that are quite extensive, but let us never forget that our primary task in relation to the world is not to change political structures, but to offer forgiveness of sin in the name of Jesus Christ.”

k) And again, our focus needs to be on our responses of faithful obedience in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, rather than the circumstance itself -

I Corinthians 7: 17

Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches. 18 Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. 22 For he

who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

5). So now let's go back to I Peter 2 and pick up in v. 19 and read it through to the end of the Chapter -

19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps, 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

a). Yeah, the word "suffering" is in here, and it's used in relation to getting beaten. This is compared with Christ, who was Himself beaten. And Peter makes sure to put the focus on Jesus' response to what was without doubt the most unfair and unrighteous situation one could think of.

b). Please don't equate all mention of "suffering" in the Scriptures to just physical suffering, though this was the reality of the first century Christian (again, go beyond the situation). Suffering goes way beyond the physical - it encompasses all manner of action that we willingly partake in (being Spirit led) that causes our "flesh" (our "old man") to suffer pain and death. You know that feeling of dread when you know the right thing to do and then you decide to do it, but just moments before you do it your body cringes and inside there is a whole flock of butterflies let loose in your gut and your mind tries to talk you out of it (because it'll be shameful or hurtful or whatever) before you actually do what it is that God wants you to do? And sometimes your body shakes a bit and you have to mentally push yourself to do it? Yeah, your flesh is dying... and you're suffering... and that is the righteousness of suffering with Christ every bit as much as those faithful saints who got sawn in two.

d) As Peter says in verse 21, 'Christ also suffered' - meaning, Christ experienced extremely brutal and sadistic treatment at the hands of those He was sent to save. And He did this for us, "leaving us an example."

d) This should be quite an encouragement to any Kingdom-seeking believer in the midst of the most difficult and demanding circumstance, to know that God in the person of His Son has Himself embraced and endured the most vile and hostile of treatments known to man, and can therefore, through His own experience, have empathy with our own adversity. And by seeing where His focus was in the midst of His suffering would show us where ours needs to be also -

Hebrews 12:2

...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

e). Christ made an emphatic point to 2 of his disciples when trying to get them to understand why their Christ had to die -

Luke 24:25

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

f) If you then compare that with this Psalm -

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

g). I hope we would understand the Word of God not only illuminates for us *where* we should walk (the narrow pathway), but seeing that the Word spoke endlessly about the necessity for suffering to precede glory (made perfect in the person of Jesus, who is the Word in the flesh), the Word illuminates *how* we should walk.

6). And so we continue in Peter -

1Peter 2:21

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

a). Christ's experience of rejection and humiliation and suffering has set the pattern that we are to follow with regards to what it looks like to 'endure grief, suffering wrongfully'. Then Peter goes on to give us the details of Christ's experience.

b). Christ committed no sin, nor was deceit ever found in His mouth, unlike us who would be guilty of both. The point of drawing attention to this is so that we will realize that there was absolutely no possibility whatsoever of Christ having done anything deserving of punishment. He was completely innocent and completely without fault; something that was even obvious to the cynical politician of the day -

John 19:4

Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

c). If anyone had a case for setting the record straight it was Christ, yet what did He do? When He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.

d). The thought in this word "revile" (Greek word meaning "vilify") is not just to accuse or to curse at, but to deliberately humiliate and shame through abusive words for the purpose of inflicting emotional pain.

e). Our natural response to anything of this nature would be to retaliate, but retaliation was not Christ's response and nor should it be ours if we are reviled -

1Corinthians 4:12

And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

Luke 6:22

Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake.

f). Notice that 'when He suffered' does not speak of a single event, but of something that was progressive. Christ's suffering was progressive, beginning in the garden and then continuing and not finishing until the moment of His death on the cross. Yet throughout this experience, not at any point did He threaten those abusing Him.

Matthew 26:53

"Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"

g). It is not that the Lord had no threat He could make; He had some serious things He could have said, but He chose not to.

h). In the place of reviling and threatening 'He committed [Himself] to Him who judges righteously'.

7). In case we need to be reminded as to *why* 'Christ also suffered for us,' the reason is given -

1Peter 2:24

...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

a). Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He literally took our sins, carried our sins, bore the weight of them and the shame of them in His own body and then offered Himself as the sacrifice for those sins on the cross.

b). The consequence of this is that we have, through His death, died to sins so that we might live for righteousness - this is exactly how we need to understand being called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

c). The end of verse 24 makes Christ's dealing with our sin quite emphatic - 'by whose stripes you were healed'. Healing here has nothing to do with sickness and disease, because contextually this is not in view. What is in view is Christ setting us free from our being slaves to sin. There was a time when we were all sick unto death because of sin, because we were bound to it and slaves to it, but that sickness of sin that caused our spiritual death has, through His sacrifice, been dealt with. With respect to the impossibility for us to escape from the ravages of sin, we have been healed.

d). And again, to count the cost of what it took to make that possible - He suffered for us, patiently enduring vindictive, spiteful, and violent persecution - He bore our sins in His own body on the tree and by His stripes our healing came.

e). The word translated 'stripes' here is singular in the Greek language. The wound on His back caused by His scourging was one red river of raw flesh, ripped and torn and mutilated.

f). According to the church historians, the Christian martyrs at Smyrna around 155AD were so torn by the scourges from Roman whips that their veins were laid bare and even their inner muscles and sinews and even bowels were visible.

i). Perhaps now we could hear with fresh ears the words -

1 Peter 1:18

...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Peter 2:11

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

8). And so Chapter 2 concludes with this statement -

1Peter 2:25

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

a). There was a time, even in our Christian life, when we were not walking the narrow path that would lead to the Kingdom, but now, because we have been brought forth from above to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we have turned about and placed ourselves under the direction of the One who is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls, that we should follow His example and walk in His steps.

And so to end, I would like to leave us in Peter again, a little further on in his first letter-

1Peter 4:19

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.