Text: I Peter 2:18-25
Title: "Living Courageously in the Face of Betrayal"

INTRODUCTION

The thread woven throughout the Passion is the suffering that Jesus endured on the way to and then hanging upon the Cross. He did it because He loved us, and because the Father was offering His Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. And it's important for us to remember *why* Jesus suffered.

> But it is also important for us to remember *how* Jesus suffered … and how He lived courageously in the face of all kinds of suffering. A couple of weeks ago we saw how Jesus lived courageously in the face of the suffering of despair.

As we study the sufferings of Christ, we see that one of the most painful things for Jesus was to face the treatment that he received … from enemies and from His own followers.

> Note: Don't think that just because Jesus was God that He wasn't hurt by the insults and unjust treatment He received. Remember He was also fully man. So when we endure betrayal and insults and unjust treatment, we can know that we can go to our Savior who endured that same kind of treatment … and must worse.

Now turn with me to I Peter 2:18-25. Here God's Word teaches us how to live courageously in the face of betrayal and ill-treatment by following the example of Jesus.

> Before we get to this passage, I want you to remember that Jesus was not only subjected to incredible insults and cruel treatment from his enemies; the ultimate betrayal came from someone very close to Jesus … Judas, one of the Twelve. Judas' betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane triggered the events that would lead to Jesus' arrest. From there Jesus was taken across town to the house of the high priest Caiaphas. Peter, Jesus' main man, followed at a distance. When Jesus was taken inside before the Sanhedrin, Peter sat near the fire in the courtyard . A servant girl spoke up, "You're one of Jesus' followers, aren't you?" Peter denied, "Woman, I don't know him." Later someone else identified Peter as a follower of Jesus. Peter again denied it, "I don't know him." Later a third person identified Peter as a follower of Jesus. And Peter swore "I don't know what you're talking about." At that point apparently Jesus was somewhere near the courtyard, because the Scripture says that Jesus looked at Peter; and Peter ran away and wept bitterly.
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> How wounded Jesus must have been in the face of this betrayal and this denial. This same Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes the words before here in I Peter 2.

I want to read these verses and just highlight the truths found in them.

1 Peter 2:18 - Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

TRUTH: Circumstances in life will put us in the middle of harsh treatment.

I can't think of anything that would more embitter a person's soul than to be a slave working for a harsh master. Peter is writing to slaves who have been saved. He says, "Put yourself under there authority (submit) and show them respect."

Now no one hear this morning is a slave. That was outlawed long ago. He's really talking more about household servants. And some had masters (bosses) who were good and gentle. But some were "harsh." The word there literally means "crooked" or "unscrupulous."

Anyone here ever work for a boss like that? Is there someone here who lives with an abusive mate? An abusive parent? Is there someone here who has to put up with ill-treatment from customers or clients?

Circumstances in life will put us in the middle of treatment like that. And the challenge is to keep your spirit under control.

Can I just tell you something here? To forgive is an act of the will, not of the emotions. If you just respond the way you feel like responding, you'll probably do the wrong thing. Keep your spirit under control.

1 Peter 2:19-20 - For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

Notice the word "commendable" is used twice.

TRUTH: There is a commendable way to handle unjust treatment.

In other words, there is a way to handle ill-treatment from others that is pleasing to God. God is pleased when you endure hurt in the right way. And the assumption is that there is a way that doesn't please the Lord.

That way is to "bear up" under it. We'll see this again later, but it means to be under a load. Keep that in mind. And this commendable way has something to do with being "conscious of God" (v.19). What does this mean?

> It means that I am conscious that while I endure this treatment, God is present and God is working.

1 Peter 2:21 - To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

TRUTH: Jesus left a trail for me to follow when I suffer unjustly.

Again, I need to know not only *why* Jesus suffered, but *how* Jesus suffered. He suffered *for* me, but He also suffered *with* me.

When I go through this kind of ordeal, Jesus has been there and he has left a trail for me to follow. And when I suffer, I am supposed to respond the way Jesus responded … I'm supposed to act the way Jesus acted.

1 Peter 2: 22 - "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

By the way, it was no accident that Jesus suffered in this way. Even the OT prophet Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit saw this coming. In fact, let's just push the pause button here in I Peter 2, and turn back into the OT to Isaiah 53.

> **Isaiah 53:7 (NIV) - He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.**
>
> **Isaiah 53:9 (NIV) - He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.**

Jesus was completely innocent. He didn't deserve to be treated the way He was treated.

And that's what Peter was telling us. Now go back to I Peter 2:23. Notice how Jesus courageously faced this

1 Peter 2:23 - When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

When it says that Jesus "entrusted himself to the him who judges justly," it's another way of saying, "Jesus put his trust, His faith, in the father.

TRUTH: Faith in God gives me the courage to forgive those who have hurt me.

Notice that this verse tells us what Jesus <u>didn't</u> do when He was treated unjustly.

- When they hurled their insults, he didn't retaliate. What did they do? They said stuff about Jesus that was ridiculous. They lied about him. They disrespected Jesus in every way you could imagine. But he didn't retaliate.

  In fact, the literal rendering of the text says, "They abused, but he didn't abuse back."

- When He suffered, Jesus made no threats. What does this mean? Example: He could have called on the legions of angels to come to His rescue.

But v.23 also tells us what Jesus *did* do when He was treated unjustly.

Luke 23:34 (NIV) - Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Luke 23:46 (NIV) - Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Do you think Jesus responded this way because He felt like it? No, the natural human instinct is to fight back … and don't forget Jesus could have. He could have called down ten thousand angels to come to His rescue.

Again, to forgive is an act of the will, not of the emotions. If you just respond the way you feel like responding, you'll probably do the wrong thing.

Now how do I know when I have forgiven someone who has really hurt me, or disappointed me, or let me down, or in some way treated me in a way that I didn't deserve to be treated? Here are a few ways that we know we have forgiven:

1. **I KNOW I HAVE FORGIVEN WHEN I CAN REMEMBER THE DEED WITHOUT PLOTTING TO GET EVEN.**

Unfortunately, we cannot always forget the pain that has been inflicted on us. We try. And sometimes we think we have forgotten, when deep inside we have only blocked it out, or we're living in denial.

ILLUSTRATION – A friend was telling me this week of a painful experience that happened in this life recently. He was unjustly treated by an organization that he worked for. And the traffic pattern of his life causes him to drive by the building of that organization most every day. And each time he drives by he remembers the pain of the ill-treatment.

2. **I KNOW I HAVE FORGIVEN WHEN I FEEL THE PAIN I IMMEDIATELY TURN TO GOD.**

You see, when the memory comes back to me of what was done to me … or when I see a person who has hurt me, I have two options. One option is to give way to the natural instinct to rehearse in your mind everything that happened. And the more you think about it, the madder you get.

The other option is to immediately turn to God. Give that memory to God. And forgive.

By the way, the word "forgive," most of the times it is used in the NT means "to send away." In other words, "Let it go."

1 Peter 2:19 - For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering <u>because he is conscious of God</u>.

1 Peter 2:23 - When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, <u>he entrusted himself to him who judges justly</u>.

3. **I KNOW I HAVE FORGIVEN WHEN I CAN PRAY FOR THE PERSON WHO HURT ME.**

Matthew 5:44 (NIV) - But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

4. **I KNOW I HAVE FORGIVEN WHEN I DON'T RUN FROM THOSE WHO HAVE HURT ME.**

The easiest thing for us to do when we've been hurt, betrayed, treated abusively is to say, "I don't need this. I don't deserve this." And we run from that person.

And this world is filled with people, even Christians, who run from one marriage to another, from one job to another, from one church to another … all because they've never learned to forgive.

5. **I KNOW I HAVE FORGIVEN WHEN I CAN SACRIFICIALLY LOVE THOSE WHO HAVE HURT ME.**

You see, that's exactly what Jesus did. When He was hanging on the Cross, He was sacrificing for those who treated him harshly.

1 Peter 2:24 - He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 2:25 - For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Jesus bore our sins. He carried it. He didn't throw it off, though that is exactly what we deserved … to be thrown off. Jesus could have said, "I don't need this. And they don't deserve anything but to be rejected." But He didn't. He bore our sins. He carried us when we didn't deserve anything but judgment.

Col 3:13 - <u>Bear with each other and forgive</u> whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

CONCLUSION

ILLUSTRATION – "Facing the Giants" is about a Christian high school football team and their coach, Grant Taylor (Alex Kendrick). In six years of coaching, Grant has never had a winning season. After realigning himself with God, Grant delivers his team a new philosophy. But he will need the leadership of one of his key seniors, Brock Kelly (Jason McLeod). Coach Taylor is trying to instill a new attitude in the hearts of his players … an attitude that will allow them to put aside their own personal agendas, and enable them to sacrifice for the team. In this scene Brock Kelly literally carries one of his fellow players in what is called the "deathcrawl."

SHOW VIDEO

I don’t want you to be impressed with Brock Kelly. I want you to be impressed with Jesus, and what He endured on the Cross … He was carrying you … and He went the whole way … right to the very end … to death. And we are to follow in His steps.