

# **“Leaving Us an Example”**

## **1 Peter 2:21-25**

This passage is very familiar to many that have studied the Bible or have been in Bible-preaching churches for any length of time – it is one of the clearest explanations in the Bible describing what Jesus did on the cross in paying for our sins. In relation to the context of 1 Peter it is showing that Jesus gave us an example to follow in relation to “enduring hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” Although we will not be able to do what Jesus did in ransoming man’s soul, Peter clearly states that Jesus left “us an example, that we should follow his steps.” That’s not saying we are to follow “IN” His steps – we can’t do that. It is saying, though, that we are to follow His leading in living as a believer ought.

When Peter speaks of Jesus having left us an "example" (1 Pet. 2:21), he chose for "example" the Greek word signifying "the headline of a copybook." Jesus is for our imitation; he is our "copy." And a test of discipleship is the progress we make in the reproduction of the copy he has set. (as found in e-sword illustrations module)

As was stated at the beginning of our study in this evangelism series (and has been stated several times since), we are to follow the steps, the pattern, that Jesus left for us: in baptism first, and then in bringing people to Him (in sharing our faith, in other words). Peter demonstrates to the believers to whom he was writing that the testimony we live for Christ will have a profound influence on those we are trying to reach. He may not explicitly bring out the issue of soul-winning, per se, but he makes it abundantly clear that if we are going to be used of

the Lord in advancing the cause of Christ, we are going to need to live our lives in demonstration of Him, and obedience to His call and commands.

Evangelism never seemed to be an 'issue' in the New Testament. That is to say, one does not find the apostles urging, exhorting, scolding, planning and organizing for evangelistic programmes ... evangelism happened! Issuing effortlessly from the community of believers as light from the sun, it was automatic, spontaneous, continuous, contagious.

Richard Christian Halverson

Martin Manser, *Christian Quotations*, (Nashville, TN: WORDsearch, 2016), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 126.

## **I. HIS EXAMPLE IN SUFFERING – VS. 21, 23**

### ***A. "Suffered for us" – Jesus was the example for us – all believers, not just full-time Christian workers, are to give themselves for others***

John 13:14–15

**14** If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

**15** For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Romans 8:29

**29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1 Corinthians 11:1

<sup>1</sup> Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Ephesians 5:2

<sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

***B. Vs. 23 gives us the example in the suffering of Christ that if we suffer wrong for the sake of our testimony and for the sake of Christ, we are to take it without fighting back.***

There's a point to be made here: there are too many believers (and this is especially significant for the pastor/teacher) that feel they have a God-given right and responsibility to defend themselves against every attack brought against them. This text, and the example of Jesus, shows that to not be right. If we are suffering for the cause of Christ, then we are to keep our testimony clear and accept the persecution for the sake of the cross.

Mark 14:60-61

<sup>60</sup> And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

<sup>61</sup> But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

Mark 15:29-31

<sup>29</sup> And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,

<sup>30</sup> Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

<sup>31</sup> Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

2 Timothy 1:12

<sup>12</sup> For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Hebrews 12:3

<sup>3</sup> For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

1 Peter 4:19

<sup>19</sup> Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

## **II. HIS EXAMPLE IN SINLESSNESS – VS. 22**

### ***A. Of course, we cannot be sinless – but that is the goal for which we are to aim.***

Romans 3:23

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Philippians 3:13–14

<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

<sup>14</sup> I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 1:15–16

<sup>15</sup> But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

<sup>16</sup> Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Matthew 5:48

<sup>48</sup> Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

***B. He didn't say anything to cause harm when He spoke under the circumstances of suffering – the example here is that we are to keep our mouths under control in times of suffering for the Lord.***

### **III. HIS EXAMPLE IN SACRIFICE – VS. 24**

***A. He bore our sins on the cross – "in his own body" – that is, He did it Himself – there was no one to do it for Him.***

Isaiah 53:4–6

<sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Matthew 8:17

<sup>17</sup> That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Hebrews 9:27–28

<sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

<sup>28</sup> So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of

many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

***B. The reason is that we "should live unto righteousness" – the purpose of Christ's suffering was to provide a ransom for us with the purpose of living for Him and bringing others to Christ.***

Romans 6:11

<sup>11</sup> Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:22

<sup>22</sup> But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Philippians 1:11

<sup>11</sup> Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Conclusion: Verse 25 is a fitting conclusion. In relation to the Jews (the recipients of this letter) they, through the work of Christ on the cross, have been able to return to their Shepherd and Bishop. They were His, lost that, and then are now able to return. That is true of all of us – the work of Christ on the cross was redemptive – it paid the ransom for our souls.

As we consider Christ's example in all things, remember, in all that we do and say in life, we are here to bring people to Him – our life is to be lived in such a way as to do just that.

The story is told of Gordon Maxwell, missionary to India, that

when he asked a Hindu scholar to teach him the language, the Hindu replied: "No, Sahib, I will not teach you my language. You would make me a Christian."

Gordon Maxwell replied, "You misunderstand me. I am simply asking you to teach me your language."

Again the Hindu responded, "No, Sahib, I will not teach you. No man can live with you and not become a Christian."

Gordon Maxwell's reputation as a Christian preceded him. His very lifestyle attracted people to Christ. And so it was with the Apostle Paul and his two missionary companions, Silas and Timothy. Saint Francis of Assisi captured their philosophy of evangelism when he said, "It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless we preach as we walk!"

**(as found in e-sword illustrations module)**