

The Benefits of the Sufferings of Christ

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I want to begin today by turning to the Old Testament to Psalms 103. Here we find a psalm of David. In my Bible, it's titled "Praise for the Lord's Mercy." This psalm is the basis of a hymn that most of us have sung many times over the years, a hymn titled "Bless the LORD Eternal, O My Soul." Beginning in verse 1, we read:

Psalm 103:1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!*

2) *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: (NKJV)*

Let's stop there for a moment. *Forget not all His benefits.* At this point, David goes on to list various benefits that he—and by extension—benefits we receive from the Lord. Benefits such as, continuing here in verse 3:

3) *Who forgives all [our] iniquities, ... (NKJV)*

What a benefit, brethren! Upon repentance, our iniquities are forgiven.

3b) *...Who heals all [our] diseases,*

4) *Who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, (NKJV)*

All of these are benefits.

5) *Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

6) *The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.*

7) *He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.*

8) *The Lord is merciful and gracious, ... (NKJV)*

More benefits.

8b) *...Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. (NKJV)*

More benefits. Dropping down to verse 11:

11) *For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;*

12) *As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (NKJV)*

More benefits. Dropping down to verse 17:

17) *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children,*
18) *To such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them. (NKJV)*

A huge benefit found here in verse 17—that of everlasting mercy! Finally, the latter part of verse 22:

22) *Bless the Lord, O my soul! (NKJV)*

The last time I spoke, which was on July 1 in a sermon titled Jesus Christ, Our Perfect Paragon, when the first virtue of that sermon was introduced—that of suffering patiently—I stated that within the virtue of suffering patiently, we find two aspects: that of the sufferings **of** Christ and that of the sufferings **for** Christ. I, then, stated that the sufferings **of** Christ would be a sermon of and by itself. The sermon on July 1, then, went in the direction of suffering **for** Christ.

Since the subject of the sufferings of Christ carries with it many aspects, today we will seek scriptural references as to features concerning Christ's sufferings, the benefits He received from His sufferings, and we will see the benefits we receive from His sufferings. In this message today, we will not review details of Christ's sufferings—a subject that would be more appropriate as meat in due season prior to the Passover—but today we will review the multifaceted benefits of His sufferings. And, as I mentioned, benefits to both Christ Himself as well as the benefits that each of us receive.

Now, in Psalm 103, we are given a list of benefits we receive from the LORD. We just read those. But, there are additional benefits, benefits derived from the sufferings of Christ and, once again, benefits He received and benefits that we also have an opportunity to receive. Before discussing the actual benefits themselves, I want first to do a very short, general overview as to Jesus Christ's sufferings. And, as stated, we won't go into any detail as to the sufferings, just a short overview regarding such.

First, we find that His suffering was predicted. Jesus Christ's suffering was predicted. Turn to 1 Peter 1, and we'll read verse 11. I'll be reading this verse from the American Standard Version. We're breaking into a thought here:

1 Peter 1:11. *Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was [with] them did [point unto], when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the [glories] that should follow [them]. (ASV)*

Verse 11 here is a summation of the prophets of old—prophets that included David, Isaiah, and others. They were inspired to write their prophecies of the sufferings of the one who became Christ, but they—at least to the best of our knowledge, it was not

penned—they did not have the understanding of how or when these prophecies would be fulfilled.

Now, I don't want to go into any depths here as we reference examples of David's and Isaiah's writings as these scriptures deal with the details of Christ's sufferings, but they do support what we just read moments ago in 1 Peter 1:11. So, we'll do just an overview. First, David's writings; we'll turn to Psalm 22, and we'll begin reading in verse 1.

Psalm 22:1. *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? (NKJV)*

Now, verse 7:

7) All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out [their] lip, they shake [their] head, saying,

8) "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" (NKJV)

Picking it up in verse 14:

14) I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within Me.

15) My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.

16) For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;

17) I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. (NKJV)

We see here that in these seven referenced verses we find support for what we just read moments ago in 1 Peter 1:11.

Turn to Isaiah 53. We'll begin reading in verse 3.

Isaiah 53:3. *He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

4) Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

5) But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; ... (NKJV)

Again, here in these three verses, we find scriptural support of Jesus Christ's sufferings, sufferings that were predicted in the Old Testament.

A second aspect of Christ's sufferings is that they were announced. Turn to Mark 9. We'll begin reading in verse 2.

What we're doing in this portion of the sermon is putting together the basis, the foundation. And, as we go through later on in the sermon, we will put together the benefits of these sufferings.

Mark 9, beginning in verse 2, the context here is that of the transfiguration of Christ on the mount.

Mark 9:2: *Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.*

3) *His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.*

4) *And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.*

5) *Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" —*

6) *because he [Peter] did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.*

7) *And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"*

8) *Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.*

9) *Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.*

10) *So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.*

11) *And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"*

12) *Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first [to restore] all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? (NKJV)*

Now, note here in verses 9 and 10 that Christ Himself mentions His resurrection. Even though the apostles had no clue as to what He meant. Christ Himself in verse 12 is announcing the fact that He must suffer many things, included being treated with contempt. Christ was not prophesying His suffering at this point; He was simply announcing to Peter, James, and John of what they could read in the scrolls concerning His sufferings.

A third aspect of Christ's sufferings is that they are explained. Turn to Luke 24. Here in Luke 24, we're going to read first verse 26. And, we're going to read that from various translations as both the King James Version and the New King James Version leave a little to be desired as far as a clear understanding. Then, we'll read verse 46. The

context here is that Christ has been resurrected. As we read, let's understand that these are Christ's own words here in verse 26. So, Luke 24:26 from the King James Version:

KJV - Luke 24:26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

Now, verse 26 from the New King James Version:

NKJV - Luke 24:26: *Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"*

This is still a little foggy as to the meaning. Verse 26 from the NIV:

NIV - Luke 24:26. *Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"*

Now, verse 26 from the New American Standard Bible:

NASB - Luke 24:26. *"Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"*

And, finally, from the New Living Translation:

NLT - Luke 24:26. *Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory?"*

So, we find here in verse 26 that by Christ's own statement, in His own words, He explains the reason He suffered.

Now, verse 46 from the NLT:

NLT - Luke 24:46. *... "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day.*

Christ suffered so He could be glorified.

Turn to Acts 17 and we'll read verses 2 and 3.

Acts 17:2. *Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3) explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ [is the Messiah]." (NKJV)*

In Hebrews 2:9, we read:

Hebrews 2:9. *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. (NKJV)*

The explanation as to the why of Christ's sufferings: So that He could be crowned with glory, He could be crowned with honor.

A fourth aspect of Christ's suffering is the fulfillment of prophecy. Acts 3 beginning in verse 11, the context here is the preaching on Solomon's portico. "Portico" here is simply a structure consisting of a roof attached to a porch. Acts 3:11:

Acts 3:11. *Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.*

12) *So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"*

13) *The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he [Pilate] was determined to let Him [Christ] go.*

14) *But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,*

15) *and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, ... (NKJV)*

The Father resurrected His Son.

15b) *... of which we are witnesses. (NKJV)*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, we just covered that, a reason for His death, that of the resurrection. Verse 16:

16) *And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*

17) *"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.*

18) *But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. (NKJV)*

We covered this earlier when we referenced Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. Christ suffered for the purpose of fulfilling the words of the prophets of old.

Another aspect of Christ's sufferings is that they (Christ's sufferings) were witnessed by disciples. Again, we're doing this overview for the basis of understanding the benefits that both Christ and we received. We'll get to those benefits here in a moment.

This aspect of His sufferings is that these were witnessed by disciples. Turn to 1 Peter 5 and we'll read verse 1.

1 Peter 5:1. *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: (NKJV)*

We find here that Peter witnessed and fully documented those sufferings here in this epistle. With that in mind, turn to Mark chapter 14. We'll begin reading in verse 32. These are very familiar scriptures here.

Mark 14:32. *Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."*

33) And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.

34) Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.... (NKJV)

One could say of the mental anguish of Christ at that time, He was suffering, suffering mentally. He was "exceedingly sorrowful, even to death," and He states to the disciples:

34b) ... Stay here and watch."

35) He went a little farther, and fell [down to] the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.

36) And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

37) Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?"

38) Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

39) Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words.

40) And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

41) Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? ... (NKJV)

How discouraging this must have been for Christ! He was already exceedingly sorrowful; very discouraged, we just read that in verse 34.

41b) ... "Are you still sleeping and resting? ... It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42) Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

43) And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

- 44) Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely."
45) As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.
46) Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.
47) And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.
48) Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me?
49) I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." (NKJV)

We find here Peter, James, and John were personal witnesses of the events of the Garden of Gethsemane. And, we read here of the deep distress, the suffering of Jesus Christ just hours before His trial, before His beating, before His crucifixion.

The last aspect of Christ's sufferings that we'll address at this point is that His sufferings were proclaimed. Turn to Acts 17. We read earlier that they were announced. We're going to read now that they were proclaimed. Announcements and proclamations are somewhat the same. They're also somewhat different. Acts 17, we'll begin with Paul's proclamation of Christ's sufferings. Acts 17 beginning in verse 2:

Acts 17:2. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,
3) explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." (NKJV)

Turn once again to 1 Peter 1 beginning in verse 10. We'll read Peter's proclamation of Christ's sufferings. We read verse 11 earlier. 1 Peter 1 verses 10 and 11:

1 Peter 1:10. Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,
11) searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was [with] them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. (NKJV)

We have now reviewed six aspects concerning Christ's sufferings, which give us a foundation of the fact that He, indeed, did suffer as His sufferings were predicted. They were announced. They were explained. They were fulfilled, witnessed, and they were proclaimed.

With this as a background, we will now move into the body of today's message in this sermon that is titled

The Benefits and Sufferings of Christ

We'll see, as mentioned earlier, the sufferings of Christ were both beneficial to Him and the sufferings of Jesus Christ are beneficial to each of us.

First, the benefits of sufferings to Christ, which He received, turn once again to Hebrews 2 where we'll begin in verse 17.

Hebrews 2:17. *Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in [the] things pertaining to God, to make [a] propitiation for the sins of the people.*

18) For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (NKJV)

Christ's sufferings were beneficial to Him as the sufferings prepared Him to be a merciful, as well as a faithful, High Priest. Look what we read right here in the same chapter beginning in verse 14.

Hebrews 2:14. *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,*

15) and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16) For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. (NKJV)

As our High Priest, Christ, due to His sufferings, is able to aid each of us in our times of need. Christ's sufferings were beneficial to Him as they prepared Him to become a merciful and a faithful High Priest.

A second aspect regarding Christ's sufferings that were of a benefit to Him is that through His sufferings, He learned obedience. Stay here in Hebrews. Turn over a few pages to chapter 5 and we'll read verse 8. This is a very familiar scripture.

Hebrews 5:8. *though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (NKJV)*

Keep that in mind and, as we turn to Philippians 2:8. We just read in Hebrews 5:8 that Christ earned obedience through the things He suffered. Here in Philippians 2:8, we read:

Philippians 2:8. *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, ... (NKJV)*

Suffering can bring about obedience. In the case with our Savior, this obedience was to the point that He went through with the sacrifice. He was committed to death on the stake for both you and me and all of mankind.

This brings us to another benefit of Christ's sufferings, which is His sufferings brought about perfection. Referencing once again Hebrews 5, we find in verse 9, reading from the New Living Translation:

Hebrews 5:9. *In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. (NLT)*

Christ's sufferings brought with them perfection. And, as we stated in the previous sermon of July 1, 2017, He—Jesus Christ—is our perfect paragon.

The last aspect of sufferings that were beneficial to Christ that we'll look at today (at least in this sermon) is that His sufferings brought Him to glory. Turn to Psalm 8. We find here a prophecy of Christ. We'll begin in verse 4.

Psalm 8:4. *What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?*

5) *For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor.*

6) *You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, (NKJV)*

We find here that Christ is crowned with glory. Now with that in mind, turn once again to Hebrews, 2 and we'll begin with verse 5.

Hebrews 2:5. *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

6) *But one testified in a certain place, saying: ... (NKJV)*

Paul is now quoting here what we just read in Psalm 8.

6b) *... "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?*

7) *You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.*

8) *You have put all things in subjection under his feet." ... (NKJV)*

The Psalm 8 quote ends here and we continue reading in verse 8:

8b) *... For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.*

9) *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. (NKJV)*

So, we find here that Christ, due to His sufferings, we find here the benefit to Him—that of being crowned with glory and with honor.

To this point, we have covered six features regarding the sufferings of Christ. Those once again are that they were predicted, announced, explained. They were fulfilled, witnessed, and proclaimed. And, we've looked at four benefits to Christ of His sufferings. For the remainder of today's message, we will look at the benefits of Christ's sufferings to Christians, the benefits of His sufferings for each of us.

The first benefit of Christ's sufferings that we can receive can be found in 1 Peter 3. 1 Peter 3, we will read verses 14 through 17, which speak of our suffering, and, then, speaks of Christ's sufferings in verse 18 and the benefits we receive from those sufferings. I'll be reading from the New International Version. 1 Peter 3, beginning in verse 14:

1 Peter 3:14. *But, even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."*

15) *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*

16) *keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

17) *It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

18) *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, (NIV)*

Do you see the benefit to each of us due to Christ's sufferings and death is found here in verse 18? Through Christ's sufferings, we are brought to God. Jesus never sinned, yet He suffered. The result of His sufferings was His resurrection by the Father. We, too, have this benefit before us—reconciliation to our Father and the potential of the resurrection—the ultimate outcome of our sufferings that we now experience in the flesh.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 5. We'll begin reading in verse 14.

2 Corinthians 5:14. *For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;*

15) *and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

16) *Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.*

17) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

18) *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,*

19) *that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

20) Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

21) For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NKJV)

Jesus Christ was sinless; yet, He became sin on our behalf, allowing each of us to become righteous before God to be reconciled to God. I really like the way the New Living Translation reads verse 18 and 21.

2 Corinthians 5:18. *All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to Himself through what Christ did.... (NLT)*

And, what did Christ do for each of us? He suffered beyond our comprehension. Verse 21 from the NLT:

21) For God made Christ, who never sinned to be an offering for our sin so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (NLT)

Jesus Christ suffered. His sufferings and death has made us right with our heavenly Father.

A second benefit that we are recipients of due to Christ's sufferings—and we just touched base on this in some of the scriptures we just read—our sins are atoned for. A second benefit is that our sins are atoned for. Hebrews 9:11.

Hebrews 9:11. *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*

12) Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (NKJV)

Christ suffered, shedding His own blood, for the redemption of each of us, for the redemption of all of mankind. Verse 13:

13) For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,

14) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15) And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, ... (NKJV)

Jesus is the mediator. A mediator is one who intervenes between people to bring about a reconciliation. He is a mediator between God the Father and each of us. And, He is qualified to do so by His suffering, death, and resurrection. Continuing here in verse 15:

15) *And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (NKJV)*

Dropping down to verse 21:

21) *Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.*

22) *And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*

23) *Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

24) *For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;*

25) *not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another —*

26) *He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*

27) *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,*

28) *so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.... (NKJV)*

Contrary to the belief of the Roman Catholic Church, which states that at each Catholic mass, Christ dies—that's what each mass is. Here we read that Jesus Christ was offered once to bear our sins. Our sins are atoned for. "Atoned" means *to make amends or reparation*. Our sins are atoned for due to the suffering, the sacrifice of Christ. That's a benefit without measure, if you stop and think about it, for each of us as well as all of mankind.

Turn to 1 Peter 2. Here we will read of the benefit that on the surface may not seem to be a benefit, but once understood, we will see it is for our wellbeing. 1 Peter 2, we'll read verses 21, 22, and 23.

1 Peter 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; (NKJV)*

The benefit found here is the fact that Christ has left us an example, an example that we are to follow. Please note the example. So often, we simply state here that the example left by Christ is that we are to suffer, and that is one aspect of it. But, if we look closer at what is stated here, we find the example left for us is that we should follow His footsteps in committing no sin. Also, that we are to find no deceit in our mouths.

When reviled, we should not revile in return. When we're threatened, we shouldn't cause harm on someone. And, lastly, the example to each of us is that we should live righteously. This is why Christ's example of suffering is such a benefit to us for we have a mentor to follow.

Another benefit of Christ's sufferings is that we can have fellowship in His suffering. "Fellowship" here means *association with*. Turn please to Philippians 3, where we'll begin reading in verse 7. I'll be reading from the NIV.

Philippians 3:7. *But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.*

8) *What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ*

9) *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

10) *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,*

11) *and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. (NIV)*

The association of our sufferings to Christ is that we can become more like Him, putting to death our unwanted deeds and, through the mercy of God, obtain the resurrection itself.

The last benefit that we'll cover here today is that through Christ's sufferings we are the benefactors of comfort. The benefit we receive of Christ's sufferings is that we, too, can be comforted. Turn, please, to 2 Corinthians 1, where we'll begin in verse 1. Through Christ's sufferings, a benefit we receive is that of comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia: (NKJV)*

And, by extension, to all of us here in these end times. Verse 2:

2) *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

3) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,*

4) *who comforts us in all our tribulation, ... (NKJV)*

This is a benefit to each of us.

4b) *... that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, ... (NKJV)*

We find here that we are to comfort others—a benefit to them.

- 4 continued) ... with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
5) For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us [our sufferings], so our consolation also abounds through Christ.
6) Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, ... (NKJV)

There is a great deal of comfort found in these two words alone—consolation and salvation.

- 6) Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.
7) And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you [are partakers] of the consolation. (NKJV)

We are partakers of sufferings. Just look at the prayer update every week.

But what does scripture say about partakers of consolation? At this juncture, we're going to take a moment and look at this word "consolation." It's interesting. Now consolation is defined by Bing Dictionary as *comfort received by a person after a loss or disappointment*. And, I think we could all agree that this is probably the definition we think of when we think of consolation.

But, I want us to consider the following definition, this definition from Guidepost Family Topical Concordance to the Bible, copyright 1982. This resource defines consolation as *comfort fortified with encouragement*. I want us to consider that. Consolation--*comfort fortified with encouragement*.

Turn to Romans 15. We'll begin in verse 1. Keep in mind this definition of consolation--*comfort fortified with encouragement*. Romans 15:1:

- Romans 15:1.** *We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not [be pleased] ourselves.*
2) *Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.*
3) *For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."*
4) *For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*
5) *Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,*
6) *that you may [be of] one mind and one mouth [glorifying] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)*

We find here in verse 5 the source of both patience and comfort—that source being God. And, we find a great deal of encouragement here in verse 4. For in verse 4, we find that things written before were written for each of us—for our learning, for our

patience, for our comfort. And why? The encouraging answer is that we can have hope. So that we can have hope.

Listen to how the New Living Translation reads regarding verses 4 and 5. From the NLT:

Romans 15:4. *Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises.*
5) *May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you to live in complete harmony with each other, each with the attitude of Christ Jesus towards one another. (NLT)*

Our consolations are directly from God and the consolations we receive from God are to be shared with others.

Turn once again to 2 Corinthians 1. A moment ago, we read verses 1 through 7. At this point, we will read verses 3 through 11 and I'll be reading from the New Living Translation.

2 Corinthians 1:3. *All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of every mercy and the God who comforts us.*
4) *He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God gave us.*
5) *You can be sure that the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. (NLT)*

What a benefit! Verse 6:

6) *So, when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your benefit and salvation! For when God comforts us, it is so that we, in turn, can be encouragement towards others. Then you can patiently endure the same thing we suffer.*
7) *We are confident that as you share in suffering, you will also share God's comfort.*
8) *I think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and completely overwhelmed, and we thought we would never live through it.*
9) *In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we learned not to rely on ourselves but on God, who can raise the dead.*
10) *And he did deliver us from mortal danger, and we are confident that he will continue to deliver us.*
11) *He will rescue us because you are helping us by praying for us. As a result, many will give thanks because so many people's prayers for our safety have been answered. (NLT)*

There is a great deal of consolation found here; once again, *comfort fortified with encouragement*.

So, let's begin to wrap this up. Today, we reviewed six aspects of the sufferings of Christ. We found that:

- His sufferings were predicted;
- They were announced;
- They were explained;
- They were fulfilled;
- They were witnessed; and
- They were proclaimed.

We reviewed benefits that Christ Himself received due to those sufferings.

We reviewed five benefits each of us receives due to Christ's sufferings.

- We are brought to God;
- Our sins are atoned for;
- We have examples to turn to;
- We have fellowship in those sufferings; and
- We receive comfort.

Today, I hope we have a greater understanding of the consolation we receive from our sufferings. Once again, that definition of consolation is *comfort fortified with encouragement*.

For one last scripture that summarizes this entire message, turn to Philippians 2. We'll begin reading in verse 1. These two scriptures summarize this entire message.

Philippians 2:1. *Therefore if there is any consolation ... (NKJV)*

In other words, any "comfort fortified with encouragement."

Philippians 2:1. *Therefore if there is any [comfort fortified with encouragement] in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,
2) fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. (NKJV)*

There is consolation—*comfort fortified with encouragement*—found here in these two verses. Consolation—*comfort fortified with encouragement*—probably the greatest benefit that each of us receive from the sufferings of Jesus Christ.