



Part 2

In the Bible, the story following the revelation of Jesus Christ through Peter is Jesus telling of His death and resurrection. Then Jesus tells us (His disciples) to take up the cross and follow Him (Matthew 16, Mark 8, and Luke 9). There is a reason for this order.

First we must begin to listen to Him instead of what the world says about who Jesus was, is, and will be. This hearing comes by the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

John 14:26 - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Romans 10:17 - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

After we choose to believe what He Himself says, we must come to the cross and follow Jesus in His sufferings and in His victory. Why do we have to share in His sufferings if it is already finished and we already have the victory?

1 Corinthians 1:3-7 - 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, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 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 will partake of the consolation.

Let us make it plain. Jesus suffered mockery, atrocious accusations, torture, and finally death. Why? So that we could ALL come to be reconciled to the Father but also so that we

could have the opportunity to sit with Him on His throne. The second part of that sentence is key. The journey of us taking up the cross, walking through the streets, and following Jesus in His sufferings is how we are able to sit with Him on His throne.

Revelation 3:21 - To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Have you ever prayed for someone and became overwhelmed because you knew their pain? Did you stop praying for them or did it give you an even greater joy to continue to press in praying for them? Have you ever seen someone in a situation you have overcome and could not help but share your testimony with them to see them set free? This is suffering in Christ. You went through whatever the pain and suffering was to be set free from bondage; to take the yoke of Jesus Christ instead of the yoke of the world that was choking you.

Hebrews 12:1-2 - Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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.

Suffering in Christ, taking up the cross, and following Him is for the purpose of serving your fellow brethren.

Mark 10:35-45 - Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." 36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" 37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" 39 They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be

so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

To serve goes beyond our day to day serving in church activity (though the day to day is included). To serve also means going through some things to be freed from bondage so the next member of Christ's Body can also be freed and come to the knowledge and understanding of Jesus as the Christ.

Lord, we acknowledge that You are the Head, that You are the Ruler of all and we humble ourselves before You today and ask that You forgive us where we have tried to make things happen in our own strength. We declare freedom over our lives and ask that You would expose any areas that are not of you. We ask for You to help guide us and that as we follow You, that You would show us where we can best function day in and day out - that we don't get comfortable with where we are - but that we are continually coming before You to allow You to show us Your mighty plans- You are faithful and we choose to follow You!

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9.10.2015