

## Christ: The Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls

1 Peter 2: 24-25

As we continue to look toward Easter, celebrating the resurrection, again I want to consider a passage of Scripture that deals exclusively with the triumph of Christ and the eternal benefit believers have in him. Peter deals with the crucifixion of Jesus, the great sacrifice made on our behalf, and the significance of His sacrifice in our individual lives.

Clearly Peter refers to a powerful Old Testament passage recorded in [Isaiah 53](#), particularly [verses 4-7](#): 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. <sup>[7]</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Our text reveals much concerning the provision Christ made for us as He bore our sin upon the cross. It is good to be reminded of the events that took place and the provision that was made. I want to consider the [assurances](#) afforded the believer as we think on: [Christ – The Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls](#).

**I. The Great Substitution** (24a) – [Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree](#). There is no doubt Peter is speaking of the horrific crucifixion as Christ bore our sin as the substitutionary atonement for humanity. Peter likely thought of the annual Day of Atonement, the day set aside to atone for the sins of the people. On that day the high priest would carry the blood behind the veil and place it upon the mercy seat. He would also confess the sins of the people over the head of a goat, which was led into the wilderness to die, bearing the sin of the people. This was all in accordance with the law of God, but it never fully atoned for sin. Each year the sacrifice had to be repeated and another goat would be led away.

- In the Old Testament economy, the sheep died for the shepherd. In Christ, the Shepherd died for the sheep. He too was led without the city gates, to the lonely hill called Golgotha. There He bore our sin in His body, fully atoning for our sin.
- This wasn't something Christ oversaw or sent another to provide for us. The darling Lamb of God, He who was holy, perfect, and sinless, bore our sin in His body. He was God robed in a garment of flesh. There was no sin found in Him. Never once had He transgressed the law of God. Never once had He broken fellowship with the Father. Never once had sin entered into His heart or mind. Jesus became sin so that we might be saved.

- The sins of humanity had to be atoned and in order for atonement to be made, a perfect sacrifice had to be offered. Jesus was the only One worthy to be that sacrifice. God made a righteous demand that mankind could never achieve, so He became the sacrifice for Himself.
- [Heb.2:9](#) – But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. [1 John 2:2](#) – And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. The word [propitiation](#) means “to be a sacrifice; the covering, satisfaction, payment, and appeasement for sin.” Jesus’ sacrifice turned away the wrath of God and brought reconciliation. We could never have achieved that within ourselves. Jesus became my substitute!

**II. The Gracious Salvation** (24b) – [Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness](#): This is a truth we all understand. Beginning with the first of God’s creation, sin entered into the hearts of mankind. Because of that initial sin, all are born in sin, being dead through sin unto God. [Rom.5:12](#) – [Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned](#): There was no hope, no means of escape from the penalty of sin within the human race. Death was the ultimate consequence of sin. [Jam.1:15](#) – [Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death](#). There had to be One who could forever make that atonement and free humanity from the penalty of death.

- Jesus was that One. [1 Cor.15:21-22](#) – [For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.](#) <sup>[22]</sup>[For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive](#). We were all dead in trespasses and sin. We were separated from the holiness of God and condemned. Unless a change was made, we would all be eternally lost because of our deadness. Jesus died upon the cross that we might live.
- We have been raised from a state of deadness unto life. The sins that once held us captive and undone have been pardoned and we have been set free in Christ. I rejoice that I have been born again unto life eternal.
- Dead men can’t follow after anyone. If we are to follow the Lord and serve Him we must be alive in Him.

**III. The Generous Sanctification** (24c) – [By whose stripes ye were healed](#). Jesus bore our sin upon the cross so we might be saved. He suffered death that we might live. Here we find the source of our healing, the [stripes](#) of our Lord. This has the idea of “*a wound that trickles blood.*” We all know the suffering and pain that Jesus endured. We all know of the horrendous scourging He received prior to the crucifixion. The stripes He bore brought about our healing.

- There is an interesting concept we need to consider. The **healing** spoken of literally means “to cure; to make whole; to free from error and sin.” The suffering and death Jesus endured brought about our healing. It brought about the cure for sin. It set a captive race free from bondage. All that sin had damaged and the hindrances it had caused were made right and justified as Christ hung upon the cross. **Is.53:5 – 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.** All who come to Jesus in salvation can be made whole of this dreadful disease that always ends in death. Jesus made a way for all to live if they will only come to Him.
- I also believe there is a continual application here for those who believe in Christ. We have been made whole in Him; we have been freed from the error of our sin. Is that saying that all who come to Christ will live perfect lives, free of sin? Absolutely not, but it does remind us that we have a source of healing when we are tempted and fail living in these bodies of flesh.
- Jesus is the way to a life of peace, contentment, and righteousness. He alone has the power we need to rise above sin and live lives that honor Him. We will never imitate and follow the life of Christ as long as we are burdened down with sin. Jesus can give us the strength and help to live a sanctified life in Him. When we do fail and come short we can take comfort knowing that Jesus already paid our sin debt and we are forgiven in Him.

**IV. The Gentle Shepherd (25)** – **For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.** Peter portrays us as sheep that have gone astray, those who have wandered from the safety and provision of the flock, and are no longer under the care and protection of the Shepherd. In Jesus sheep can be restored unto the fold. We can find the comfort of a loving, providing Shepherd who watches over His sheep.

- I am told sheep are among the dumbest animals that God created. Without a shepherd to guide them they will not find the green pastures; they will not seek out a source of water, and in danger they will flee the safety of the fold. We may not like to admit it, but we are just like sheep. God created us and He knows the similarities we share. God knew that we too need a Shepherd if we are to survive in this world in which we live. Jesus Christ is that Shepherd.
- Jesus also stands as the **Bishop** of our souls. This has the idea of “a watchman; overseer; a Superintendent.” This stands in association with His divine duties as our Shepherd. All the saved are within the tender care of Christ. He is watching over us, superintending our lives. Through the guidance of the Spirit, Jesus directs our paths, leading us in the right way. Isn't it comforting to know that Christ our Lord cares enough to watch over, protect, and guide us?

**Conclusion:** Aren't you glad that Jesus made provision for us? He endured all He did so that we might live through Him. If we are to live for the Lord, in a way that pleases Him, we must allow Him to guide our lives. We must allow Him to be the Shepherd of our souls and heed His voice. Our only hope is to keep our eyes upon the Shepherd and follow Him.

Storms of life will come; there will be seasons of adversity and difficulty. Being a child of God does not shield us from hardship, but it does provide a resource to lean on in those difficult times. Jesus endured much so that we could live victoriously in Him. Do you have peace in your heart this morning? Do you know Christ as the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul? If not, there is room in the fold for you. Jesus died so that you might live. The Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. Come to Him today as He leads!