

## Excerpts from Life-Study of 1 Peter, Message 21

### THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND ITS SUFFERINGS (3)

#### Bible Verses:

**1 Pet. 2:24** Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

**1 Pet. 2:25** For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Peter 2 verse 24 says, “Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.” This verse speaks of Christ as our Savior, our Redeemer. As our Savior, Christ “bore up our sins in His body on the tree.” This points out that when the Lord offered up Himself as a sacrifice (Heb. 7:27) on the cross, He bore up our sins in His body on the cross, the true altar for propitiation.

The “bruise” in 1 Peter 2:24 is a suffering that resulted in death. According to Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, and the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman’s seed. The bruising in Genesis 3:15 is related to the bruise in 1 Peter 2:24.

According to verse 24, we have been healed by Christ’s bruise. This is the healing of death. We were dead (Eph. 2:1), but Christ’s suffering of death healed our death so that we may live in His resurrection. As we have pointed out, by Christ’s bruise we have been healed. This means that His death heals our death.

Verse 24 indicates that, as fallen human beings, we were dead and full of sins. But Christ put our sins upon Himself and bore them up on the tree, the cross, where He suffered God’s righteous judgment for all our sins. Christ’s death on the cross was a bruise, and that bruise, that death, has healed our death. Now we have become alive. On the one hand, Christ’s bruise that heals us keeps us away from sins through His death; on the other hand, this healing enlivens us so that we may live to righteousness.

In 1 Peter 2:25 Peter goes on to say, “For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” Christ was our Redeemer in His death on the tree. Now He is our soul’s Shepherd and Overseer in the resurrection life within us. Therefore, He is able to guide us and supply us with life that we may follow in His steps according to the model of His suffering (v. 21). According to verse 25, Christ is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. Our soul is our inner being, our real person. Our Lord, as the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul, shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our real person.

Our problem was that we were like sheep being led astray. But now we have returned, turned back, to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. We should not think that in verse 25 Peter uses soul as a synonym of spirit. This is definitely not the case. A shepherd takes care of the physical needs of his flock, and Christ our Shepherd takes care of the needs of our soul. Christ

mainly shepherds us by taking care of our soul. He takes care of our mind, emotion, and will.

In our experience sometimes we just do not know what to think about. We do not know where to direct our thoughts. This is an indication that our mind needs the Lord Jesus as the Shepherd. I can testify that many times in this kind of situation the Lord Jesus has been a Shepherd to me. As a result of His shepherding, our mind is directed and set in the right way.

Our emotion, being complicated, is easily upset. This is especially true of the sisters' emotion. Therefore, we need the Lord Jesus to shepherd us in our emotion. His shepherding comforts our emotion.

Our will also needs the Lord's shepherding. As human beings, we often find it difficult to make the right decision. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to make a decision. Unbelievers have no one to lead them and guide them in making decisions. But we have a Shepherd to lead us and guide us. The Lord's leading and guiding are primarily related to our will. As the living Shepherd, the Lord continually directs our will. I cannot tell you how many times I have experienced

this. The Lord is truly the Shepherd of our soul. He directs our mind, comforts our emotion, and leads and guides our will.

According to my experience, there is a difference between leading and guiding. Leading is related to a destination. Suppose you are driving from your home to a certain city. A road map may lead you to your destination. But once you arrive at that city, you will need a guide, someone to direct you to the exact place where you want to go. In the Bible some verses speak of the Lord's leading, and others, of His guiding. On the one hand, the Lord will lead His people to the Holy Land. But once He has led them there, He will guide them to Mount Zion.

As our Shepherd, the Lord leads us first and then guides us. He leads us to the right place, and He guides us to the exact spot. This is Christ, our Shepherd.

Sometimes the Lord shepherds us in the same way that He shepherded the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We also may speak to Him in a nonsensical way or ask Him nonsensical questions. We may even rebuke Him, and He may pretend not to know what

we are talking about. Many of us can testify of having the Lord Jesus shepherd us in this way. As the life-giving Spirit dwelling within us, He is the Shepherd to us in our experience.

According to 1 Peter 2:25, Christ is also the Overseer of our souls. I wonder how many Christians have experienced Christ as an Overseer, as an Elder.

The New Testament reveals that an overseer is an elder and that an elder is an overseer. In 5:1-3 Peter gives a word to the elders concerning the shepherding of the flock of God. What is the function of an overseer? The Greek word for overseer means “one who oversees a particular condition or situation.” This word seems to indicate someone above us who takes oversight concerning us and watches what we are doing. However, according to our experience, the Lord as the Overseer is One who cares for us. For Him to oversee us means that He takes care of us. As the Overseer, the Lord does not govern us or rule over us. Rather, He cares for us as a mother cares for her child. A mother oversees her child with the purpose of caring

for the child. She wants to take care of every need. The same is true of Christ as our Overseer.

As we read 2:18-25, we see that Peter was very rich in experience. In this portion he speaks of grace, the writing copy, the Savior, the Shepherd, and the Overseer. Christ is the life within us, and He is also the model for us to follow. If we live by Christ as our inward life, that is, by the indwelling Christ Himself, we will undergo the process of spiritual xeroxing to become a reproduction of Christ. At the same time, we will experience Him as the Savior saving us, as the Shepherd leading and guiding us, and as the Overseer caring for us. Oh, Peter's experience was rich, and his writing is marvelous! May we all practice to enjoy Christ according to what is revealed in these verses. May we all enjoy Him as grace, as the model, and as the wonderful Savior, Shepherd, and Overseer.

*Read the verses and footnotes online: <https://text.recoveryversion.bible/>*

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Note: This version is not intended to be printed as material for pursuit during the small group gathering. Instead, it is to be used as additional reference for brothers and sisters who want to prepare in advance for fellowship on the message. We include here notes from the commentaries of the brothers in the life-study radio program. The points from these commentaries can help enrich our understanding and, eventually, our fellowship with the saints on the selected portions of the life-study message. We still recommend that, if possible, the saints still listen to the [audio message](#) in addition to reading the [life-study message](#) for personal pursuit and for preparation for small group gatherings. We also wish to point out that these notes have not been fully polished.

**[Commentary]:**

### Introduction

[CW]: The New Testament book of First Peter in chapter two gives us some marvelous and very experiential expressions concerning our relationship with Christ. In verses 24 and 25 we see Him not just as our Redeemer, but also as the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. What does it mean that Christ is our Shepherd and Overseer? Well, to understand these aspects of Christ, we should go back to verse 12 in the same chapter and see that this is Christ in His loving care for His people, even as He comes to inquire of them in the day of His visitation. Sweet portion. Matt Miller is here to enjoy it with us. And Matt, I like these verses.

[MM]: Chris, I really like them too. And I was thinking, as you were sharing and saying how this is a sweet portion. I thought this is going to be a great life study today, a great program. And I'm laughing inside because someone commented to me jokingly recently. They said, "You say every program is a great program, that we're really in for a good one today." Well, I feel the same way again today, Chris, I think this is going to be a great program. And the listeners, I hope they really stay with us.

[CW]: Well, it certainly will be, Matt, if we have his visitation, and that's what we seek every time we come together, and we hope that our listeners enjoy and experience Him in His loving visitation today. Matt, we're in chapter two. As I pointed out a lot, in this chapter, we want to focus on a few things, and we're going to connect verse 12 with verses 24 and 25 in the program today. In verse 12, let me read the whole verse, and we'll kind of just set up a portion we're about to hear from Witness Lee. It says, "Having your manner of life excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the matter concerning which they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works as they see them with their own eyes, glorify God in the day of His visitation." We're going to focus on the last part of this in Witness Lee's sharing, but put the whole verse in context for us.

[MM]: You know, Chris, there's two different schools of thought in this understanding of this verse, and some people refer to the day of Christ's visitation as a judgment, then Christ is coming to judge. But the other school of thought, and the one that we're with today, is that it's not a judgment. Christ isn't coming to judge us here. He's coming in a caring way, a shepherding way as an Overseer. He's coming and visiting us in a very sweet way to care for us. And that's why, as you said, we hope that this will be a visitation of the Lord, even in this radio program. And as people are listening, wherever they are, our prayer is that the Lord would visit them in a sweet way, not visit them in a judging way. That's not what the Lord means here.

[CW]: Right! And I like Peter's reference here, even that the opposing ones, which is who he's talking about, these evil doers who are speaking evil things concerning God's people. They, in a sense, get won over or neutralized inwardly experience a kind of a change where they begin to glorify God because they're witnessing God's visitation, this kind of loving visitation in the midst of His people, and that affects the manner of life or what is expressed to the point that it closes the mouth of the opposers. This should be our experience, shouldn't it? I mean, certainly we always will experience persecution, but this is the antidote to the persecution.

[MM]: When we really see the Lord and others see the Lord visiting us in such a sweet, caring way, it just melts people. People that have such a strong argument against God, they hate Christ, but then Christ comes and visits. Melts everything.

[CW]: Wow. Well, as you expressed, I also am looking forward to what we have before us today, so let's get to it. Here's Witness Lee.

### **Part 1**

[CW]: Well, Matt, this is sweet, it's intimate. But I like the analogy. Actually, this fall, I had the opportunity to go to New Zealand, which is sheep country. We went to this sheep farm and watched a kind of a demonstration of the farmers. And what you find out is the good shepherds, the ones who are really caring for their flocks in a proper way. They're out among the flock. They even know the intricacies or the quirks of the different sheep so often in their flock. This is the kind of care that seems as being referred to, isn't it?

[MM]: It is. It's really a care, and the sheep responded to that care. You know, someone told me one time that the difference between a shepherd and a cowboy, the Shepherd leads the sheep because the sheep love the shepherd, he cares for Him, He's with them, they follow Him. But a cowboy gets behind the cattle with a whip, and he's driving him. The Lord, He doesn't drive us. He's not leading us that way with force, but He gains us with His care and His love. Chris, I went back and looked at this word visitation in the Old Testament, in Exodus, chapter four, verse 31 it says, "Jehovah visited the children of Israel, and He saw their affliction. So this is an example of visitation, not to judge them, as they were there suffering in Egypt, but He saw their affliction. It's kind of the way Witness Lee described the Lord's visitation to us. How you doing? Are you okay? You know, kind of puts His arm around you in your affliction, and He doesn't leave you there, but He comes and He takes care of you in His visitation. And it was very meaningful to me also to see the Greek word for visitation. I actually looked it up. It's the same word as overseer. It comes from the same root word, and I made a photocopy of the Greek dictionary. Here, the word for overseer is Episcopus. That's the word for overseer. The word for visitation here in Peter is Episcopae. Same root. It's the same word to visit is to oversee, it's not to judge. And even in Luke chapter one describing the Lord's coming, it was also the Lord visiting His people. So when Christ comes, he's coming to visit his people, to care for them, to be God with us, to be Emmanuel, to care for us, not to come and judge us. And I think that's a concept that many have, and even affected the interpretation of this verse in First Peter chapter two, verse 12, that he's coming to judge us. No, his visitation is he's coming to visit us, to see us in our affliction, to care for us, to shepherd us, to oversee us, and we're going to see more about the overseer as we go on in this program.

[CW]: Very good connection there, Matt, because we are kind of jumping. We're going verse 12, and we're jumping to verses 24 and 25 where this matter of the shepherd and overseer reappears. So it's implied in the word *visitation*. Verse 12 is really developed in verses 24 and 25. Let's read 24. We'll go back to Witness Lee. Twenty-four says, "Who Himself bore up our sins in His Body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed." So much implied in this verse. I'm looking forward to hearing our brother and then coming back talking more about it ourselves.

[MM]: Me too, Chris,

### **Part 2**

[CW]: Matt, as I was listening there, it was back, looking at a burst and I were talking about before the program today, it says exactly the same thought that Paul brings out in Romans chapter six, His death on the cross first

terminates us. We experience that death, but then it makes us alive in another sense, develop this thought. I don't want you to miss this little passage at the end of being healed by his bruise.

Well, Chris, I really pray that the Lord would allow us to pack into this short time we have to bring out the light that is really in what Witness Lee just shared from this portion in Peter. Peter says in verse 24, "Having died to sins." Okay, we've died to sins. And literally, that means we're away from sins, okay? And Paul says in Romans 6:7, the one that what you just referred to, "He who is dead is freed from sin." So the best way to be free from sin is to just die. Well, that doesn't mean we're going to just go commit suicide. That's not what we're talking about. What the word is talking about here is we experience the subjective working of the death of Christ in us. And every seeker of the Lord has this experience where the subjective working of the cross within will do a termination of that sin in their life, and they reach a point where they're just dead to the old life, to the old manner of life, the vain manner of life. But that death is not the end, because it says, and I love this phrase, "By whose bruise you were healed." And so that death is not the end, but because of the Lord's death by His bruise, we're healed. So in that experience of death to sin, there's something miraculous that happened. It's wonderful. It's just amazing that out of that death to sin, we're healed. All of a sudden, we have this desire to live to righteousness. It's a miracle. We think it's the end. In a sense, we almost want to give up hope, and it's like we're giving up. And then out of that situation of death to sin, there's this desire to live righteously. That's Christ in resurrection, healing us, "by whose bruise you were healed."

[CW]: Watchman Nee makes the point along this line, particularly referring to the parallel passage in Romans 6, "That what dies is not sin in us. It's us so that the sin has no effect. Then it is us that are made alive in Christ." In Romans, he says, "alive unto God". Here it is, "alive unto righteousness". So Peter and Paul again, by this point in Peter's life, in his ministry, he and Paul have just, it seems to me, almost converged, passage after passage. In this book of First Peter, we see the same thought that Paul brings out in his epistles, don't we?

Yeah, in fact, in Romans, chapter six, I think it's verse four or five, he talks also about the matter of grafting. Yeah, there's another life grafted in. So we're cut. He who is dead is freed from sin, but a new life comes in through the imparting of the new life, and something comes out of it. So we're still there. It's not like we're just uprooted and gone, right? But we're organically grafted into Christ, our God, given faculties at birth, are uplifted through his resurrection life and organic union, typified by this grafting

[MM]: And as he is so faithful to do in every portion, it seems, almost every program, he brings us to the experiential aspect of this by the calling on the Lord, which is really our fellowship with Him. We call on Him. We enter into the experience of Him within us as this new life flowing within us. And that brings in both of these experiences, simultaneously, the one dying to sin, to the world, to the old manner of life, and also the experience of being reborn, regenerated. Not that we need to be regenerated each day, but we need the fresh experience, don't we, of the life that we retain at our regeneration?

[MM]: Well, the title Paul gave him in First Corinthians 15:45, he's the life-giving Spirit. That's not a once for all experience. We need life every day, every moment. He's giving us life as we open to Him.

[CW]: Well, let's go on. We have one verse left in this passage that we were talking about today. It's verse 25 and now, out of that experience, I think 25 becomes very significant to us, for you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and overseer of your souls. Here's Witness Lee for our final portion.

### **Part 3**

[CW]: Well, this poor Galilean fisherman who stumbled and tripped up so many times in the gospels, has had a lot of experience, hasn't he, Matt, of the Shepherd, of the Overseer, of being cared for. So what he provides us is a marvelous picture by now.

[MM]: Seems like Peter's experience, like you said, Chris, he made more mistakes than anyone in the Gospels. He seemed like he was always the one that was putting his foot in his mouth and receiving the rebuke from the Lord. And therefore, he experienced the Lord's care a lot. And the Lord was the Overseer of his soul and the Shepherd of his soul. And this is the same kind of care an elder should have in the church. He should have the same care that Christ has. An overseeing care. This is what an overseer is. It's not a position, it's not a title. It's someone who really cares for people, who cares for them like Christ does, and Christ truly cares for us. I just like this picture of Christ as his Shepherd and Overseer. And Witness Lee stress at the beginning of this section, is it's almost like incredulously, how could anyone say that Christ does not live in you? Because some people actually say this. They say Christ isn't in you, only the Spirit's in you. Christ is in the heavens at the right hand of God. Well, that is an aspect of Christ. He is objectively, physically, in bodily form, at the right hand of God. That is a fact, but subjectively, Christ must be in us as the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul. It doesn't say here the Spirit is our Overseer, but Christ is the Overseer.

[CW]: In the Life-study message, Matt, I think he makes the reference to the experience that the two men had on the road to Emmaus, when the Lord came on the day of resurrection and was walking with them as a kind of a picture of how he was sort of guiding them from place to place, and at each point, their realization, their revelation of one who was with them, increased. We get this experience by him being within us as we're on this path of the Christian lives, don't we?

[MM]: Only what we do, Chris and is I have a vision right now of people driving down the road having that same experience that those disciples had as they walked with Christ, that the scriptures open up to them. Their heart burns within them, and there's a real care and shepherding of the Lord through that time, and it all comes through an indwelling Christ. And you know what? Our listeners right now wherever they are in the world, we have listeners all over the world listening to this program wherever they are. Christ is there as the shepherd and overseer of their soul, shepherding them even through this work today.

[CW]: Well, we had what we thought would be a sweet and enjoyable portion. I've been shepherded and cared for in a loving way, and had some visitation. I hope you and all of our listeners have as well. Man, appreciate your being here.

[MM]: I appreciate too, Chris, and to answer your question, yes, I have been shepherding much by this program.

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