

Follow His Example

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. “When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.” (1 Peter 2:21-23)

Jesus came to bear our sins: He paid the price of our unrighteousness. Our sins caused His death. *“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree.” (1 Peter 2:24)* Christ suffered for us because He loves us. *“Greater love has no one than this that He lay down His life for His friends.” (John 15:13)* His love is not a selfish love; His love is a life giving one. He gave us not only the best but even His very life. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not be perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)*

Jesus Christ suffered for us: The suffering that Christ suffered was not a simple one; He received insults, disgrace, and increasing pain sustained till His death. He was mocked, sneered, slapped and spitted on the face, whipped, carried a heavy cross on bruised and injured back, pierced by nails that penetrated His hands and feet, hanged on the cross tolerating the excruciating pain of the crucifixion. In brief, His suffering was to the maximum. *“He committed no sin. And no deceit was found in His mouth. When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.”*

The Lord Jesus Christ suffered, leaving us an example to follow:

- 1) **He did not retaliate:** To His disciples Jesus said, *“If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him for taking your tunic.” (Luke 6:29)* Jesus taught us not to retaliate; eye for an eye or tooth for a tooth is no longer the principle, for it would just turn the situation from bad to worse. We don't extinguish fire by petrol but by plain water. *“Do not take revenge, my friend, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)*
- 2) **He made no threats:** It is easy to love those who love us and who are good to us. But how do we express the love of God to our enemies? The first step is to love the Lord above all so that we can obey His command when He said: *“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)* We should continue to do good to those who do evil to us. The only way so that we can correct them is to love them more. We should not speak any curse or threatening words to them but, on the contrary: *“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:20-21)*

- 3) **He entrusts Himself to Him who judges justly:** Our God is holy and just He is the God of justice and His judgement is always fair and just. The Prophet Isaiah said, *“I have labored to no purpose. I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God.” (Isaiah 49:4)* Our Lord God Almighty is watching us; His eyes are upon us:

- A. *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.” (Colossians 3:23)* This clearly tells us that we are not working for men. In structure, we do work under man's authority but our service is ultimately evaluated by God.
- B. *“Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by Him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.” (1 Peter 2:13,18)* There is no use of complaining or making trouble especially over little differences because we cannot change situation by using manpower. It may even become worse if we express resistance and non-compliance. As well, the power of the servant of God is in humility and humbleness. The more we humble in our attitude, the more we are gentle in our reply. The more we are faithful in our service, the more we get position and authority to change situations. This is because the Spirit of God works mightily in our behalf. In our weaknesses, the Lord gives us strength and power. As we humble ourselves, He lifts us up.

My dear and beloved: The Lord Jesus is the image of the invisible God. He has the power to change the lives of people who follow Him. He changes them so they can follow His example. By doing so they become the channel of blessing to others in order to receive the love of God. If we are humble, gentle, loving person, and preserving in suffering like Jesus, God can use us as noble vessel to give His love for others. We will be a good example for them and through us they can see who truly Jesus Christ is. Let us therefore follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, for this we are called. We are not called to fight or to quarrel; it is not God's will that we retaliate or we use manpower and give threats to our enemies. The word of God teaches us a new style of life; it is easy, more joyful, more promising and rewarding as we continue to obey and follow the Lord's example.

My Prayer: *“Heavenly Father, I come before You in the name of Jesus. I thank You for your word to me. Lord, I commit myself into your hand. I ask you, Lord, to change my character and behavior. Humble me and guide my lips and action. Lead me in the way that You want me to be – living at peace with everyone. Thank You, Lord. This is my prayer in Jesus' name, Amen.”*