

Perfecting by Suffering

Hebrews 5.9

Christ is being perfected by the things that He willingly endures... This word perfected is something to consider, it is an enormous word, filled with meaning and implications that must be rightly understood. The word rendered perfected could also be rendered, consummate, fully consummated, consecrated, it has linguistic roots in the idea of hearkening unto, of listening, of hearing with a design to learn and obey. It signals to us that He is dedicated, consecrated and set apart as a priest by suffering

I. CONSIDER THE PRECEDENT

The priests of the OT Law were also consecrated by suffering. Thiers was the suffering of the sacrifice offered in their place. 3 sacrifices to be exact. The details are found in Exodus 29. The blood sacrifice makes atonement for the soul. Leviticus 17.11

Three animals were sacrificed.

The first a sin offering - a bull, to be burnt outside the camp in this case (normally the priest would consume the sin offering to show that he is taking the sin of the people and interceding on their behalf) for the remainder of the week of consecration a bull was offered daily as a sin offering before God.

The second a burnt offering - the first ram, the sweet smelling aroma to God

The third - a peace offering, or the offering of consecration, this was the second ram.

- Its blood was placed on the right ears, right thumbs, and right big toes of Aaron and his sons, signifying that they were cleansed and dedicated to God. The extremities being cleansed signified the whole man between them, from the top of the head to the tips of the toes
- Blood on the ear may have symbolized dedication to the hearing of God's Word, blood on the thumb may have pictured holiness in doing God's work, and blood on the toe may have spoken of walking carefully in the service of God.

- There is also an aspect of the strength and power of the man from these things. Kings that were subjugated often had their thumbs and great toes amputated so that they could never rebel. Eyes were sometimes burned out, ears removed to hobble and humble a man... here these key components are submitted, consecrated and empowered by God for His work. Made holy, made His.

There is no escape from the Biblical idea that sin is terrible and that a price **MUST** be paid, further that this price is an awful one. Again, Leviticus 17.11 tells us

Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.'

We see the suffering of the sacrifices woven throughout the OT structure... But in Christ all of that comes to a head, powerfully, profoundly as God

Himself takes on flesh and becomes the fullness of all of the previous sacrifices combined.

But the word could also be rendered as it is, perfected. So we must ask how is it that Christ is "perfected"?

II. CONSIDER THE MANNER

- a. Sovereignly. Called and perfected by God's plan, design and power
 - i. How great a matter it is to have sinners made partakers of eternal redemption
 - ii. How great, how infinite was that wisdom, that love and grace, which contrived it and brought it about
 - iii. How great and terrible will be the ruin of them by whom this salvation is despised
- b. Obediently Perfected by the participation of His own sovereign will and obedience to the suffering that would redeem us-

Psalm 40.6-8

c. Vicariously - He suffered and was perfected for OUR sakes, not for His own sin.

John 17.19

III. CONSIDER THE MEANING

a.2 ways perfected

i. on His Own part - not in His nature, but in His office, and in the work that His office demands.

1. This cannot be overstated. Christ in His person does not need perfecting!! He is Perfect, He is GOD. But Christ had to be made the perfect priest according to the pattern of the Law. He had to be made finally fit and eternally fit for the office of High Priest forever by His own suffering

2. Nothing else would be strong enough

3. Nothing else could be given, once would do, and to add to this weakens and lessens that which He has accomplished.
- ii. With respect to us - that He might be the author of our eternal salvation.
 1. He delivers us from the curse and penalty of the law,
 - a. so saving us from “the wrath to come.” **1 Thessalonians 1.10**
 - b. He condemned sin in the flesh fulfilling the righteous requirement of the law - **Romans 8.3**
 - c. And this was by his “bearing our sins in his own body on the tree;” - - **1 Peter 2.24**
 - d. by being “made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” - **2 Corinthians 5:21**

- b. To both of these ends, (for his own preparation for the role and the delivering of the people) the sufferings of Christ were necessary and designed by God

IV. CONSIDER THE MEANS

- a. His sacrifice

- i. The full satisfaction made for our sin, guilt and the debt we owed to God
- ii. The perfect merit or worth of His obedience unto the law on our behalf, which merit is then communicated to us.

- b. His intercession

- i. This is the means by which He bestows His payment and His obedience unto the law UPON us. We do not take hold of Him nearly so much as He takes hold of us.

Hebrews 7.25-27

- ii. He APPLIES His blood purchase upon us. He faithfully communicates what He has done to all that the Father has chosen.
 - 1. He teaches us the way of salvation
 - 2. He makes us fit for that salvation, saving us from the power of sin
 - 3. He preserves for, and delivers it unto us
 - 4. He gives us entrance unto it and assurance of it
 - 5. One day He will by His power and authority finally bestow upon us the eternal life purchased and promised.

V. CONSIDER THE SCOPE

a. To all who obey Him

- i. First to do with obedience in repentance. None can except those whom the Father has chosen, those who have been called to life by the working of the HS - these alone have the blood purchase of Jesus applied unto them, these alone can and will repent

- ii. Secondly - this has to do with the ongoing process of sanctification which God will work out on our lives all the days which we walk the earth.
- b. This salvation is eternal –
 - i. absolutely and completely
 - ii. In comparison to the temporary relief given in the OT
 - iii. Temporally - all external punishments in relation to the Law have been removed. The curse is broken, Christ having become a curse for us. This does not negate the discipline of God but the punishment. The difference is total and absolute

VI. CONSIDER THE RESULT

- a. We have been delivered from Hell
- b. Christ is honored in our salvation
- c. God is vindicated before all creation
- d. The wrath and holiness of God are known by all who will not bow before Him
- e. The righteousness and love of God are known by all who call Him Lord