

1 Peter 2:21-25, Part C

1Pe 2:21 (NKJV) **For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:** ²² *"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth";* ²³ **who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;** ²⁴ **who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.** ²⁵ **For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

It seems to always be a good thing to have a very good model or pattern to follow, and especially when it comes to spiritual matters. Knowing someone and being good friends with someone who is able to model the Christian life for you will always have great benefit and blessing for your life. In a family, it should be the parents who model Christ for their children. In a church, the pastor and the elders should always be serving as a model of what it means to live a godly life. However, the most obvious example to follow for a believer is the model provided in the life of Christ. He is the ultimate “**example**” to follow. So, as we come to v22-24, we find that Christ is our “**example**” in multiple ways. Notice how He lived in this passage. (1) He committed no sin, (2) He never said anything deceitful, (3) He never reviled anyone who reviled Him, (4) He never threatened anyone who threatened Him, (5) He committed His life to His heavenly Father, and (6) He bore our sins in His own body. This is the “**example**” that Peter has given the believer to “**follow**”. This is the “**example**” that we as believers are to emulate. Obviously there are many other aspects of the life of Christ that should be followed, but certainly this is a great place to start. Now, what should stand out to us in this passage is the phrase “**committed Himself to Him who judges righteously**”. Everything in His life was focused on what it was that His Father desired of Him. The will of His Father was always the priority of His life, always the governing factor in how He lived, and always the constraining influence that controlled how He lived. We could put it in the form of a question – “*what would my Father want me to do in this circumstance?*”

In v22, it says that there was no “**deceit found in His mouth**”. The word “**deceit**” is the Greek word “*dolos*” and it comes from the Greek word “*dello*” which meant to decoy something. Dr. Strong says that it represents a trick, bait and that it means to be crafty and deceitful.¹ Jesus never deceived anyone, He never tried to trick someone, and He was never cunning and sneaky. Jesus was never someone that you could accuse of being shrewd, devious, or scheming. He never had some hidden motive where He felt that He needed to be a little shrewd with someone. To the very opposite, He was always upfront, transparent, and completely honest with everyone to whom He spoke. He immediately told the religious Nicodemus that he had to be “**born again**”. He told the woman at the well that she had had five husbands and the one she was currently living with was not her husband. He told the rich young ruler that he needed to sell what he had and follow Him. He told the Pharisees who were plotting to kill Him that they were white washed graves full of dead men’s bones. He told Pilate that he had no power over Him except what was given to him from above.

He never said one single deceitful word to anyone – not one word. He never exaggerated anything that He told someone. He never embellished an idea so that it would sound better, so that it would seem

¹ Strong, “*dolos*”, Word #1388.

more attractive, or so that the individual would be more inclined to accept what He was saying. The opposite of the word “**deceit**” would be truthfulness and honesty. The problem today is that we live in a culture that seems to embrace being crafty and baiting people to buy things. It is almost impossible to know if what you are being told is accurate or deceitful. When I was looking to purchase a truck recently, I gave them a price that I was satisfied with and the sales manager came back with a counter offer and told me that they were only making \$834 on the sale on the price that he had given me. Then he made this statement – “hand on the Bible” is what he said. I told him that the price he quoted was not good enough and that we had some other trucks to look at in Columbia and that my son knew the manager of the dealership there in Columbia. So, he said that he would go back and give me his quote just so I could have it if we changed our mind. When he came back, he had lowered the price by \$2500. I guess they just lost money on the deal – right? Probably not! I understand that selling something is a business, but people simply are not honest, and what they say can be very misleading. Advertisers are more than willing to make claims about their products that are greatly exaggerated. Every warranty that someone receives with a purchase is nothing but small print that has more exclusions than benefits. Now, we have what is known as “fake news”.

So, here is the goal for the believer. It is to be completely transparent, totally honest and truthful in all that we communicate, and never manipulate people with inaccurate or deceptive information that strengthens what we may want to achieve. If we have something difficult to say to someone, make sure that it is seasoned with grace and mercy. Make sure that the words that are used are filled with kindness and compassion. There is no law against being thoughtful and considerate of other people. I had a very uncomfortable conversation recently with a pastor who was very frustrated with some things. In the process of venting his frustration, I became his latest victim. What he said to me was reviling, scornful, and very caustic and sarcastic. Inside, I kept thinking to myself “*How can you be a pastor and talk this way to someone?*” However, I made the right decision. I responded back to him with as much grace and kindness as I knew how. Even though my words to him were gentle and charitable, he completely rejected my attempt to be gracious and made some very condescending remarks to me. My personal decision was that I would not react with anger or bitterness towards him, but simply try and do and say the right thing and in doing so commit myself to my heavenly Father. Life will always have these very unpleasant and unsettling moments for us. They are inevitable, but they are also the opportunities that God provides to us so that we can be Christlike to others when we do not want to be Christlike, when we want to say negative and demeaning things to them. We must see that. We must embrace that. We must grasp that. We never know when these things will happen to us, so it is critical that we be both mentally and emotionally prepared, and these verses are provided to prepare us for that which is unpleasant and for those moments when we sense that people are trying to use us or manipulate us.

V23 simply says this about Christ - “...**when He was reviled, did not revile in return**”. If there was ever anyone who did not deserve to be reviled, it was Christ. The word “**reviled**” is “*loidoreo*” and it means to rebuke harshly.² It carries the idea of insulting someone, of reproaching them and heaping abuse on them.³ It is to say something about someone that wounds them, that stings them, and that bites

² Harris, “*loidoreo*”, Word #3032.

³ Renn, 812.

at their person and character.⁴ There really is not a much more scathing kind of thing that can be done to someone than to “**revile**” them in this New Testament sense. The Dictionary of New Testament Theology says that it is to insult, to abuse. It has the idea of slandering someone and was used in classical Greek in the political life of the Greeks. To the Greeks, it was an art to know how to insult people.⁵ Surely, we see this same kind of language abuse all the time when it comes to the political realm in which we live. Then to paint a greater picture of the reviling, the verb is a present tense participle which means that the reviling was something that was happening over and over to Christ. It was not that someone just said something inappropriate to Him, but rather that the abusive language was continuous. It is as if in every situation that He found Himself that people were hurling out very harsh and demeaning words at Him. Listen to several verses relative to this word for “**revile**”. [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#) speaking of those who are not Christians says the following,

1Co 6:9 (NKJV) Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Before we were saved, some of us were this way. It is interesting to me that the person with the caustic tongue is placed in the same listing as fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, extortioners, and drunkards. However, for the believer, the encouragement is to handle being reviled with a completely different approach. [1 Corinthians 4:12](#) says,

1Co 4:12 (NKJV) And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

I.e., when someone says something that is scathing and insulting to us, God wants us to find a way to actually “**bless**” them. This word for “**bless**” is “*eulogeo*”. “*Eu*” means well or good, and “*logos*” means to speak. It simply means to speak well of someone, to actually invoke a blessing on them. Taking this approach is something that goes against what our flesh wants to do. Our flesh wants to curse someone, to say something scathing about them, and to revile back at them. However, that is not what God desires for us. We should pray for them and ask God to deliver them from the obvious bitterness and hatred that they have in their heart. [1 Peter 3:8-9](#) says,

1Pe 3:8 (NKJV) Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

The Greek Interlinear actually translates the word “**reviling**” as “**abuse**”. Please notice that v9 says that “**you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing**”. Most likely the blessing will not come to you through the individual who has reviled you, but from God. It will be a unique and deeply spiritual blessing that God will provide for your life.

⁴ Wuest, Vol. 2, 1 Peter 2:23, 67.

⁵ Verbrugge, 343.

Next we see that when Christ suffered that He did not threaten in return. So, often that is exactly what we want to do – to threaten someone. The simple instinctive response that everyone is inclined to have is to get even, to try and hurt them for hurting us. We want them to know that we are capable of revenge that will hurt them for hurting us.⁶ We want to say to them “*You can’t talk to me that way. If you continue to treat me and abuse me this way I am going to do so and so.*” We want to tell them about God’s future judgment on them, but we must see that Jesus never threatened His revilers – not one word. He never said something like “*You have no idea what God is going to do to you – none whatsoever.*” I believe it is an accurate statement to say that when we feel unjustly abused and mistreated that the urge for revenge and retaliation is so strong that it almost seems unbearable at times.⁷ It is like our mind, our tongue, and our resolve to say something is so intense inside of us that it just comes out suddenly without any self-control. Speaking of Christ, listen to [Isaiah 53:7](#) speaking of the non-retaliatory spirit that He had,

Isa 53:7 (NKJV) He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

Jesus had a principle that He always followed, and that principle was that no matter what happened to Him, He was going to simply “**commit Himself**” to His Father and let His Father determine what would be done to the one who was doing the reviling. The Greek word for “**commit**” is “*paradidomai*”, and it means to yield oneself, to entrust yourself to someone. It means to deliver yourself over to someone else’s care or charge.⁸ I.e., you are giving that person permission to take care of you. The verb is in the imperfect tense and active voice which means that what Jesus was doing was something that He had been doing as an ongoing part of His life. Jesus kept handing over every dimension of His life to His Father.

When my mother was alive, I had the power of attorney over her so that I could handle her finances, her health, and her overall welfare. Everytime that I get on an airplane, I am committing myself into the care of someone else. The point in this verse is really very simple for the believer. There is always a much greater value and divine purpose for our life when we do not react to difficult situations in the way that we might normally be inclined to react. First, there is great benefit to us personally because we are able to exercise a high degree of self-control – an attribute that is always the believer’s best spiritual friend. People who lack self-control will always react to what is happening to them rather than responding. They will react in the flesh rather than respond by the Spirit. The second benefit is that the individual who has created the tension for you will be deeply challenged by the fact that you did not respond like them.

I am personally convinced that many people are inclined to actually try and provoke us through their anger and through their harsh and inappropriate words. I have taught it often and will continue to do so that God is never as interested in what happens to me as He is to how I respond to what happens to me. However, being able to respond with dignity, with grace, and with self-control is not natural, so it has to be an area of our life where we become very intentional, purposeful, and deliberate. When the individual

⁶ Grudem, 130.

⁷ Schreiner, 143.

⁸ Zodhiates, 1103.

called me and began to vent his frustration towards me with very harsh and inappropriate words, I had to immediately make a decision – “*who was I going to allow to control my life?*” Was it going to be the person who was unkind and harsh, or was it going to be my heavenly Father? Before the individual ever stopped talking, I had made my decision. I would not react, but I was going to commit everything that was happening to my heavenly Father – and I did just that. It was that decision that I knew that I must make that gave me the strength to not say anything that was a kind of subtle retaliation, or anything that was harsh, or anything that was inappropriate. I just kept committing my words and my reaction to my heavenly Father. It was a very deliberate choice that I was very prepared to make. Why? It was because I knew the great truth that was embedded, rooted, and implanted in this verse. When the conversation had ended, I knew that I had not only heard God, but that I had obeyed Him by simply not reacting. Since that time, I have really been able to pray for this individual with a heartfelt love for them. No matter what they may do or say at a later time, I am prepared to continue to treat them with kindness and love.

Every one of us need to always be ready to hand over to our heavenly Father every dimension of our life, and especially the ones that often become quite uncomfortable for us. Christ is our model, He is the underwriting that we follow. He is the pattern and the perfect example that the Father has given to us to follow. I am convinced that we can never achieve what is right by doing what is wrong. The right thing to do is to follow Christ and keep committing ourselves and others to God the Father.

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