

From Witness to Partaker – I Peter 5:1-4

I. Introduction:

A. **Luke 24** describes Jesus' first visit with His church after the resurrection.

1. He had already revealed Himself to Mary at the tomb, & He had met the 2 disciples on the Emmaus Road.
2. But this was His first appearance before the assembled church. The members were frightened.
3. His first words were *"Peace be unto you,"* because He knew the weakness of their faith.
4. Then he showed them some of His wounds, before demonstrating that He was for real, by eating some fish.
5. At that point He reminded them of what He said in regard to the prophecies about His sufferings and death.
6. *"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."*

B. *"And ye are witnesses of these things."*

1. Before Peter begins his exhortation to the church elders, he points out that not only was **he** an **elder**, but also *"a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed."*
2. Christ called him to be an **apostle** and an **elder** but also to be *"a witness of these things."*
3. In his **second letter**, Peter testifies, *"We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."*
4. Three things – apostleship, eldership & observance – gave Peter special opportunities to serve His Saviour.
5. They also provided some of the gifts which he was to invest for the Lord.

II. Let's think about the fact that Peter was a **WITNESS** of – and for – the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. How much of Jesus' ministry did Peter have the privilege to observe? Essentially, all of it.

1. **John 1** tells us that **Andrew** and some unnamed individual, probably **John**, were the first to follow Christ.
2. Andrew, immediately went out to find his **brother Simon Peter**, telling him, *"We have found the Messiah,"* and he brought Peter to Jesus.
3. There were lapses when Peter was not as close to the Lord as he could have been, but essentially he became a witness to all that Jesus did and suffered for that three and a half year earthly ministry.
4. He saw Jesus' miracles, even one of them as close as the healing of Peter's mother-in-law.
5. He also saw it when people picked up stones to try to kill Jesus for blasphemously declaring that He was the Son of God.
6. But those attempts at murder failed, because Jesus **was** the Christ; He truly **is** the Son of God.
7. Peter heard the verbal abuse which Christ received from time to time from the Pharisees, the priests and the Sadducees.
8. He was there when the religious pseudo-intellectuals tried in vain to trick and deceive Christ into sin.
9. And he witnessed the arrest of Christ, even trying to defend the Lord with a sword.

B. Even though Peter was not present at the brutal beating at the palace of the High Priest, he did see the Lord afterward as they prepared to take Him to the palace of the Roman governor.

1. He saw the blood from the crown of thorns, pouring down his swollen and distorted face.
2. He could see the blood seeping onto the back of Jesus' seamless robe from the whipping He received.
3. At the crucifixion Peter may have been among *"all (Jesus) acquaintances, and the woman that followed him from Galilee... beholding these things" – Luke 23:49.*
4. Peter was intimately familiar with the Lord Jesus and all that He suffered to purchase our salvation.

C. And as important as that was, Peter was thrilled to be able to say he was also a witness of Jesus' resurrection.

1. The statement he makes in the **second epistle** may be a reference to Jesus' **transfiguration** – the precursor to Christ's resurrection – we *"were eyewitnesses of his majesty."*
2. Then four times in the **Book of Acts**, Peter declares that God had given him the privilege to be a witness to the resurrected Saviour.

- D. As he tells us, Peter was someone who **observed** – who **saw** and **witnessed** – all that Jesus suffered.
1. But the word he uses – “**witness**” – has more meaning than that of just a spectator.
 2. The same word is used in **Acts 1:8** where Christ says, *“But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be **witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*
 3. This is what Peter was doing in his defense before the Jewish counsel when he said, *“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his **witnesses** of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”*
- E. When Peter said to us, *“I am a witness of the sufferings of Christ,”* he was saying that he had taken in all that he had observed, but now, like the witness in a court case, he was testifying to what he had seen.
1. He was telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.
 2. Just as Paul did in **Acts 22**, Peter could have heard, *“The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.”*
 3. Peter was exactly that: an observer and now a sharer of his eye-witness of Christ.
- F. Incidentally, as many of you may know, the word Peter uses has even another extended meaning.
1. The Greek word translated “**witness**” is “**martus**,” and that has come into the English language as “**martyr**.”
 2. A martyr is literally someone who is willing to testify to the truth of something with a willingness to give his life for that truth.
 3. Even though this was not Peter’s intent in our text that was the eventual outcome of his witness of the sufferings of Christ.
 4. There is evidence that Peter died by crucifixion in Rome under the persecution of Nero.
 5. There is far less evidence to the claim that he was crucified upside down, because he didn’t feel worthy to suffer as His Saviour had suffered.
 6. But that Peter gave his life as a martyr and witness is undoubtedly true.
 7. He was a witness of the sufferings of Christ in three different ways – an observer, a testifier and a martyr.

III. He also claimed, in this verse, to be a **PARTAKER** of the glory that shall be revealed.

- A. Beloved, there is coming a glorious day.
1. By that I mean that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, and when He does it will be with all His unimaginable glory.
 2. All of the ugliness of this world will be dissolved in the heat of that glory.
 3. And the people of God will be glorified through the Lord’s glorious magnificence.
 4. The **Apostle John** says, *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God... Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is.”*
 5. In essence John says that we can’t imagine **how** we shall be transformed or **what** we shall be.
 6. As Christ was transfigured so that the fashion of his countenance was magnificently altered, and even his clothing was white and glistening, so will God do to his saints – (**Luke 9:29**).
- B. Paul once wrote: *“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, when shall ye also appear with him **in glory**.”*
1. How do you interpret those words of **Colossians 3:4**?
 2. Do you understand it to mean that God’s people will be **taken** to a **place** we might call “**glory**?” **Heaven**?
 3. I don’t. I think Paul is saying, that when Christ shall appear **we shall appear glorious**, just like him.
 4. **David** said in **Psalms 17**, No matter what the world, the flesh and devil throw at me in this life, *“I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake (if even from death) with thy likeness.”*
 5. **Paul** said, *“Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body...”*

6. He also said, *“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*
 - a. He wasn’t talking about the glory which would be revealed **TO** us.
 - b. He wasn’t talking about the **glorious heavenly mansion** in which we will reside.
 - c. He was talking about the glory of Christ which will be revealed **IN** and **through** us.
- C. Peter also was quite particular in the way he spoke about **his part** in this coming glory.
1. He said, *“I am ... an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a **partaker** of the glory that shall be revealed.”*
 2. He is to be a partaker of that glory, a recipient of it.
 3. That glory will be another gift of God’s grace, not something Peter merited or earned in some way.
- D. This word he used is translated **“partaker”** here as well as in half the other places we find it in the Greek Bible.
1. But it is in some of the other verses where we see the word’s peculiarities.
 2. It speaks of a **far closer bond** than what we recognize at first glance.
 3. Peter, as you might know was a fisherman before the Lord called him to become an apostle.
 4. And in his business, he shared a boat with his brother and two others – fellow disciples John and James.
 - a. **Luke 5:10** says, *“James and John, the sons of Zebedee... were **partners** with (Peter).”*
 - b. Peter, Andrew, James & John equally shared or partook of their catch on the lake. They were partners.
 5. Also, Paul spoke of **Titus** to the Corinthians, *“Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my **partner** and fellowhelper concerning you...” (II Corinthians 8:23).*
- E. I don’t want to leave the impression that we, or Peter, are in some sort of partnership with Christ in salvation.
1. Nevertheless the relationship we have to the Lord Jesus and to His glory is closer and more precious than just names written on the same page.
 2. That Greek word is used in **I Corinthians 10:20** where it is translated **“fellowship.”**
 3. *“I am ... an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also (**in the fellowship**) of the glory that shall be revealed.”*
- F. I’ve brought all this to your attention because I believe there is a pattern in it.
1. Peter was **not a partaker** of the glory that shall be revealed, **because** he was in the business of **testifying** of Christ’s sufferings.
 2. But **because** of what he **saw**, and what he **believed** about Christ’s sufferings, he became a partaker.
 3. He was a partaker of Christ’s future glory, because he had made Christ’s sufferings in the past a part of his heart, and his soul, and his hope for the future.

IV. It is only when sinners are witnesses of Christ’s suffering that they will be partakers of Christ’s glory.

- A. No one is in the **family of God** because they have some sort of **relationship** with **me**.
1. This church is not in itself a doorway into Heaven.
 2. The ordinances of this church cannot transmit the glory of God to a spirit dead in trespasses and sins.
 3. To enjoy the future glory of God, you must be intimately connected to the sufferings of the Saviour.
- B. On the next page in your Bible, **II Peter 1:2-4** Peter says, *“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, & of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory & virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great & precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers** of the **divine nature**.”*
1. Peter was not only a partaker of **CHRIST’S glory**, but also of **GOD’S nature** to a limited degree.
 2. Did he do something special to partake of that nature? Did he earn it through his sinlessness or service?
 3. Did the baptism by John give him God’s glory? Of course not. Then how did he partake thereof?
 4. By the grace of God. God chose to redeem the man and to promise His eternal blessings to him.

- C. Peter was a witness of the sufferings of Christ.
1. And I invite you to look as well.
 2. In particular, look toward the cross.
- D. When Paul's evangelistic travels took him to the city of Corinth he arrived with a fresh vigor and resolve.
1. Later he testified of that visit, *"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."*
 2. For Paul it was not enough to know that Jesus was virgin born, or that he lived a victorious and sinless life.
 3. To know that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and the eternal Son of God, is important, but it is not enough.
 4. The people of Corinth and the people of the Spokane River Valley need to witness Christ crucified.
 5. Paul said, *"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*
 - a. *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*
 - b. *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*
 - c. *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*
 - d. *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:*
 - e. *But we preach Christ crucified..."*
 6. In order to enjoy the glory that shall be revealed at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to experience, by faith, the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- E. Paul said to the **Galatians** – *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*
1. Why did he refuse to glory in anything else?
 2. For one reason, because, for the sinner, there is no eternal glory in anything else.
 3. What enabled Peter to say that he will be a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed?
 4. It was because he was a partaker, by faith, of the sufferings and sacrifice and blood of the Saviour.
- F. Are you a witness of the sufferings of the Saviour?
1. Is your faith in Him this afternoon?