

He Bore Our Sins

by Linda Rex

April 30, 2023, 4th Sunday in Easter/Resurrection—Sin. Such an old-fashioned word. Is there even room in our world today for such a concept? One would gather from what we read and see today that many believe we have no need to discuss sin anymore.

But when we talk about Jesus Christ, the discomfort associated with sin must be addressed, for the reason Jesus came was so that sin might be eradicated once and for all from our human flesh and our cosmos. Even though Jesus was sinless, the apostle Paul wrote, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21 NASB).

Karl Barth, in his *Church Dogmatics*, says that the mere fact of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins tells us that we are sinful people, in need of redemption. This goes much deeper than a particular deed we may have done at some point in our lives. It goes down to the depths of who we are as those who have turned away from the One who made us and called us to be his very own. This has to do with our broken relationship with our Creator and with a denial of our identity as human beings made in the image of this God who ever lives in other-centered, self-giving love and oneness.

Sin has to do with us as God’s children living a lie, no longer living in the truth of God’s creative genius. God made us persons who could share warm, close fellowship with the God who is three Persons—Father, Son, and Spirit—in one Being. God meant for us to walk and talk with him, to do everyday life in relationship with him, as we care for and tend the world he created and placed us in.

Each of us has, in some way, turned away from our center in our Triune God and turned to ourselves, this earth, the creations of our own hands, and to one another. We rely upon ourselves, and consider ourselves the master of our destiny. Our will and passion reign supreme. There is no room for our loving Father, his Son, or his Spirit in our lives. It is when we become the center of our existence that death enters in, and begins to slowly but surely diminish our life. Darkness begins to overtake the light. And we suffer.

The apostle Peter reminds us that when we suffer because of our bad decisions, poor choices, and our rebellion against God, we really don’t have any right to complain. Indeed, we are only getting what we deserve. Grace, however, is when we receive from God what we don’t deserve. And this is what God gives us in the gift of his Son Jesus Christ. Christ’s life and death are a gift to us—for he did not sin, yet offered himself to us to be sinned against, to be beaten, reviled, and crucified, even though all he ever did was love, heal, give, and serve.

That God would come himself in his Son Jesus, to live our life, die our death, and rise again, and send the Spirit for our salvation, invites us to walk away from sin, darkness and death and to enter into life, life in relationship with God now and forever. To be sure, in this broken human existence, turning from sin to Jesus Christ can mean embracing suffering rather than escaping it, for the natural response of our social systems is to ridicule and reject followers of Christ. But wouldn’t it be better to suffer for the sake of being true to who God says you are in Christ rather than to suffer the consequences of sin? Wouldn’t it be better to face up to the things you need grace for than to continue down a path which inevitably will destroy you and others?

The Shepherd and Guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ, is worthy of our trust. He has shown us our loving and forgiving Father, and given us the gift of his blessed Spirit, by whom we may

know and believe we are God's beloved children. Today, this day, won't you embrace the truth of your belovedness and turn away from sin?

Dearest Father, Son, and Spirit, I admit that I have turned away from you to the things of this world, to my own self, and to others. I find I am rebellious, stubborn, selfish, and indifferent. On some days, it seems like I'm okay, but you know my heart, how far it wanders away from you. I confess my sin and receive your forgiveness with thankful heart. Thank you for bringing me back home, Jesus, and for washing me clean, and for giving me your blessed Spirit. Heavenly Father, from this day on, grant me the grace to live my life your way, the way you always meant me to, in obedience to your will and purposes, through Jesus my Lord, and by your Spirit. Amen.

"For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 'who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth'; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls." 1 Peter 2:19–25
NASB