

1 Peter 2:21-25 (NIV)

21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” 23 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. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Sobering words to say the least! Sobering, yet extremely comforting! First, let's look at the comfort. Christ suffered for us. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die with him to sins and live for righteousness. Jesus died so that we wouldn't have to die eternally. Jesus died and our sinful nature died with him. Jesus gave us the power to drown our sinful nature daily with our sorrow over our sins and our trust in his forgiveness. By the wounds that he suffered on the cross, wounds which caused his blood to flow, we have been healed as his blood washed away all of our sins. Jesus has given us a new lease on life. No longer does sin have a strangle-hold over us. No longer can it solely dominate our lives. We have been called by Christ out of the darkness of sin and into the light of life! How comforting to know that our Shepherd and Overseer has done all of this for us!

Now comes the sobering part. He's left us an example to follow; a perfect example. He committed no sin. No deceit was found in his mouth. He didn't retaliate when people insulted him. He didn't threaten revenge while he suffered more than we can fathom. The sobering reality is that none of us can even think of duplicating this example. The sobering reality is that we miserably fall short. This should serve as a wake up call to all of us that we can't do it! We can't earn our own salvation. We can't play even the tiniest part in it because one sin, one misstep is damning. But that's why these words of Peter are so comforting.

We don't have to! Christ has done it for us! For us he suffered. For us he bore our sins on the tree. For us he was wounded that we might be healed! He has defeated our enemies! He has given us the victory! Through his righteousness, we can follow in his footsteps. With his oversight, we can strive to emulate his example. We were lost, but now we're found. Christ has returned us to himself! With joy and enthusiasm, we follow his example as we love our God and love one another. We walk side by side with our Good Shepherd, living for righteousness.