

March 10, 2024 - St. Stephen Lutheran Church – Pastor Mark Gullerud

Sermon Theme: Jesus is our Endurance

Text: Hebrews 13:12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

In the name of our Savior Jesus Christ who suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem for us, dear fellow redeemed;

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a woman named Mary Mallon who became known as “Typhoid Mary.” Mary, who was born in Ireland, emigrated to the United States when she was 15 years old. She supported herself by working in homes as a cook. But there was a very serious problem. Wherever she cooked, those who ate her food became so ill that they died. Mary went from house to house, working for eight families in New York. In seven of those households people became critically ill.

While Mary had no symptoms of being sick, she was the carrier of a disease that infected some 50 people before she was quarantined. This was the only way to prevent others from being infected by “Typhoid Mary.” For 30 years Mary was separated from the rest of society. That was indeed a very long time to suffer solitary loneliness until she finally died.

Could you or I endure this? If this were to happen to any of us, it wouldn’t be surprising if we were to react by saying, “I just can’t take this anymore!”

We might very well have a difficult time enduring something like this, but Jesus Christ endured much more than this as our Savior. Again this evening, you are invited to Keep Your Eyes on Jesus: He is our Endurance.

In order to learn of Jesus as our Endurance, we look back in time to the Old Testament days, centuries before Jesus came to earth, even to the days of the prophet Moses. In those times, whenever a priest or any of the people were guilty of sin, God instructed that a sin offering be made for them. They were to take a young bull without any defect. The priest was to put his hands upon that bull, signifying the transference of human sin to the sacrificial offering. After the bull was killed, some of its blood, as well as fat from the animal was offered to God on His altar. Following this, the priest was instructed in the book of Leviticus, “the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.” (4:12)

All this symbolized the taking away and complete removal of the infectious disease of sin from the people. The sacrificial bull pictured the carrier of the disease of sin and it was in a sense quarantined from the rest of the human population. This bull in some respects endured suffering for the sins of the people, being killed and taken away from the Tent of Meeting and burned up in fire outside the camp.

The LORD accepted the sacrificial bull as a sin-bearer, serving as a substitute for the people in bearing and taking away their sins by suffering and dying for them. All this pictured for the Jews the need for a sacrificial offering be made for them in order that their

sins might be forgiven by God.

Of course, you and I know that there was more to it than this. Animals cannot assume our sins and suffer our punishment in order for us to be forgiven. It was a symbolic picture that foreshadowed and pointed to Jesus Christ who would come and actually bear our sins and take them all away through His sacrificial offering on the cross.

But did Jesus actually take away our sins? How can we know this for sure? Well, the Word of God in the book of Hebrews reveals to us that the Old Testament practice which God commanded of the Jews matches up with Christ. Like the sacrificial bull, Jesus suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem on the cross for the purpose of sanctifying us by His shed blood.

In making their way to the execution sight, a man named Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry the cross of Christ for Him to the skull like hill called Golgotha. As the Jewish leaders and many others followed this procession to Calvary, they undoubtedly didn't realize the spiritual significance of what was taking place before their eyes. But believers, who have been blessed by the Spirit of God with understanding, know by faith that all this was a fulfilment of what was symbolically portrayed over the centuries of time in the sin offering of the sacrificial bull. Jesus was the One who truly carried our sins. Jesus suffered and died outside the gates of the city for our forgiveness and eternal salvation.

As Jesus was lifted up on the cross and nailed to the accursed tree, He endured great suffering for us. He endured the great shame of having His garments removed and then gambled over by the Roman soldiers.

He patiently endured all the mockery hurled at Him by the Jewish leaders, deriding Him by saying, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" (Matt. 27:42-43) Even both of the criminals to begin with said the same thing to Jesus. The Roman soldiers also chimed in with ridiculing Jesus.

How do you think you would feel if you would have been in Jesus' place? Would you have been able to take all the scoffing and ridicule?

Jesus knew that He could have saved Himself by coming down from the cross, if He wanted to. As the eternal Son of God He had the power. Like someone ridiculing you for not being able to prove something when you know you can; was not this a source of temptation to Jesus? If Jesus had taken Satan's bait, that would have ruined the sacrifice He was offering up for the sins of the world. But instead of giving in to the temptation, Jesus patiently endured the mockery. He put up with it all.

Of course, the enemies of Christ gathered around His cross were not the only ones who were guilty of rebelling against the Lord Jesus. We too stand guilty! If there is any question in our minds about this, think of all the times we disobeyed God's holy Laws and righteous commandments. Aren't we prone to grumble and complain when the LORD sends us hardships which we are called on to endure, but we don't want to. When we undergo pain, sorrow and loss, aren't we tempted to say, "Why is this happening to me? Why do I have to put up with this? Why do I have to be the one to suffer? We are not always very good at enduring trials, adversities, and hardships. If some ridicule or mockery

is directed our way, some ill health strikes us that we didn't expect, our bank account seems to run down too quickly, aren't we tempted to say, "This is no good, God! Why don't you take care of me?" No. We are not always so good at enduring.

But Jesus was. He willingly, patiently, and lovingly endured everything that was heaped upon Him. He did all this so that we could be eternally saved and wouldn't ever be forsaken by God and condemned to hell.

In addition to what His enemies caused Him to suffer, Jesus also endured tremendous physical pain. Crucifixion is known to us as being one of the most cruel and painful forms of execution. After the initial sharp pain of the nails being driven into His hands and feet, His body suffered greatly as it pulled against the nails. And there was the tremendous thirst Jesus experienced as He bore all this—a thirst which was cruelly quenched by the soldiers offering the bitter drink of sour wine.

Like the sacrificial bull that suffered outside the camp for the sins of the people, Jesus in reality suffered for us outside the gates of Jerusalem, for He truly bore the sins of others. He bore your sins. He bore my sins. He bore all the sins of everyone throughout human history. As difficult as it was to suffer all the guilt and shame of countless human sin, He willingly and patiently endured it for us.

And finally there was God's punishment for all our many transgressions. When God's fierce and heavy hand came crashing down upon Jesus, causing Him to suffer the eternal fiery torments of hell for them, Jesus said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46) Not only was Jesus forsaken and left all alone by humans to bear our sins and suffer our punishment, but He was left all alone by His Father in heaven. When Jesus asked this question, He wasn't wondering why God did this to Him. No. This question was pointing to the hellish punishment He was enduring for all of us for our salvation.

When Jesus endured the very worst possible kind of pain, sorrow, torment and suffering, He wasn't merely giving us a perfect of example of how we are to endure what we are faced with this world. No. He is our endurance. Because we have so often miserably failed to endure things, Jesus endured all the sufferings during His passion for us in our place. He endured all the mockery, scoffing, and ridicule without complaint so that He could remain on the cross for us. He endured the sins of the whole world on His soul and mind for us. And He willingly endured the deepest depths of hell's torment in our place. All this He endured for us so that God will not charge us with our sin and make us pay the debt for them in hell.

Because of all that Jesus willingly and lovingly endured for us as our Savior, we are sanctified through His blood. The term "sanctified" is a most beautiful and very comforting word, for it means that through Jesus' blood and righteousness God washes and cleanses us completely of all our sins and iniquities. Through faith in Jesus we are set apart from the rest of the unbelieving world as God's holy people free from sin.

Since Jesus did so lovingly and willingly endure all this for our forgiveness and our sanctification, we find in Him the will and the strength to endure whatever difficulty and adversity comes our way. Because God so richly loved us, we know by faith that whatever trial God allows to come upon us or He sends to test us, we know that He does so out of

love for us. He always wants what is best for us. We trust that He will use the adversities to serve for our good. Knowing all this and believing all this, God helps us to endure all things.

The important thing that we always need to remember is to keep our eyes directed to and our hearts depending upon our Savior Jesus Christ, for He is our Endurance.

“Remember Typhoid Mary? She was quarantined, sent away to suffer alone, away from society, because she carried a deadly disease. She was sent away so that others could be healthy and clean from sickness. So also Jesus, carrying the deadly disease of the world’s sin, was sent outside the camp to suffer so that others could be clean and safe.”

(Anonymous)

Praise and thanks be to Jesus for all that He willingly, lovingly, and patiently endured for us as our Savior. May we ever keep our eyes fixed on Him, trusting Him as our Savior, looking to Him as an example of endurance, and relying upon Him to give us patient endurance unto the very end of our life. Amen.