

Watch a mom being a mom and you'll see someone who does what's necessary for her children. She might work all day, like my mom did. Come home and work some more preparing a meal for the family, some of whom will sit for two minutes while they inhale it and then jump up leaving the table without pushing in their chairs. She then probably has responsibilities around the house. Laundry duty, cleaning duty, outside duty. She might be in charge of balancing the finances, planning the vacations, and she might even get a little time to herself. I know that was my mom and probably was or is yours too.

Most of the time moms don't complain. If my mom ever complained it was to my dad. But sometimes her frustration would come out to my sister or me. She was always doing what was necessary for the family and for her children. Suffering was likely a part of that. Long hours, painful feet or legs, headaches, or general tiredness. But moms do it and we love her for it.

As hard as my mom worked, as hard as your mom works, and as much as she may have suffered through many years of raising you nothing she did or could ever do will give you hope. Not living hope at least. She may have hoped you'd have a better life. She may have hoped you'd get into a good college. She may have hoped you'd have the necessities. But those were her hopes for you. What about your hope? What about living hope? Hope that's a guarantee? That only comes from one place. This Mother's Day we continue our look at Peter's first letter. He points out for us that...

Christ's suffering brings living hope
He substitutes himself for you
He suffered as example for you

I read and hear a lot about helicopter parents. Have you heard that term? From what I gather it means a parent that hangs around and does things for their child without the child ever learning or facing problems for themselves. It might be the mom enrolling her son in college, filling out his registration, signing up for his classes, and getting his financial aid in order. It might be the mom who's there for the job hunts, calling prospective businesses, sitting in on interviews, even following up with employers. It might be the mom hovering outside the classroom door watching and waiting for her daughter to experience a fall, lose a toy, or spill something and then she swoops in to fix everything. Mom is just trying to make sure her child of any age doesn't suffer, doesn't face problems, has everything they need. But the child never learns to do things for themselves. The child never experiences problems and more importantly how to deal with them. Mom tries to be the substitute for the child.

Does this fad happen because no one really wants to suffer? Suffering causes feelings of loss, hardships, and bad feelings. Suffering is no fun. So mom is there to make sure that little Johnny doesn't have hardship, doesn't have bad feelings, doesn't suffer. But what if mom is attempting to stop suffering her child brings upon themselves? A son who never really tried in high school and now can't get even register himself for college. He slacked off and mom is trying to advance him anyway. His suffering isn't helped by mom covering it up. Maybe mom didn't discipline so now the kids suffers with a job that requires something. And the daughter in the classroom might be falling because she first shoved another child. Swooping in mom might give the wrong impression about what's acceptable behavior.

People rarely suffer in silence. But suffering for doing something wrong isn't commendable. The helicopter mom who tries to save her child from suffering when they have done something wrong or when she may have done them wrong isn't helping. That's not the kind of substitute the child needs or the mom needs to be.

No doubt you are experiencing suffering today. It might be a past lie you told and can't shake. You tried covering it, but still you suffer guilt and shame. You didn't directly deal with the guilt or the pain and so the suffering continues. It might be something shameful you're caught in right now. For you the suffering is right on the surface and you worry others can see too. We can even terrorize ourselves with the constant fear that our sins, which are many, will pull us away from God. Drinking, divorce, and anger might all be our everyday suffering. We bring it on ourselves and we suffer without hope. Mom can't be there to take that kind of suffering away. She can't give hope.

There was no reason he had to suffer the way he did. It wasn't right. He hadn't done anything wrong. He was suffering unjustly. He was insulted and tortured. Yet **"When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats."** Jesus suffered in silence. He stepped in to endure physical suffering for you and me. He came for this reason, to endure suffering taking the insults and the suffering unjustly. And then came the cross with more physical suffering but also spiritual suffering. Jesus carried the sins of the world personally. **"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."** The tree is the cross. Jesus died so you wouldn't die eternally. He died and your sins died with him. Jesus died so you would live. Because of the death of Christ you are right with God, living righteous before him. And in a most amazing substitution that no helicopter mom ever could do Jesus suffered wounds. By his wounds, the very things that brought him the suffering, you've been healed. Healed of your past guilt, healed of any attempts to keep a child from suffering when they brought it upon themselves, healed of the lies, the pain, the anger. Healed of all your sins. Forgiven in Christ. Jesus substitutes himself for you and his suffering brings you living hope.

Shepherds were not required by law to put themselves in harm's way for sheep. Nothing said if a bear or lion attacked the sheep the shepherd couldn't run the other way to save himself. Moms don't have laws telling them they need to put themselves in harm's way for their children either. But most moms that I know would do anything for their children; protect them from any harm, stop any attack they might face. Jesus didn't have a law telling him he had to come to this earth and save sinners. But try and stop the Good Shepherd. No attacking devil intent on your destruction would keep Jesus from saving you. He stood in and fought for you, he fought as you, as your substitute. His fight and the suffering he endured which won you heaven now also leave you an example of suffering to follow.

Something helicopter parents could do better at, teaching their children how to suffer and bear it. Children watch and learn. Children see their mom suffer job loss and get angry and post hateful comments online. Children learn the example when mom gets yelled at for a mistake and then seeks revenge. Helicopter parents probably would have a lot less helicoptering if their children learned an example of suffering from their parents. But sinful parents struggle passing that example on to their children.

Thankfully we have the perfect example, the only perfect person who suffered and bore it perfectly. **"But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."** That holy life is our example. Like a child learning to write the ABCs might be given a sheet of paper with the letters already written lightly so they can trace over the top and learn, so Jesus leaves an example we can trace. When he suffered he remained perfect, he endured. So you suffer. Even if you don't deserve it you still must endure it because your pattern is Christ and he endured suffering. If you're mistreated in school you're called on to endure it because Christ is your pattern of suffering and enduring. Jesus suffered as example for you.

Realistically will you be able to in silence endure suffering just like Jesus perfectly? No. Jesus as example is good for us as a place to start, but only if Jesus isn't just example. Jesus' suffering can't be only example; it must be payment for our sins as substitute. Remember the purpose of Jesus' suffering was so you might see the grace of God and receive his blessing. Remember that Christ suffered so you and I might know the love God has for us. He suffered so we might see his suffering and recognize no mom could suffer for her children that way, no one could ever suffer for us the way Jesus did. His love led him to suffer the ultimate so we would enjoy the ultimate gift of God.

Parents, maybe especially moms, try and be helicopter parents to their children. The kids may like it or not. Maybe even mom likes it or she may figure it's for the best right now. Jesus won't ever stop being Savior to us. After his resurrection from the dead he promises never to leave us. He laid down an example of suffering but enduring we can follow. He substituted himself for us and paid for our sins. Christ's suffering brings a living hope.