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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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"I Gave My Back to Those Who Beat Me"

Isaiah 50:4-6

Prayer: *Father, we just again, I thank you for the gift of your Son, I thank you for this time where the whole world can at least be focused in some way on the fact that we are celebrating your birth, your entry into flesh. Lord, this morning as we are opening up your book and looking into your servant songs, we see anew just the prophetic message that you had there, and I pray as we open up that book, as we look into it, we would be given a renewed and deeper sense of what it is you gave us in that gift of your Son. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, as you know we've been examining the servant songs of Isaiah, and those are four different Hebrew poems and they're scattered throughout the book of Isaiah, and they're about Jesus the Messiah, they are uniquely crafted by God, and in those poems, God speaks to and he speaks through, and he speaks about Jesus. And Jesus who had given up his prerogatives as God to enter into human flesh in all likelihood, in all likelihood he studied these very scriptures to learn and to grow in his role as Messiah. And this morning

we're going to look at the first part of the third song. This is *Isaiah 50:4-6*. It says this: *The LORD God has given Me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens Me each morning; He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed. The LORD God has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious; I did not turn back. I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting.*

Like I said, this is the third servant song that we're looking at, and Jesus here again is speaking of the tongue. We saw in his second song Jesus speaking to his Father about the issue of the tongue, and in that song Jesus said this in *Isaiah 49*, he says: *Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD has called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."*

In that song Jesus is lamenting that he'd been given a mouth like a weapon that is like a sharp sword but it was a weapon that had temporarily been put away. Jesus said: *He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me.* Well in this our

third servant song, Jesus is again acknowledging the tongue that he has been given but in this song, he speaks of his tongue not as a weapon but as a comfort. Again *Isaiah 50: The LORD God has given Me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens Me each morning; he awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed.* What is so extraordinary about this exchange is that Jesus is acknowledging that he's being instructed, he's being taught, he's being taught by his Father. Now this again raises an important question and that is this: How could the God of the universe, someone who's omniscient, someone who possesses all knowledge, how could that God be in a position where he needs to be instructed in anything? Well, it's because Jesus as a man had essentially had to go back and start from scratch. Paul tells us in the book of *Philippians* that God made himself nothing. When he left heaven to take on flesh and live life just like one of us, *Philippians 2:5-8* says this, it says: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

You know, we struggle to understand just how God did that, because

God was -- Jesus was fully man and he was also fully God. As God in the flesh, he couldn't be fully God if he had emptied himself of his omnipotence and his omniscience because those are attributes of just who God is. Strip them from God and God really does, he ceases to be God. And we know that Jesus was fully and completely God because *Colossians 1:19* tells us: *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.* We understand Jesus as simultaneously and voluntarily veiling those aspects of his incarnate deity in order to fully realize what it meant to be human. You see, the scripture doesn't say that he emptied himself; it says he made himself nothing, that is, he embraced the profound humiliation of flesh to become one with us. That is to say that moment by moment Jesus chose to make himself nothing by veiling from his human nature those aspects of his divinity that would have denied him the ability to live like we have to live. I said before, Jesus could have lived among us with all of his attributes like some kind of a super hero but then he wouldn't have experienced life like we experience life. *Hebrews 4:15* says: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.* To be tempted in every respect as we are tempted is to live the same life that we have to live. And to do that, Jesus had to moment by moment cover his divine attributes.

John Calvin said that Jesus "suffered His divinity to be concealed under a veil of flesh." Now, he didn't do that by emptying himself of himself but instead by embracing what it meant to live life on earth like we have to live it. And again, for Jesus that meant he had to go back to square one, he had to submit to being instructed in this case by his Father. Again *Isaiah 54*: The LORD God has given Me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens Me each morning; He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed. You see, Jesus was able to be instructed because he voluntarily set aside this divine genius that he possessed that encompassed all knowledge and he set about the task of growing and learning just like you and I have to do it. Jesus would discover through the Old Testament scriptures who he was and why he was here. Luke's gospel gives us a glimpse of that process developing. We talked about this before. Luke describes Jesus briefly displaying his newly discovered genius at age twelve when he was in the temple. And you know the story, his parents had gone up to the Passover celebration in Jerusalem and they accidentally left him behind, and they thought he was lost and after this three-day journey, they come into the temple and they find him there instructing the great religious leaders, and Mary and Joseph are very upset and they let Jesus know it. Jesus responds in *Luke 2:49*, he says: "*Why were you searching for me?*" He asked them. "*Didn't you know that I had*

to be in My Father's house?" But they did not understand what He said to them.

You know, Jesus had the religious leaders listening to his every word. I mean, in all likelihood could have begun his earthly ministry right then and there as a twelve-year-old at the very center of Jewish thought and culture in Jerusalem, and he would have been instantly famous. I mean, the religious leaders were astounded at how extraordinarily gifted this young man was. We know that that twelve-year-old boy in the temple was in fact the creator of the universe who in order to fully identify with us had made himself nothing. You see, it's beyond comprehension for our little minds to grasp the conflict that Jesus had to have struggled with discovering that he was God incarnate, understanding that that meant that he had this particular position and yet understanding that as God himself living on earth as a man, he could not tap into his vast genius but instead would have to choose to live with the same resources available to us. And as we pointed out before, young Jesus in profound humility leaves the very place that would have brought him fame and power and he accompanies his mother and father back to Nazareth to work as a carpenter's apprentice. *Luke 2:51 says: And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in*

favor with God and man.

And again we wonder, how could Jesus increase in wisdom if he's the source of all wisdom? I mean, how did he as Calvin put it "suffer his divinity to be concealed under this veil of flesh?" How is it that the master teacher himself would submit to being a disciple who needed to be instructed by his Father? Well, Jesus went on to say that the role between teacher and taught doesn't in any way define the difference between superior and inferior because the Father and the Son were equals. After washing his disciples' feet, Jesus said this in *John 13*, he said: *"You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him."* See, Jesus is telling the Father in a sense it's not greater than the Son he is instructing, and the question we ask is what is the Father instructing the Son in? Brings us back to *Isaiah 50*. He says: *The LORD God has given me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens Me each morning; He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed.* So we see that part of Jesus' profound humility was his willingness to assume the role of

a student learning how to comfort the weary. And we know that Jesus learned that lesson well because years later as he ministered to the crowd, he went on to say in *Matthew 11*: "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

You know, there's a Greek word for a unique type of knowledge, the Greek word is the word "ginosko" and it means knowledge, not just any kind of knowledge but knowledge that you gain by experience. It's the knowledge you can only get by doing something. I can read a dozen books about wrestling and I can learn the difference between a half nelson and a three-point takedown and I could learn all of the jargon and think that I have all of the lingo down pat until I get in the ring and I actually start to wrestle. Then I learn what I really know. You see, I learned then that I don't really know by experience what it means to wrestle. And Jesus had to learn how to know how to wrestle with living life as a human being and he had to do that by experiencing life as a human being. That meant being born and living his life in a family just the way we live our lives. You know, he knew what it felt like to be hot, to be tired, to be frustrated, to be exhausted, to be all of those things that make up being a human being because he put himself

through those experiences to live life the way we lived our lives. And so God himself understood what it meant to be weary. And because he had personally experienced weariness, he could see it in the lives of the sheep that he was ministering to. In fact, in *Matthew 9:35* it says: *Then Jesus went to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were weary and worn out, like sheep without a shepherd.* Again, the servant song says: *The LORD God has given Me a tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens Me each morning; He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed.* Jesus the man had tuned his ear to listen to his Father's instruction. He was doing exactly what James exhorts us to do in *James 1:19* where he says: *Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.* That last part, that slow to anger was never more true in the darkness that was to follow, and we see that expressed in the servant song. The servant song takes a very dark turn next in *Isaiah 50:5-6* it says this, it says: *The LORD God has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious; I did not turn back. I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting.*

Understand the implications of what Isaiah is saying here. Isaiah wrote some time around the 8th century BC, hundreds of years before Christ was even born. Jesus as a young man turned to these ancient prophetic scriptures to receive instruction from his heavenly Father. *He awakens Me each morning; He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed.* Jesus needed instruction because he had emptied himself of his prerogatives of omniscience relying instead on God speaking to him through the Old Testament scriptures. And there in Isaiah's servant song and other places, it is confirmed to him that not only will he be humbled to the position of a student gaining instruction and learning, but he also learned that he would be learning that his ultimate purpose lay not so much in teaching but in dying, in dying for the sins of his sheep. Jesus describes the process as one of utter and complete submission to authority. You see, no matter how difficult, no matter how terrifying the instruction was, Jesus could say in verse 5: *The LORD God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I did not turn back.* The Father had much to instruct the Son when it came to living as God in the flesh among men. Jesus had to learn that he would encounter only two types of people on this earth. There would be this tiny minority of his disciples of those who loved him and the vast majority of those who hated him without a cause. Jesus told his own disciples in *Luke 21:17*: *"You will be hated by all for my name's sake."* Jesus identified this gut level

hatred by describing two different camps that the whole world is divided into. Those camps haven't changed in 2,000 years. You are either a lover of this world or you are a lover of Christ. But you can't be and you won't be a lover of both. Jesus said in *John 15:18*: *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."* These are Jesus' words. These are not my words.

Now I will be the very first one to admit that if you ask the average person on the street: By the way, do you hate Christ? He's going to look at you like you have two heads and probably tell you that's a ridiculous question, a question that seems to smack of paranoia, I mean, who in the world hates Jesus? Well, I'd have to qualify that question by asking another question and that question would be: Well, which Jesus are you referring to? You see, there are dozens and dozens of different Jesuses. There's only one Jesus as defined by scripture. There are environmental Jesuses, social justice Jesuses, gay rights Jesuses, be left wing Jesuses, right wing Jesuses; which particular Jesus do you want? The Jesus that the Bible describes was the flawless, spotless son of God in the flesh who lived among us without ever sinning, ever. And because he was flawless, because he was without sin, he was immensely

threatening to those whose idea of God centered around their own ideas of their own goodness. The Jesus that they had created in their own mind was a teacher or a philosopher or a great example, someone who blazed a trail that showed them how to live but he was certainly not God incarnate living his life flawlessly, showing us that the only way to be worthy before God was to accept his sacrifice on our behalf and reject the notion that we had the ability on our own to make ourselves worthy of heaven. Jesus broke the curve that said that we could be worthy of heaven simply by doing our own version of what we thought of as good. Jesus came to say that the very notion of goodness itself according to God was the kind of life that he alone was able to live out. It was a life that was so transcendently flawless, so free from sin that Jesus could challenge his own spiritual enemies with a question that none of us would ever dare to utter. In the midst of a heated discussion, Jesus is surrounded by his enemies, and he says to them in *John 8:46*: "*Which one of you convicts me of sin?*" I mean, could you imagine anyone else on the planet challenging his enemies to find in him any hint of sin? No other son of Adam on the face of the planet could ever live up to that standard. And so Jesus' life created its own dichotomy. You could accept his life as a perfect sacrifice lived out flawlessly, then laid down at the cross as payment for your sins or -- or you could insist that your goodness, whatever level of goodness that was, had better be enough

for God. It's not. Jesus came into the world as a light shining in the darkness but the scripture says in *John 3:19*: "*This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*"

In Isaiah's servant song, Jesus says: *The LORD God has given Me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. And so we see that his word sustained and uplifted and encouraged and fed those who had become worthy of their sin but his word also did something else. His word also frustrated and outraged those who thought their goodness was good enough, and they hated him for it. Jesus said in John 15:22: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'*"

It's been 2,000 years since Jesus was here and absolutely nothing has changed. The world is still at war against Jesus; it just doesn't realize it. Ever since the fall of Adam, mankind has been running and hiding from a God he alternately fears and loathes.

It's in our DNA. It is in our subconscious. We have this gut-level hatred for a Christ we don't even know. And what is worse, we have no idea that we have this hatred because it is never openly acknowledged. See, there's a reason why there is a so-called war on Christmas. It's because the world has never stopped conducting a war on Christ, and there is nothing more offensive in the entire world than the name of Jesus.

Just this week Fox News reported this latest salvo: "ESPN has reversed its decision banning a Christmas commercial from a Catholic children's hospital because of its religious content -- a stunning reversal in the face of widespread outrage from Christians. The sports programming juggernaut had originally passed on the ad because it included references to God and celebrating the birth of Christ." Okay. So let me see if I got this right. A major television network bans a Christmas ad because it refers to celebrating the birth of Christ. I mean, you don't want to mess up a perfectly good Christmas ad by talking about Christ. You know, really, you can't make this stuff up. What you can do though is reflect on the fact that God sent his son into a world that detested him and his Father, and he sent them into the world not to condemn it but to save it. You know, we started out this morning looking at the servant song and the humility of Christ approaching his role as a suffering servant, not with the

omniscience that belonged to him as God in the flesh but with a humble attitude of a learner, of a disciple willing to put himself in a position of having to be taught. And again we go back to the scripture. It says: *The LORD God has given Me the tongue of those who are instructed to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens Me each morning; He awakens My ear to listen to like those being instructed. The LORD God has opened My ear, I was not rebellious; I did not turn back.* But notice now how quickly the song turns to what it is the suffering servant must learn about and what he must do to save us. In verse 6, he says: *I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting.* You see, the song prophetically transports the servant 800 years into the future. There God himself who had made himself vulnerable to his own creation began to experience firsthand the full brunt of the hatred that the world had for him. *Luke 22:63 says: Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. Matthew 27:27 says: Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him in the head.*

There's something very important for us to get in the statement that Jesus makes in the servant song. See, there are many people today who think of Jesus' passion and his crucifixion as this monumental travesty of justice, which it certainly was, but they also somehow think of Jesus as a victim. You know, they think that Jesus got caught up in some religious political vortex and due to a series of lies and other injustices, he just happened to get tortured and executed. That couldn't be further from the truth. You see, it was Jesus who organized, prepared, and orchestrated every one of the events that took place at his crucifixion. He was the great high priest sacrificing the one perfect Lamb of God who had lived a flawless existence. He was the sacrificer and he was the sacrifice. We know for a fact that Jesus knew precisely what he was getting into when he was well outside the city of Jerusalem fully days before the crucifixion actually took place. We know that he repeatedly took his disciples aside and told them precisely what was going to take place even though at the time he was enormously popular. Mark's gospel describes one such incident in *Mark 10:32*, it says: *And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed him were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will*

be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."

Now, when Jesus spoke those words, the reality was only days away. When God wrote the servant song of Isaiah, the cross was some 800 years away. Still he spoke as if it had already happened and here it's critical to understand what Jesus was prophetically claiming when he said: *I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting.* See the soldiers, they were mocking, beating, and spitting on the king of the universe, the one who at that very same precise moment was keeping the universe spinning, the sun shining, and the blood pumping in the very veins of the ones who were torturing him. You see, Jesus says he gave his back, he gave his cheeks, he gave his beard to those who would torment him. Had he for one moment decided to exercise a molecule of the power that had actually belonged to him over those who were torturing him, then all of that pain and humiliation would have ceased instantly. You and I would have been doomed forever. But the universe would still shout out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD God of hosts!" You see, at the beginning of Jesus' torture, he made a statement to the soldiers that had come to arrest him. He said this in *Matthew*

26:50, he said: *Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"*

Okay. A little history. We know from history that a legion consists to up to 6,000 soldiers. So twelve legions meant up to 72,000 angels. We also know from scripture that angels are an order of creation that can and had in the past interacted with human beings in a very negative way. There is an account also in the book of Isaiah about an angel attack on human beings, on a human army. There was an Assyrian ruler named Sennacherib who thought he was well on his way to dominating the entire world. He had an Army of 185,000, and he sought to wipe out God's people in the city of Jerusalem. Instead God sent an angel, and this is the description in Isaiah, *Isaiah 37:33*. It says: *"Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or cast a siege mound against it. By the way that he came,*

by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David." And the angel of the LORD went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.

Now I need to say also there's much independent archaeological evidence to suggest that Senacharib and his Army came to a very sudden and screeching halt. That's in the records. We know it's because God had dispatched one angel. One angel, one night, and 185,000 top-flight soldiers are struck down dead. I want you to picture 72,000 of these same angels who have spent their entire existence worshiping the glory and the honor of the one who is now being blindfolded, spit on, and slapped. Just picture the holy rage they must have felt stopped by only one thing, the will of the one being tortured. You see, had for one second Jesus changed his mind, I doubt very much there would have been even a scrap of human material to commemorate what had taken place. Picture these angels hearing the raucous laughter that ascends into the very throne room of heaven according to *Matthew 26: Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that you struck you?"* The angels knew precisely who it was. But they also knew that their hands had been stopped

by the very one who said, *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*

So after Jesus had been beaten to a bloody pulp, he's brought out before the crowds. Pontius Pilate thought the sight of one pathetically treated would induce the crowds to have some kind of pity, so he takes the broken, bloodied body of Jesus and he puts him on display. It only incensed the crowd, made them much more desperate to see Jesus crucified. They were desperate because they, like us, hated Christ. When I try to explain to people that on a gut level we hate God, they're usually -- they think this is ludicrous. They think this is ridiculous. They're incredulous. And I like to point out to them there's only one time when God came down to our planet, one time when he gave up his prerogatives as God, one time when he made himself vulnerable to us, and during that one time, he lived among us perfectly and our response to him standing beaten to a bloody pulp as Pilate looks for mercy is found in *Matthew 27* which is this, it says: *So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."* And all the people answered, *"His blood be on us and on our children!"* We are those children, and his blood is either shed to pay the full penalty of our sin or it remains convicting us on a gut level that we might

not even realize that the light is come into the darkness and we preferred the darkness.

You know, there are many, many different ways to preach a sermon, and there are many, many different types of sermons. Some are practical, some are designed to show us a better way to live, some are designed to inform us all about God and his word. This one is really designed to grow our love for Jesus. When I was a brand new Christian, I heard the verse that everybody hears, the most famous verse in all of scripture, *John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* There's a key word in that statement; it's a very tiny little word. It didn't strike me at first. It's the Greek word "houto" that we translate "so." And what is striking about this word to me is that it's a little tiny two-letter word that can grow infinitely. You see, 40 years ago I could say with certainty for God so loved the world. For 40 years now that word "so" has grown deeper and broader and wider, wider than I'd ever imagined it could grow. So this morning I'm looking at Isaiah's servant song telling us that God so loved the world that he gave his back to those who would beat it. Without his permission, they could not have laid a finger on him. *Hebrews 12:2* says: *Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,*

despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. How Jesus must have despised the shame that he was put through, but He gave His cheeks to those who tore out His beard. He did not hide His face from scorn and spitting. I said it many, many times before, the joy that was set before Jesus, the joy that made him endure the cross was you and it was me. We were the joy that he died for, all the while despising the shame. It was the joy that he had of glorifying his Father by rescuing his sheep. Just allow those thoughts to sink into your consciousness.

During the Christmas season, consider the love of God extended to creatures determined to mock, torture and execute him. Consider that tiny little word "so." How great it can grow and how much we need to grow it ourselves. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Let's pray.

Father God, I do thank you that you so loved us, that you came into a world that had nothing but intense, pathological, Adam-induced hatred for you. Father God, you came into a creation that was in utter rebellion, that sought to make you vulnerable enough to kill, and we did, and we did it with relish, we did it celebrating as a raucous crowd, celebrating as a crowd of soldiers and celebrating as a crowd that explicitly said, "May his blood be on us and on our

children!" This was the people that you came into. This was the people that you gave your body to. This is the people that you gave your blood to. Father, I thank you that you have transformed us, that you have given us new hearts and a new spirit so that we could see and understand the amazing depth of that love, and I praise you for it, in Jesus' name. Amen.