

Isaiah 53:1-6(NKJV)

1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, *There is no beauty that we should desire Him.*

3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

We have before us this morning a wonderful inside scoop on our Lord and Savior. It is handed to us hundreds of years prior to Christ showing up on our planet. And it reveals tremendous insight into Christ and us. We get a look at the impossibility of salvation apart from the work of God. And we see the lengths that God would go to to save us.

Let's imagine this morning this scenario. Imagine that you are zapped into God's presence. He is seated at a conference table with His son Christ. Christ asks you a question. He says, "Father and I want to save the world". And I am going to visit the planet in this effort. We would like your opinion. How should we accomplish this? How should we go about it?"

At this point you begin to think, OK how can Christ make the greatest impact, gain the most favor, have the most influence, gain the most power? What position should He gain in order to best accomplish this job? What platform would best suit this purpose? Can you see what would happen? We could be as sincere as it is possible to be, but we would never hit the mark. Because we cannot help thinking the way we think. If God had not communicated to us His plan, none of

us would have stumbled into it. We would have all come up with a plan that would use fleshly methods to accomplish fleshly ends.

All of us would want an amazingly attractive human being who would be impressive to look at. We would want him fit and handsome. Then we would want to put him in some worldly platform whereby he would garner the world's attention. Maybe a movie star or a rock star. Maybe a president or prime minister. Maybe a billionaire or a renown educator. We would somehow want the world to see this man's value and attraction. Then we would think He has the best chance of accomplishing His mission. He would then educate. He would teach the truth. He would educate and influence people into following God. And somehow the world would be saved.

That is a version of what the Jewish people had in mind. Of course all the cabinet officials would need to be Jewish. But other than that it would look a lot like our version. What we see is that God has an absolutely backwards way of going about this. Because what He wants are spiritual results brought about by spiritual methods. They have no fleshly appeal. Well let's look at **His** plan.

¹ Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

Here the remnant of Israel speak. And they have a lament. No one is getting this. No one is understanding everything we said of Jesus. They do not understand their guilt, even though they know their blood sacrifices aren't meeting the full need. They are a stop measure. The scape goat is needed every single year. Their sacrifices continue as long as people live. When will this ever be finished? They just don't get it.

And then we shift over to Christ. If you had been alive when Christ walked the earth, do you really think **that** would have made a huge impact on you? It didn't on most people. Very few grasped that He was the arm of the Lord. Few grasped that He was God's power to save in a human body. Few understood or could accept what Christ was here for. After all, if **we** were going to send a Savior, he wouldn't look like Jesus. He was apparently an illegitimate child **after all**. That is what the people would have thought. How could this man be the Savior? How could He be from God?

2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, *There is no beauty that we should desire Him.*

Well, so much for the attractive Jesus of our plans. So much for the man just oozing with worldly potential. This person grows up with all the fragility and vulnerability of human children.

Then He is as a root out of dry ground. When you are digging in dry ground and you come upon a dry root, how likely do you think it is that something of great value will grow out of that? Most of the time we think there is nothing that will come out of it. That is how Christ appeared from a fleshly view. He was an apparent illegitimate child from the sticks of Galilee. He had no money. He had no reputation. He did not have an impressive father who held political clout. From the world's perspective He was a nobody with nothing to offer.

We see all these images of Jesus, often looking like some surfer or some good looking white guy. And these guys are usually very handsome. At least I am guessing they must be. I don't know much about that. But if I understand this passage, those pictures are inaccurate. He was not unusually appealing. He was probably average in the attractive scale. No one would be impressed by looking at Him. Jesus did not have the physical attributes that would have caused anyone to select Him for His position. I think that is part of the point. We can't tell by looking at Christ the phenomenal purpose He held. He looked just like another guy on the street. No one would know better by looking. No glow. No halo. No aura. Just skin.

3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

This passage may be describing what happened to Christ and what our reactions were. Throughout Christ's trial He was despised and rejected. He claimed to be the Christ, and great violence came out of the onlookers. He experienced terrible sorrow and grief when He took the guilt that **we worked so hard to create**, and He carried it all **as if it were His own**. This verse is such a massive understatement. We could talk about its significance and implications for hours. Are you hurting due to the existence of sin this morning? Christ hurt more. He knew grief in a way that you and I will only just touch on. He knew guilt in ways that we cannot fathom. That was God's plan for the Savior He was sending. It sure would have been different than our plans.

And after Christ was treated so badly by us, how did **we** respond? We could not look upon the one that we had done so much damage to. Our ugliness punished Him and our what our ugliness accomplished we were repulsed by. There isn't much of a resume there for us. We punish the good until we cannot even abide

to look at it. Do you want to know where dependence upon your wonderful human potential leads? Here you have it.

We hid our faces from what we had done to our savior. And we simply could not see Him as Savior. There was nothing in our seemers to catch that this person was our only way to be right with God. We did not esteem Him.

Now we have seen Christ's situation. We have seen our reaction to Him. We have seen what we have done to him and we have seen our response to what we did to Him.

But why? What is God's purpose in this seemingly meaningless suffering by the Son of God?

4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Here is the wonder of all wonders. Here is the revelation of the mystery of the gospel. How will God save us?

Remember how last week we talked about our guilt? Remember how we talked about how slippery we all are. We will go to great lengths to tell our story without revealing our true guilt. This guilt was the great obstacle to our peace with God. We cannot be saved if our guilt remains intact, if it can still be held against us.

Here we find out the core of God's plan. We find out why God's plan was nothing like the one we would have come up with.

Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

This verse shows us the chasm between what God does and what we think. What did God really do in Christ? What was really happening in time and spiritual reality? God was taking our guilt and putting it on Christ's shoulders. He bore our griefs. He carried our sorrows.

These griefs were not Christ's. These sorrows were not Christ's. They were ours. They were the fruit of decisions made with no concern about what God wants, about what God says. We earned these griefs and sorrows. We deserved them. It was unjust to make someone else carry them. It would have been wrong

except that Christ volunteered to do so. He did it willingly. He took this tremendous burden, the burden that is so painful that we find ourselves making up alternate realities to avoid it, this guilt that drives us to lying about ourselves so we can look in the mirror. And Christ volunteered to take it as His own.

That is what was really happening. That is what God was doing. So how did we see it? Did we say, praise God. Look at what Jesus is doing for us? Of course not. Every one of us in our fleshly understanding of God would have read it the same way. The word for esteemed also means reckoned. We would have looked at this puzzle and our seemers would have all added it up to this. God must have really not liked this guy. Look what God did to Jesus. He must have really screwed up for God to have treated Him like this.

Our seemers bat about 1000. But the problem is it is 1000 in the wrong direction. Our seemers are prone to get it wrong just about every time.

And you know what? They are still doing that in our lives. You know those places where you cannot figure out what God is doing? How do you figure them? Isn't our inclination wrong just about every time? When circumstances suddenly stack up very negatively, what is your first impulse? Doesn't it seem like God isn't being very loving? Doesn't it seem like maybe God doesn't really know what you need? We simply cannot trust ourselves to interpret what God is doing in our lives. We must go **to Him** to find out what He is doing. We must go to His word and read what **He says He is doing**. And then we need to believe it even when everything in us tells us not to trust God. **God's plan** cannot be **figured** by us. But **his word** can be **understood** by us.

So God provided a way for our salvation in Christ. And we think that God must be punishing that guy that is suffering so. And we are as phenomenally wrong about the most important act in human history as we can possibly be. That is just about par isn't it? That is just about what we should expect from us, isn't it?

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

This verse goes into greater detail on what God was really doing.

Sin demands a payment. Sometimes we interpret God's grace in the wrong way. We can easily start thinking, well what is the big deal with sin? If I do it, God will

forgive it. And not only that, when I sin it shows off God's grace. We can easily start thinking that sin is no big deal.

Hebrews 10:26-29 (NKJV)

²⁶ For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

Notice here what the issue is. Notice the phrase- who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant a common thing. The issue here is the realization that sin must be paid for. Guilt must be punished. And we simply cannot **appreciate** Christ's sacrifice and **spit on it** at the same time. We choose one or the other. It is a huge deal what our sin cost Christ. We cannot continue in it. And the issue is not that God does not have enough grace. The problem is we don't appreciate what our sin cost Christ. We cannot **love Christ and appreciate the price He paid for us and trample on that sacrifice by intentionally sinning** at the same time. If we appreciate the price paid, we submit to the Lord. If we would rather sin and take our chances, we show our contempt for the Christ that we have fooled ourselves into thinking that we love. That is the issue.

5 But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

We are soon going to be putting on a push for all of us to be able to show that we can present the gospel. Here is a wonderful verse to memorize and use when presenting the Gospel. This puts what Christ did for us in very easy words to understand. He took upon Himself our sin and our penalty and we are saved by what He completed for us. And this next verse is wonderful to commit to memory as well.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

This verse clarifies a question for us. Who needed this sacrifice? Who needed what Christ was about to do? Was it just the worst of the worst. Who need transgressions covered. This verse tells us in one word. All.

This describes you, me and everyone we will ever meet. Most of Isaiah's listening audience would have understood this imagery. They lived with sheep. Many people, even those living in cities had some sheep. They would give them to a shepherd to take care of them along with other people's flocks. But they knew something about sheep. Sheep are stupid. Their instincts all seem designed to get them killed. They don't ever figure things out. And they are a real hassle to take care of. Without a shepherd they are toast.

Well that is us. We have all gone out, done those things we thought would make us happy, and shown ourselves to be permanently lost. We are beyond self repair. We need a rescue. This is understood to be sin, this missing of the mark. And it is an iniquity that needs a cure. So God took all of our sin, and laid it all upon Christ. I want to end today by laying out an appeal by our brother Ortland. Listen to it. Whether you know Christ or you don't, let this be an appeal to your soul.

Look at him. By faith look at him hanging there on his cross. What is he saying to you by his sacrifice? "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matthew 11:28](#)). "Come, for everything is now ready" ([Luke 14:17](#)). "Come to me... and I will make with you an everlasting covenant" ([Isaiah 55:3](#)). Look at him. By faith, see his dying love for you. What is it worth? His blood is flowing down into pools at the foot of that cross. But it doesn't lie there in waste and loss. It flows out toward us—guilty, sad us. His blood flows out toward a woman who has shamed herself in a desperate craving to be loved. His blood washes her shame clean off her. Then that shame flows back to the cross, where it shames Jesus and is no longer her burden to bear. His blood flows out toward a man held in bondage to lust. He has discovered too late that there is no comfort there, only emptiness and self-hatred. But the blood of Jesus flows out to that man, cleanses him entirely, and takes that painful wrong back to the cross where Jesus suffers for it as his own wrong, freeing that man forever.

The blood of Jesus is flowing out to sinners of all kinds, taking from them their guilt, their shame, their loss, their tears and despair, and giving them a whole new life. Jesus is saying to you right now, "I don't want you to bear your burden one moment longer. Let my chastisement give you peace. Let my stripes heal you." We are all like stupid sheep, wandering off from him through our own futile self-remedies and self-righteous excuses. Who can deny it? But look what God has done. God has laid on Christ the iniquity of us all. Believe it, and entrust your guilt to him. He can't bear it and survive, but he's still willing to bear it.

Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word – Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.