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He Had No Form or Comeliness

Isaiah 53:1-3

Prayer: *Father God, we do praise you and thank you for the gift of your Son. We thank you for what an incredible gift it is and how we are continuing to unpack and to examine and to see and to understand the depth of what that gift entails. Father, again we are looking into your servant song this morning, and again we need the presence of your Holy Spirit to give us the ability to appreciate anew just what it is you've done for us on the cross. And so I pray for that, I pray for your Spirit's guidance. May you come into this room, may you come into our hearts, may you come into our spirits and give us the means to permanently remember you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

We asked the question the last time: What moves a person to grow in his love and knowledge of God and his kingdom? And the answer can be found really in the question. We grow in our love and in our knowledge of God's kingdom by growing in our knowledge and love of God, and that takes work. It is remarkably easy to look around at life itself and to conclude that there cannot be a loving God

who is in charge of it. War, famine, disease, and the thousands of little cruelties we see parading endlessly past our TV screens makes it difficult for many people to imagine God as an all powerful and benevolent God ruling over his creation. The argument goes this way. If God is all powerful then he certainly cannot be benevolent, because no truly benevolent God would allow the pain and injustice of this world to proliferate like it does. If he is benevolent, well then he can't be all powerful. Because no all powerful God would withhold his power to stop all of that pain and all of the injustice that we see all around us. You see, the only way many folks can imagine a benevolent God is to imagine a God somehow lacking the power and the ability to effect any difference in our world. And what a miserable and limited set of choices that is.

The ancient writer Epicurus wrote this. He said: "Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?" Why indeed.

Philosopher Alvin Plantinga spoke about the difficulty of reconciling God's goodness with his power with a world that seems to lack both, and he spoke of the difference between explanations

that we can clearly see and explanations which are not very obvious. He said this, he said: "If you are out camping and someone asked you to check in your tent for a St. Bernard and you didn't come across one, you'd be very quick to say, nope, no St. Bernards in the tent because St. Bernards are very large dogs and they are especially hard to miss in a tent because they're very, very obvious. Obviously. However, if I was to ask you to check in your tent for no-see-ums -- and I don't know if you know -- all of you know what a no-see-um is, little tiny pinpoint of an insect with a voracious appetite for blood, a nasty little insect -- if I were to ask you to check your tent for no-see-ums, you'd have a much harder time. You see, if a St. Bernard is not there, it's pretty obvious, but if a no-see-um went missing in your tent, you would have a much harder time knowing that because you can't see him. And because you can't see them they're nearly impossible to find in the first place. What Plantinga was saying is that most people expect explanations for God's goodness and power to be more like St. Bernards than no-see-ums. And when they don't see the St. Bernards, they conclude that those explanations just don't exist. But what if the explanations for God's goodness are much more like no-see-ums? What if they're not nearly as obvious as we would like, and what if they stem from the difference between the nature of God and man itself? God tells us this in *Isaiah 55:8-9*: "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are*

your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." So what if God is telling us that much of the explanation for all of the pain and the suffering in this world lies outside our ability to grapple with and understand, and from those areas that we can't understand, we simply have to trust him. The reasons for the trust are there but they're not nearly as obvious as a St. Bernard, and it would be just as wrong to conclude that because you can't really see them, well then they don't exist.

Well, there's a philosopher by the name of Stephen law who objects to this argument in the first place, and this is what he has to say about it. Listen to what he writes. He says this, he says:
"Here's another thought experiment. Suppose we see an adult slowly torturing children to death. We would immediately conclude the adult was not at all good. And for very good reason. But now suppose we find out that the adult is vastly more intelligent and knowledgeable than us -- an alien super-being. Surely, that would not lead us to revise our initial opinion very much. Yes, perhaps there is some reason why torturing kids to death is ultimately all for the best, and this being can see that while we cannot. But that remains highly improbable, surely. The most reasonable conclusion to draw remains that the torturer is not particularly

benevolent. Pointing out the mere possibility that there is some good reason for the torture that we can't see (not being as intelligent or knowledgeable as the torturer) does very little to weaken the evidence that whatever the torturer is, he ain't entirely loving and benevolent."

Well, what I appreciate about what Mr. Law is saying is that he's not at all trying to be subtle. And be sure, there are many, many people who think that he hits the nail right on the head. But you see, there's something missing from Mr. Law's observation that is absolutely critical. Actually there's two things missing from his observation. The first is the general understanding of why this world is the way that it is. You see, the Bible claims it goes back to the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve traded in the perfection that God had created them with for the imperfection their rebellion brought not only to them but to every single subsequent son or daughter of Adam. The Bible says the moment that Adam tasted that fruit was the moment that mankind and all the creation experienced a paradigm shift from perfect to fallen. *Romans 5:12* says: *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.* And God says furthermore that this is a world that's operating under a curse. In *Romans 8:22* he says: *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the*

pains of child birth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Now, every religion in the world tries in some way to grapple with the effects of this curse. Buddhism says strive to remove all desire and you will see that this cursed world and all of its horrors is merely an illusion. Islam says you get out of the curse of the world and into heaven by working through the five pillars, making yourself worthy of Allah. Hinduism sees the evil in the world in terms of karma and reincarnation as the solution. You see, it's Christianity alone that says this world is completely broken, and God himself has said I will enter into this world, become one of you and absorb that brokenness into myself in order to rescue and redeem you. See, all the great religions of the world will give you a way that you can work towards in order to overturn the curse of human existence. It's Christianity alone that says we are broken beyond fixing ourselves and that the only one capable of fixing this brokenness is God himself, and God has entered into the curse of this existence to experience it at its worst. See, Christianity claims that God is not some lofty deity staring down from heaven unaffected by what happens to us down here below, but that instead in Christ, God knew precisely what it felt

like to personally experience betrayal, abandonment, torture, and execution, all at the hands of his own creation.

Stephen Law says merely pointing out that there may be some good reasons beyond our understanding why the world is so painful does very little to lessen the probability that whoever is behind it is not truly benevolent. He says there's just too much evil in the world to think otherwise. And absent the cross, I agree with Stephen Law. But that's precisely what's missing from his observation. You see, when it comes to explaining the reason for the pain and the suffering in this world and a God who may appear to be malevolent or powerless, the only explanation that makes any sense whatsoever is the cross of Christ. Allah never experienced hunger, thirst, exhaustion, or pain, but Jesus did. Buddha never knew what it felt like to hide his omnipotence and omniscience in the mantle of humanity so he could live his life just like you and I have to live ours, but Jesus did. And the greatest of Hindu masters never came close to being a spotless Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world by becoming sin itself, but Jesus did. And the greatest proof that Jesus has of his benevolence, his kindness, his humility, and his love is the cross. And that's why we spend so much time examining just what took place at the cross. You see, despite Mr. Law's objection, it makes perfect sense to me that God would find me way too far beneath him to communicate on an

equal level. God created the universe, he created the galaxies, the oceans, the mountains, every plant, every animal, everything that has ever existed. I'm just one of the persons that he created. I don't think it's unreasonable to think that there's a considerable gap between God's consciousness and mine, one that makes communication much more a case of no-see-ums than St. Bernards.

Let me give you an example, a simple example of why I think that, and it has to do -- we just came back from vacation, last month we were -- we were out in Colorado visiting our kids and we were staying at my son Dan and his wife Abby's house. And Dan and Abby have a dog named Beanie. Beanie unfortunately has a skin condition that caused him to lick himself so much that he wound up having this incredibly awful looking wound. So they took him to a vet and the vet gave him this medicine, he gave him this weird looking color that he puts over his neck so that he can't lick any of it off. So we were going out one evening, and as we were going out, Dan remembered at the last minute, he said, "Oh, I've got to put Beanie's color on." So I watched as Dan put the collar on Beanie, and I was amazed at the dog accepting this indignity, this inconvenience of having his head surrounded by this bazaar plastic funnel that won't let him lick any part of his body, and I'm amazed Beanie took it so stoically. Now consider this: If we lived in a

world where dog's ways and man's ways were reasonably close, well then Dan would have sat Beanie down and explained to him that pathogens are bad germs that cause skin infections and that antibiotics are compounds that kill these pathogens, and if you lick the antibiotic off your skin, you'll lick off the ability to kill the pathogens, the pathogens will multiply and your skin condition will get far worse. Now imagine if Dan could take Beanie's head in his hands and he could look in his eyes and he could speak as calmly and as slowly and as quietly as possible, and both you and I know that in a million years, Beanie will never get what antibiotics are all about. You see, the gap between the kingdom of dogs and the kingdom of people is simply too large to bridge there. Now, if Dan was showing Beanie how Frisbees fly and how dogs can catch them, well Dan and Beanie can communicate. But when you get beyond that conceptual, you've entered a place where dogs simply cannot go. So Beanie has to accept by faith that Dan is not out to harm him, and that's what Beanie did. Now here's the question: What makes any of us think that we are closer to God intellectually than Beanie is to Dan, especially when God says we are not. *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD, "for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."* See now, is there a vast amount of evil in this world? Absolutely. Lots of the explanations for much of the evil

are as obvious as St. Bernards in a tent. Sin is the reason for much of it, from a drunk driver taking the life of a young mother to Hitler taking the lives of 6 million Jews, but tornados and tsunamis and earthquakes don't come under the specific heading of sin and they're part of this world as well. They're under the far more perplexing heading of acts of God, and they cause death, destruction, and misery just as well. And God does not shy away from accepting responsibility for them as well. *Isaiah 45:7* says this, this is God: *"I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things."*

So why do these things happen? Well, by and large the only answer that I can give is I don't know. I don't know. But I also know that I am a creature limited in my understanding and vision, so I have two options. I have the St. Bernard option. I can try to figure out the why and if I can't, I can conclude that in the absence of an explanation, God is either too weak or too evil to do anything about it. Or I have the no-see-um option. When I can't understand the why of pain and suffering, when it is surrounded by mystery, I can examine that which is not a mystery, and that's what Christ did for me on the cross. You see, Beanie is able to trust Dan when he puts that nasty collar on him because he's seen Dan provide for him and care for him, and so he transfers the trust of

what he knows about Dan to those areas that he doesn't know. It's not really that much different for you and me. And we've all had or are going to have times in our lives when things simply don't add up. And the temptation during those times is always, it's to grow cynical, it's to grow bitter. In fact, God warns us specifically about that in *Hebrews 12:15*, he says: *See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.* You see, what enables me to obtain the grace of God is the ability to transfer the trust in things that I know about God to those areas that leave me baffled and clueless. When I'm tempted to think of God as indifferent to our suffering, I imagine God himself suffering. When I ask myself how can a benevolent God allow all this to happen, I also ask myself, how could the creator watch his own creation torture his only begotten Son? You see, the more you understand just what took place at the cross, the more you begin to understand the depth of the love of God in Christ, the more you're able to transfer the love that you know of to those areas in life that baffle, disorient, and destroy. So we study things like the servant songs of Isaiah because they open to us new depths of just what it is Jesus did for us on the cross.

40 years ago I knew Jesus died on the cross, somehow that freed me from the penalty of sin. And 40 years later I realize I haven't

even begun to scratch the surface of what that truly involved, and how much it cost the one who did that.

Now, the last time we looked at the final servant song of Isaiah which starkly takes us to a little known fact about what actually happened at the cross, and that fact stretches our understanding of what Jesus went through for us. It's in Isaiah 52:13-15, it says this, it says: *Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you -- his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind.* Here God takes us from the exaltation of Jesus being high and lifted up to the very bottom of his disgrace to astonishment, astonishment at what the cross has done to Jesus. You know, the Bible declares that Jesus bore God's wrath for three hours on the cross, and what took place during those three hours was so hideous, so devastating, that Jesus' body was no longer recognizable as human afterwards. And the experience was so hideous that God determined to hide it from human eyes. *Luke 23:44* says: *It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed.* So we saw in midday Jesus hanging on the cross for three hours and the entire area goes black, and at the center of that black hole was the servant Jesus hung suspended on a cross in midair, rejected by both God and man. The cross was a

perfect symbol of the fact that earth and its creatures had utterly rejected the God who had come to save them and that a holy God had to reject the sin that he had become for us, and so he hung in midair, rejected by heaven and by earth. I said at the beginning of that message, the key to effectively living somewhere between the legalism of the Pharisees and the easy believism of the present day church is to simply fall in love with Jesus Christ. And the way you fall in love with Jesus is by learning about who he is and what it is he did for us, because the more you love Jesus, the more you want to know about him; the more you know about him, the more astonishing the more his love, his grace, his wisdom becomes, the more prepared you are to trust him, to trust him when life presents us with a host of things that will challenge his goodness.

Well, our scripture this morning bears that out. It's the fourth of the servant songs. As we've said, it's a series of Old Testament prophetic poems that were written hundreds of years before Christ was born that describe what the future is going to be like for God's servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pick up the poem in *Isaiah 52:14* which says once again: *As many were astonished at you -- his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind -- so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they see, and that which*

they have not heard they understand. Now to sprinkle is to cleanse, and what is being sprinkled here is not water, it's blood. You see, by his own blood Jesus will cleanse not just the nation of Israel but many nations. This is the gospel going out to all the world and the result is just what we're talking about. You see, as the gospel is unpacked, as people from every tribe, tongue, and nation learn who Jesus is and what he has done for us on the cross, they begin to actually see, hear, and understand. It says: Kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand. This brings us to the end of chapter 52 and it serves as an introduction to what may be the high point of the servant songs, and that's Isaiah 53. This is the servant song that many of us are familiar with, and God uses this poem to take us from Jesus' birth almost directly to the cross. It opens up in Isaiah 53:1-2 with this, it says: Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 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, once again we're at a very important question that Isaiah asks us in verse 1: *Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?* What he's saying is who gets

what God is up to here? And instantly we begin to revisit the history of Christ's birth. We go back 400 years. It's been 400 years since the book of Malachi, and God has gone silent. There's been no prophecies, no revelation, just profound silence from heaven that has lasted longer than we've existed as a nation. 400 years of silence. And then suddenly a tender plant. Suddenly a root out of dry ground appears, and God himself asks: *Who has believed our report?* Well, the sad news is no different today than it was when Isaiah first spoke it. You see, the vast majority of folks remain unaware, unmoved, and unbelieving that God has entered into time and space and has become one of us. This is the report that most people choose to ignore, even though it's the most important report anyone will ever hear.

He goes on to say: *And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?* You know, during World War II, the government encouraged women to become actively involved in the labor force because there were just so many men who were actively fighting overseas, and in order to project an image that women could identify with, they produced a poster of a fictional character called "Rosie the Riveter." Many of you are probably familiar with that poster. It shows a very attractive woman pulling up the sleeve of her arm showing off her muscle like guys do. It was a very effective poster. Well, here we see the arm of the Lord revealed and it

pictures God himself in the heaviest and most intense labor he's ever been engaged in. He has rolled up his sleeves and revealed his arm as it were to begin the work of redeeming his sheep. And Isaiah goes on to say in verse 2: *For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground.* So we picture 400 years of the nation of Israel devolving from this lush productive garden blessed mightily of God to this arid, semi-dry desert land seemingly forgotten for centuries and suddenly out of this barren dust bowl to the shock of everyone appears a tender shoot of a brand new plant. The plant is tender, the plant is new, the plant is green. It is the life of the Messiah. God has taken on flesh. But the flesh appears to be uniquely unremarkable. *He has no form or comeliness.* Let me just add, that's an old word, "comeliness" means basically easy on the eyes, attractiveness. *He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.* You've got to remember, we're studying the servant songs of Isaiah for a reason. We're looking for ways to grow our love for Jesus, and we do that by learning more and more about who he is and what he's done for us, and this passage is no exception. But it takes a very bizarre turn. What it's saying here in plain English is that Jesus was not a physically attractive man. Scripture doesn't say he was ugly, but it does point out that there was nothing about his physical appearance that made him noteworthy. *He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him,*

there is no beauty that we should desire Him. And so I hate to break it to all those folks who think that Jesus was this stunning looking combination of Brad Pitt and George Clooney, and at the very least, this huge, muscular white North American guy, but that portrait could not be farther from the truth. A careful anthropological analysis of first century Galilean Semites would have Jesus' height at about five foot one and his weight about 110 pounds. That's just the way it was. And physically Jesus was not someone anyone would look at twice. Now, what is stunning about this piece of information is that of the billions and billions of human beings that have been born, only Jesus had complete access to the -- to the process of creating himself. You see, it was Jesus -- he's the one who -- who states and claims complete authorship over the process of creation. And that includes creating every one of us. In *Psalm 139* the psalmist declares this, he says: *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.* You see, it was Christ's creative power that knit every one of us together. And here's the interesting part. See, the Bible isn't shy about the fact that God is quite capable of knitting together attractive men. Listen to what *Genesis 39:6* said of Joseph: *Now Joseph was handsome in form*

and appearance. 1 Samuel 16:12 says of David: *Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome.* 1 Samuel 9:2 says of Saul: *And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of the Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.* Like I said, the chances are decent Jesus was five foot one, 110 pounds, and he had a face that you wouldn't look at twice. But Jesus alone had the ability to make himself the most physically attractive person the earth has ever known, and that would have given him all kinds of advantages. It would have opened to him all kinds of doors that are only open to highly attractive people that people love to walk through only if they have the goods. And that's precisely why Jesus opted instead to have a body that had *no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there's no beauty that we should desire Him.* You see, Jesus could have come to earth as a king, he could have come as the ruler of the heavens, and instead, in every way he *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.* He chose the pathway of a servant. Jesus Christ had no beauty or form, none of what even Joseph or David had, and he was born without money, without rank, without family, or even looks. He had none of the things that any of us might have just to survive. And he makes his entrance into

our world just like Isaiah said he would, like a nobody.

Who would believe our report? asks Isaiah. Earth completely ignored the report. But heaven didn't. Isaiah's question must have resonated with the angels because all of heaven erupted at this nobody *who had no form or comeliness and no beauty that we should desire Him.* Luke 2:13 describes the reaction of heaven to his birth. It says: *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men!"* And how strange it must have been for heaven and the vast unseen kingdom to know precisely what God was doing and to know that no one on earth had a clue. *Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?* Luke 2:8 tells us: *Now there were in the same country, shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over the flocks flock by night.* Sounds romantic, but we know shepherds were held in universal scorn in that region. We know that shepherds were semi wild themselves. They were considered crude, smelly, and so dishonest that shepherds weren't even allowed to be witnesses in a court of law. How fitting that God would make these men the only witnesses to the greatest worship the earth has ever seen. Men saw nothing! The angels saw it all! *Hebrews 1:6* says: *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."* See, they knew

what most Christmas revelers didn't know. They knew that that baby in the manger in that barn did not come to earth to be a leader or a teacher, philosopher, or even an example. They knew that baby had come to die. They knew that he first came to fulfill the law by living out the demands of the law perfectly and that he had to live out his life flawlessly, zero moral failures, and that he had to present that flawless perfect life before God as the Lamb of God, that he had to have his spotless divine blood splattered like that of all the lambs before him, except this Lamb of God and this perfect blood would pay the price of sin once and for all.

Who will believe our report? Well, earth, they didn't believe it at all, but heaven certainly did. You see, heaven knew that mankind was hopelessly lost because no man could be perfect like God was perfect. And they also knew that a holy and perfect God could not have anything to do with the fallen sinful creation we had become. And they saw God's answer was God himself taking on humanity, he would become the tender plant, the root out of dry ground, someone with no form and no comeliness, someone born of a peasant virgin in a barn in Bethlehem, all to live the life we should have lived so that he could die the death we all deserved to die. And so the sight of that overwhelmed the angels. Again: *And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth*

peace, goodwill towards men!" They understood it was their king, their king who spoke the universe into being now to save his people was rendered incapable of speaking. He who moved the planets in their heavenly orbits could not even lift his head. He could only coo and cry like any other earth bound baby. You know, we see Bethlehem as charming and as lovely and the angels saw it for what it was, they saw it as brutal and heartless, humiliating, yet triumphant, birth, death, and life everlasting.

So what is our take away from all of this? What can we glean from understanding that Jesus intentionally gave up the prerogatives of physical attraction when he selected the body that he would occupy while he was here on earth? Well for one, Jesus consistently modeled what the scripture declares in *1 Samuel 16:7*, it says: *"For the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."* Secondly, Jesus is speaking to every one of us who looks in a mirror and doesn't like what they see. And he speaks about what we value and what he values. And he's proven over and over again that what he values is us. You know, part of the reason why Jesus had no form or comeliness is because his desire was to live life exactly like we live it, and so we live life as we might live it on the worst days, in our worst circumstances, without any advantages that beautiful form and comeliness grants. *Hebrews 2:17* says: *Therefore he had*

to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. You see, to be made like his brothers in every respect is to experience life at its most pressing and difficult. Jesus did that to the max. You see, if anyone could experience greater pain, suffering, and sorrow than Jesus, then that person would have every right to say to Jesus, "You've not experienced the pain that I have, therefore you can't say that you've been made like me in every respect." So really in Jesus' case, there's no pain that we could ever experience that Jesus himself could not have had first experienced as well. From the pain of being physically unattractive to the pain of complete and utter abandonment and rejection, Jesus our high priest has experienced it all. And the reason is quite simple, we've said it repeatedly this morning. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Now the story is told that theologian Karl Barth was once approached by a student who asked him to sum up his theological work of a lifetime in one sentence. He is said to have responded, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." That's why we study Isaiah's servant songs. You see, the more we understand what it is Jesus experienced for us, the more we can

unpack what the cross truly cost him, the more we will begin to grasp the love of Jesus, the more we can trust him when the obvious St. Bernard explanations are not there, and the no-see-ums are all we are left with.

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

Let's pray.

Father, we are just amazed and astounded at the depth of your love for us. We are amazed and astounded that you would come to this earth not as a king, not in your glory, but as a servant and as a servant clad in a body that no one would look at twice. You who created every single body that occupies this planet, you who are the author of all creation, who could have chosen any body literally, chose to be someone with no beauty, no comeliness, someone who you wouldn't look at twice. You didn't want those advantages. You wanted to live life as we have to live life. And I thank you for that, and I praise you for that, and I love you for that. Amen.