

Pastor Tom Mortenson

Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

April 13, 2014

He Shall See the Labor of His Soul and Be Satisfied

Isaiah 53:8-12

Prayer: *Father God, we do again thank you and praise you for the gift that you have given to us in your Son. We just again stand amazed at what a gift this is, what a person and what a God we serve. So Father, again today as we are opening up your word, as we are looking deeper and deeper into what it is that you've done for us, who it is that you sent to us, we pray for your grace, we pray for your wisdom, we pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit. Father, guide us into all truth and allow your truth to become a permanent part of our lives, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, today marks the beginning of the passion week of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we who forget so easily have been given by God a week to celebrate the greatest event in the history of humankind, that is Jesus Christ's victory over death in his resurrection. Palm Sunday starts a week of remembrance of that event.

Now, there are 52 weeks in a year and this week is like no other,

because the resurrection is like no other. All history, human, divine, natural, and supernatural flows forward or backward from that one event. Today marks our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. *John 12* tells us that the multitude met Jesus with palm branches and they laid them down shouting: "*Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*" We pass out these palm branches on Palm Sunday to help us remember the joy of that moment. But do you remember what Jesus did as he approached Jerusalem at the height of his triumph? If you remember, the crowds were shouting, the Pharisees were fuming, every single person in Jerusalem was overwhelmed with Jesus. The only person who was not overwhelmed that way was Jesus. He was overwhelmed but in a very different way. It says in *Luke 19:41*: *And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it.* Jesus wept. He wept for a blindness that would culminate days later with more shouts, but this time they'd be shouts for his crucifixion, shouts for his blood to be on their head and on the heads of their children. Jesus was not weeping for himself. No, instead Jesus was weeping that light had come into the world and that men preferred darkness. Jesus knew with absolute accuracy every last detail that was going to unfold over the next few days. He knew it was the culmination of a prophesy that was made 800 years earlier in the servant songs of Isaiah. For the last few months we've been immersing ourselves in these very songs. We've said there's four

of them and they are prophetic messages identifying and speaking to the servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. They're called "songs" because they're written in a unique form of Hebrew poetry and they're scattered throughout the book of Isaiah and we've studied these songs. We study them to understand the role that they play, the foundational role in Jesus' own understanding of who he was, of his own ministry of reconciliation, and that the Father through the Holy Spirit by means of these scriptures in Isaiah communicated to the Son the servant he was to become.

This is my fifteenth and final message on the servant songs, so I thought I would kind of sum them all up, and so I started looking back through the other fourteen servants and I did a quick word count on them, there's over 70,000 words that I've written just on this subject. To put that into context, the average mystery novel contains about 60,000. So there's just too much material in those songs scattered throughout the book of Isaiah to revisit here. I'm going to have to sum up everything in one single message, but then I find out that's also what God does. You see, God himself ends Isaiah 53 with what could be viewed as a summation of all the servant songs. We've seen that each of these songs focus alternatively on either Jesus or on the people that he was serving, and we've been parked for a while at the peak of those songs, that is Isaiah 53. It reads in part: *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. 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. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 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. 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. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

Jesus is born with no form, with no beauty, nothing of the natural attractiveness that would make him appealing in any way to his fellow man. He is despised, rejected, sorrowed, and grieved. This is his own personal grief born out of our rejection of him. But he has other griefs as well. He has griefs from his Father. He is stricken, smitten by God and afflicted, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, chastised for our peace, striped with whips for our healing. We are the sheep who

have gone astray; he is the sheep who was made to pay. Verse 6 says: *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. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.*

Jesus suffers in silence and he suffers because he is our high priest and he's orchestrating his own sacrifice and he doesn't want to change any of the events that are going to take place, so he stays silent. But he's also silent because God had said in *Romans 3:19: That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* You see, before the throne of God's judgment, Jesus acting on our behalf now has his mouth stopped, because he's now the guilty one. *2 Corinthians 5:21: For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* That's where we are so far.

We've now gotten to the point in *Isaiah 53* where the whole tone begins change. We see the view start to change, it goes from the ten foot level up to the ten thousand foot level. God himself sums up all that the servant goes through on our behalf, in the following, this is *Isaiah 53:8-12*, it says: *He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For*

He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked -- but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By his knowledge My righteous servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

We start at *Isaiah 53:8*: *He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.* Jesus is taken, and he's taken from prison and judgment. There are people who are considered beneath even an attempt at justice. Jesus was one such person. He is held in such contempt that even the common justice of a fair trial is denied him and worse still, on an earthly level, nobody cares. The execution of the creator and the sustainer of the universe wouldn't make it

to a page 6 news blurb in a Jerusalem newspaper that day. *And who will declare His generation?* Well, certainly nobody from the world that he had come to save.

And finally we see God just stating what the ultimate punishment for Jesus was, what we've been studying from the ten foot level God just announces from the ten thousand foot level: He was cut off from the land of the living, thrust out from the very presence of God. It was the only thing that could make God himself scream out in agony: *"My God my God why hast thou forsaken me."* And again, Isaiah sums it all up in one sentence, he says: *For the transgressions of My people, He was stricken.* Well, if you've been here for the last few months, you know basically what those words are all about. We've studied them for months.

We move on to verse 9 which seems like a minor afterthought to all of the torture before. It says this in verse 9: *And they made His grave with the wicked -- but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.* You see, what God is speaking about here is what he so often speaks about when he describes what man intends versus what God superintends. God tells us that man intended to complete Jesus' humiliation by making his grave with the wicked, and the very one the angelic host was worshiping is hanging naked and beaten and mocked and spit on

and scorned and he's hung between two common criminals, between two thieves. It was mankind's attempt at guilt by association, but Jesus saw it coming miles away. He warned his disciples in *Luke 22:37* this was going to happen, he said this: *"For I tell you, what is written must be fulfilled in Me: And He was counted among the outlaws. Yes, what is written about Me is coming to its fulfillment."* You see, "they," that is the Jews and the Romans, had every intention of furthering his guilt by association in his burial as well. They were just doing Satan's bidding. You see, the enemy sought to humiliate Christ by making his grave with the wicked as well. And so Satan seeks to abuse him in death as he had tortured him in life. He wanted to treat his body like it was the carcass of a donkey, something to be thrown on the dung hill and abandoned. But God had other plans. You see, God and the angels who worshiped and witnessed his coming as a babe were now witness to his torture, his humiliation, and his execution. But they knew God's plan. They knew it had been agreed on before time began and affirmed in the Garden of Eden and it would mean that Satan would appear victorious. Way back in the Garden of Eden God told the serpent he would be able to strike out at Christ. In *Genesis 3:14*, he says: *"You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* Well, that's just what

happened. Christ at the cross utterly defeated Satan; he crushed Satan's head. But Satan also struck Christ: *"And you will strike his heel."* Isaiah takes us into God's court where he allows Satan his due but not a fraction more, and that included the handling of Jesus' body after his death. Now they had prepared a dung heap for burial for the Christ, and God had other plans. *Isaiah 53:9* says simply: *And they made His grave with the wicked -- but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.* You know, you can almost hear God say: Die he must, but you will not dishonor Him further because the one you are burying was perfect in thought and deed.

And so he was spared having his body abused only by God's hand working through a rich man at his death. *Matthew 27:57* says: *Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.* God repeats what heaven already knew about Jesus: *He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.* The only violence and deceit that he had ever been guilty of belonged to us.

But you know, if you've been here for the last year, you've heard all of this before, and we've gone through all of the horror that Isaiah lays out for us, but as I said at the beginning, now something, something is changing. God sums it all up in our text this morning in verse 10, he says this: *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.* It pleased God to bruise his son. You know, there are those who would have you believe that this means that God is nothing more than a sadistic cosmic child abuser. How can it possibly be that God would be pleased to bruise his own son? I mean, how can we even process that? Well, if your son had decided to donate his kidney to save the life of his brother knowing that he would have to go through the pain of the surgery and the recovery, would you be pleased to see him bruised in that way? If your daughter decided to undergo a bone marrow transplant to save the life of her sister, would you be willing to accept the pain she would have to undergo to accomplish that? Would you be pleased that she was willing to undergo that pain? Does that make you a cosmic child abuser? You see, if God's pleasure was in bruising his son alone, well then he is indeed a child abuser. But God's pleasure looked not to that event but through that event to the other side, to what the bruising would accomplish for the Father, for the Son, for the Holy Spirit, and particularly for us. The scripture goes even further describing

God's pleasure in bruising God's son. It describes the son's joy in receiving this as well. *Hebrews 12:2* says this, it 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.*

And so we make no mistake about it, Jesus despised the shame of the cross. But in spite of the shame, he pursued the joy that enduring it would produce, and if you think that the Father didn't also despise the shame, the pain, and the horror that the son would endure, then you just don't know God very well. But here's the amazing part. You see, the pleasure of the Father and the joy of the Son in undergoing the horror of the cross was you and it was me. *Isaiah 53:10* says this, it says: *When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.* You see, God has made his soul an offering for our sin, and we are the seed that he sees. And for 2,000 years now, we have prolonged his days. We are the pleasure of the Lord that prospers in his hand. *Isaiah 53:11* says: *He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.* God sees us as the labor of his soul. We've looked at length this past year at that labor, at that travail as Isaiah has laid it all out. We've seen the tender plant with no beauty, despised by men, bearing our grief, stricken of God, suffering in

silence, denied simple justice, buried in a borrowed tomb. The cross is just this agonizing labor that precedes the birth of his redeemed. It's the travail of childbirth, and God sees the labor of a soul, and he's satisfied, he says it was worth it. The pleasure of the Father and the Son was a pleasure that knew that the torment of the cross was about to give way to the joy of the resurrection.

So Isaiah says in verse 11: *He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.* But then he adds this statement, he says: *By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.* I look at that, I say what in the world is he saying? How does knowledge justify many? First what does it mean to justify? I mean, that's what God tells us he did at the cross. In *Romans 5:18* he says this, he says: *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.* Justification is simply God's declaration that Jesus has paid my penalty on the cross, that my account before God, before heaven, is balanced. You know, when my checking account at the local bank is finally balanced, what it means is that the checks that I've written match the deposits that I've made and they say therefore your account is justified. Well, my account before God was hopelessly overdrawn

the day that I was born. It was overdrawn because I've been charged with the sin of Adam. It's in my account at birth. And Jesus offered the Father his perfection for my sin. When I become a Christian, God justifies me by Christ's blood shed on the cross. But our text this morning says: *By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.* What does God mean by that, I mean, how does knowledge justify many? Well, the word for knowledge in the Hebrew is the word "daath," and it covers a lot of ground. It's the same word used in *Genesis 2:9*. Let me just read to you this, it says: *And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* In *Psalms 139:2*, it says: *You know my sitting down and my rising up; you understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all of my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.* *Job 21:22* says: "Can anyone teach God knowledge, since he judges those on high?" Jesus' knowledge that justifies is no ordinary knowledge.

One commentator said this about that knowledge, he says this,

speaking of Jesus: He knows the counsels of His love and the will of His grace, in the fulfillment of which His own life ascends, after having gone down into death and come forth from death; and by virtue of this knowledge, which rests upon His own truest and most direct experience, He, the righteous One, will help "the many."

In other words, what he's saying is Jesus the man had to know by experience not just the Father but also both life and death as we humans know it in order to justify many. You know, the Son knew the Father and the Holy Spirit before time itself began but some knowledge Jesus had to get by experience, and that experiential knowledge was literally gained by Jesus as a matter of life and death and it was a matter of his life and his death. We say it all the time, as Tim Keller puts it: He lived the life that we were supposed to live and then He died the death that we all deserved to die. You see, it wasn't enough for God to come down to earth simply to die for men. He also had to live for man. He had to perfectly fulfill the law. That means he had to do what we could not do, he had to know life as a perfect human being. He had to know by experience what we human beings know about living, but he had to do it perfectly.

Hebrews 4:15 says: For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we

are, yet without sin. And that knowledge that Jesus had and the knowledge that he gained was not just this accumulation of information, it was this enormous additional burden that he bore as a child as the good Shepherd and as our king. *By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many* means that as a child, Jesus bore the burden of coming to know that he was the Messiah. As the good Shepherd, he bore the burden of knowing that soon all of his sheep were going to be shattered. And as a king, he bore the burden of knowing that the ransom payment he would make for his subjects would be his own body and blood. And you know, much of this he probably learned from studying the servant songs of Isaiah. And you know, all of this torment of knowing that he was born to be our sacrifice, all of that he kept inside him. When he even attempted to reveal it to the disciples, they looked at him in wild eyed wonder, they had no idea what he was talking about, or else they castigated him like Peter did for not living up to their expectations. And so Jesus just set his face like flint toward Jerusalem because he understood this is war and neither side is prepared to take any prisoners. In fact, in *Luke 14:31* Jesus uses the analogy of war to say this, he says: *"Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.*

So likewise, whoever of you who does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." So here we have Jesus counting the cost of this war, and for him the cost included forsaking everything he had, and he considered it a price worth paying. And so his Father says in Isaiah 53:12: Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great. And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and He made intercession for the transgressors.

There's four different reasons why the Father is celebrating the son in this verse. Reason number one: He poured out his soul until death, as the high priest poured out the blood, so the high priest Jesus poured but he poured out his soul, and he orchestrated his own sacrifice as the priest. He was never the victim. And number two: He was numbered with the transgressors. Now Jesus told the watching universe, I'm with them. He was unashamed to count himself one of us. Again, Luke 22:37: *"It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors;' and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment."* Number three: He bore the sin of many. The cross was not just an example of love, it was not some political leader being murdered by a kangaroo court. It was the battle plan of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit unfolding in time. 1

Peter 2:24 says: He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. And fourth: He made intercession for the transgressors. You know, at the cross Jesus said these famous words: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Who knows but that this intercession by Jesus didn't stop the Father from wiping out the entire planet and the solar system as well. Romans 8:34 says: Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died -- more than that, who was raised to life -- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Now, we see Jesus as winning this war on four different fronts; number one, he poured out his soul; number two, he was numbered with us transgressors; number three, he bore our sin; number four, he intercedes for us, therefore God says: *I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong. (Isaiah 53:12)*

So here's the \$60,000 question: What is the Lord's portion? What is the spoil? You see, the answer to that question is the answer also in another question, that question is: What am I doing here? The answer is so huge I can't do it justice, I can only simply state it. We are the portion divided among the great. We are the spoil divided among the strong. We are the gift of the Father to

the Son; the portion and the spoil is us. *Deuteronomy 32:9: For the LORD'S portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. Psalm 74:2: Remember the people you purchased of old, the tribe of your inheritance, whom you redeemed. We are the Father's gift to his Son.*

You see, God had a plan before time itself even began: He would choose his church as a gift from Father to Son. *Ephesians 1:4: He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Folks get upset about this idea of God choosing. I understand that and sometimes it's very difficult to wrestle with, to grapple with, but look at it from God's perspective. God knows man's hatred. Look what we did to his Son. Romans 3:10 says: As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. You see, if God didn't actively pursue us, there would be no church. Hebrews 10 says man tramples the gospel underfoot because he has no desire whatsoever for it and yet many folks deeply resent the idea that God would choose those to whom he gives it.*

It was Spurgeon who said this: "You do not like holiness; you do not like righteousness; if God has elected me to these things, has he hurt you by it? If any of you love to be saved by Christ, he

has elected you to be saved. If any of you desire to have salvation, you are elected to have it, if you desire it sincerely and earnestly. But, if you don't desire it, why on earth should you be so preposterously foolish as to grumble because God gives that which you do not like, to other people?

You see, the doctrine of election is the fulfillment of God's promise. God promised that a great army of souls would be his portion and his spoil after the war was won, and he made that promise before time had even begun. He made it before the foundation of the world. And the scripture doesn't only declare it, it declares it repeatedly. *Titus 1:1*, it says: *Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.* *2 Timothy 1:8*: *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.* *1 Corinthians 2:7*: *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.* Then finally, *2 Thessalonians 2:13*: *But we are bound to*

give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

You see, before Adam even tasted that fruit, there was already drawn up a war plan between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and when Adam and Eve betrayed the Father, they wound up naked, ashamed, and hiding from God, and God declared war on the devil, but it was all according to plan. *Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* We look at Isaiah and we see that *Isaiah 53:1-9* describes Satan striking the heel of Jesus, it's painful, it's awful, it's terrible, but verses 10 to 12 describe Jesus crushing his head, and verse 12 is the dividing of the spoils of war: *Therefore I will give Him a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong.* And we are the spoil of that war. See, the devil thought the cross was his greatest victory and that he had won. He said look at your king, he's stripped, he's cursed, he's abandoned. God used the very same cross as his greatest victory. Look at my Son, look at the hideousness of sin, look at the hatred of sinners, but look at the love of your King!

See, that was the battle plan from the beginning of time.

Colossians 2:13 says this, it says: *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. So Jesus poured out his soul, he was numbered with us, the transgressors, he bore our sin, and he interceded for us so he could ransom the souls that God had promised him as his portion and his spoil before time had even begun. Just consider the privilege that we have been given. Consider the responsibility of being God's gift to Christ.*

Listen to Jesus' final prayer. This is *John 17:1: Jesus spoke these words, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."* *John 17:6, Jesus says: "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of this world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word."* *John 17:9: "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those who have given me, for they are yours."* *John 17:24: "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me*

because you have loved me before the creation of the world."

Now I know some folks look at that and they say wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute, this is Jesus speaking about his disciples. Fair enough. Listen to what Jesus says in *John 17:20*, he says: *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message."* And that message has gone from mouth to ear for 2,000 years now and those who have ears to hear, they hear it for one reason. The reason why they hear it is because the harvest belongs to God. Listen to what Jesus said in *John 10:27*, he says: *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand."* Why's that so important? It's so important because that's why God could say to his servant in *Isaiah 53:12*: *Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Now you might also ask well, what does this have to do with Palm Sunday? You know, I spoke at the beginning of this message about

this very strange reaction that Jesus had to the adulation and the cheers of the crowd that he met on that day. It says in *Luke 19:41*: *And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it.* You know, there are numerous commentators who believe that this was the very same occasion that Jesus used to say as this city is welcoming him with open arms with the palms outstretched what he said in *Luke 13:34*, he said this: *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!"* We can't say with certainty that this was the same time that Jesus wept, but we know from the construction of the sentence that Jesus' heart was broken, that his was this great and deeply felt lament:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem." You know, it's one of those doubly stated cries of agony not unlike David's cry at the death of his son Absalom. In *2 Samuel 19*, it says: *The king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O, my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"* It's the same kind of agony. So why would Jesus turn a day of joy like Palm Sunday into a day of mourning? Why would he do that? I think it all comes down to four little words. He said: *"How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!"* *"And you would not."* See, I believe God is absolutely sovereign, and I believe that we are God's gift to his

Son, and I believe God's gift of grace is absolutely irresistible. "All that the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out." (John 6:37) I also believe that we are the spoils of war that Jesus won at the price of his own blood, but I also believe that if we are not weeping like Jesus wept at those around us who refuse the grandest and most gracious offer that has ever been made, if we don't weep at that, then I wonder, do we really have the Spirit of Christ within us? The world around us is literally going to hell. And Jesus weeps for that very world. Jesus died for the lost of that world, and I wonder do you and I really care for that world?

You know, one thing that we had driven home to us this week at the conference is that things are not going to get easier for those who love the gospel. In fact they're going to get much, much harder. You know, the theme of the conference was "The Unashamed Gospel." You saw a little taste of that. I'll be giving you all a full report in the next few weeks. But you know, the bottom line is this, those who love the gospel share the gospel. You see, if we truly are the spoils of war, if we truly are Jesus' portion among the great, the very gift of the Father to the Son, then we should have within us the very same Holy Spirit that Jesus had and he said with tears: "*How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would*

not!" So I ask, do we have that same lament within us? Let me leave you with one brief comment made by Charles Spurgeon who believed more than any of us in the doctrine of God's sovereign election. He said this: "If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for." Let's pray.

Father God, I just thank you for the incredible privilege we have been given. As your word points out, we are the spoils of war and the war cost our Savior his blood, his flesh, and his life, his relationship with you. He was cast into outer darkness in order to win us as the spoils of war. What a privilege we have. And Father, we are surrounded by people who are clueless, who have no idea whatsoever of what their fate is, and yet Lord, we have a gospel that has the power within itself to convert souls. We just have to unleash that power. Give us the strength, give us the wisdom, give us the courage to do that, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.