

3 | ISAIAH 53:5; Mk 15:20-41

THE DEATH OF DEATH

Death is defeated!

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Introduction

I invite you to turn in your Bibles to **Isaiah 53**. Tonight I want to consider the personal nature of the atonement. We want to consider the day that death died!

The Bible says in Hebrews 2:14-15, that Jesus, "...through death might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." Because of Jesus death is dead! Let's consider this in Isaiah 53.

Scripture Reading

Let's stand and read from Isaiah 53.

ISAIAH 53:3-6 | He was despised and rejected by men,
 a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
 and as one from whom men hide their faces
 he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

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 pierced for our transgressions;
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
 upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
 and with his wounds 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.

This is God's Word.

Outline

How has Christ put death to death by the cross?

- The **problem** the cross addresses
- The **price** of the cross
- The **personal** nature of the cross

Pierced and wounded for our transgressions! Crushed for our iniquities – our lawless deeds! When we recall the horror and frightful injustice of God's pure and blameless Son being crucified, the question often comes: Why? The answer is in the very character of God: He is perfect justice and perfect love meeting together! God loves you. God loves me. Tonight, I want us to understand the personal nature of the atonement. You cannot be eternally saved unless you believe not just that Jesus died for sinners, but that Jesus died for you. If you were the only sinner on an earth of perfect people, He would have gladly come down and died for you alone. He loves you that much.

But consider the hurdle the Son of God must get over – our transgressions. Pierced and wounded for my transgressions!

1. THE **PROBLEM** THE CROSS ADDRESSES: TRANSGRESSIONS (ISA 53:5A).

ISAIAH 53:5 | But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Throughout the Scriptures, God makes clear the divine necessity of the cross. It had to happen; it was God's purpose, and there was no other way. There had to be a just payment for your sin and my sin. Wounded for our transgressions! Crushed for our iniquities – our lawless deeds!

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

2 COR 5:21 | For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Christ was willing to be made a curse for us – to be wounded for our transgressions. God wasn't playing games with sin when He allowed His Son to be crucified. Sin is as bad as God tells us it is, with eternal consequences every bit as horrible as God describes them. We must never forget: Sin is so serious to the mind of God that He was willing to take His only Son— who knew no sin and lived in perfect holiness— and to make Him to be sin for us.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

ROM 3:24-25 | [We] are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

How can a holy God receive wretched sinners like you and me into his presence? He is the thrice holy God. The angels cry to one another in his presence, "Holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa 6:3). The only way is if he sends his only Son, the perfect sacrifice to live the life we could live and die the death we deserved to die. The sacrificial system was only a picture outlined in the book of Leviticus. John the Baptist looked upon Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

God cannot dwell with sin. His nature is too pure and good and kind. He cannot have sinners dwelling in his presence. God is offended by sin. He must meet out his righteous justice and wrath against it.

Bunyan: Sin is the Dare of God's Justice

John Bunyan said it this way: "Sin is the dare of God's justice, the rape of his mercy, the jeer of his patience, the slight of his power, and the contempt of his love".

We dared God's justice! We took advantage of his sweet mercy! And we did what we wanted. Year after year. We made excuses. We mocked his patience! We were blind to his power! Yet look at the great price! He loved us. How many years did we live in sin, ignoring his love! Oh, the mountain of transgressions we all have!

How then can a holy God receive sinners and adopt them into his family?

2. THE PRICE OF THE CROSS: CHRIST WOUNDED (ISA 53:5B; MK 15:20-41).

ISAIAH 53:5 | But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Roman crucifixion was the cruelest form of physical death mankind has ever devised, and Jesus had to endure that. But this was not the greatest tragedy of the cross. The greatest tragedy of it is what God did when He laid all the sin of the world on his Son. By this means, God dealt thoroughly and radically with sin so his justice and his holiness would be upheld. All that would be required to deal with sin fell upon his Son in an indescribably dreadful blow.

Consider how Christ was wounded!

THE HORROR OF THE CUP

Mark 14:32-36

This cup of horror foretold by the prophets is seen in full view by Jesus. Mark records it in **Mark 14**.

MARK 14:32-36 | And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. ³⁴ And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." ³⁵ And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

No Other Way But Substitutionary Atonement

What was Jesus saying? He was saying, "Father, if there is any other way, let me go that way!" But there is no other way. Substitutionary atonement is the only way. There is no other way that mankind can be reconciled to God. The suffering that Christ sees

ahead of Him is unimaginable. Unlike the entire whole of humanity, Jesus submits to the Father's will in this overwhelming struggle.

Jesus' struggle is beyond **comprehension**. Consider some of the descriptions from the text.

- ***He is said to be astonished***. Here Jesus, just before His crucifixion lays bear His heart to God and to us about His agony. The word "greatly distressed" (14:33) also has the idea of "**greatly astonished**". Jesus during His whole ministry has been completely unflappable. But here, something He sees, something He realizes stuns the eternal Son of God.
- ***He is said to be overcome with horror***. Jesus, according to the text is also "troubled" (14:33).¹ The Greek term here means "**to be overcome with horror**".²

Illustration: Once in High School on a choir tour, we stopped at an awful accident scene. Our Choir Director, Dave Shaleen, jumped off the bus and opened the crumpled car door to find a woman, alive, but her face was totally mutilated. Dave came back white as a ghost. He was horrified and nauseated and concerned.

- ***He is said to be in such intense emotional anguish, He feels close to death***. The emotion Jesus felt at this time almost killed Him. He said to His disciples, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" (14:34).

Jesus' Suffering is Unique

Many Christians have faced death, and almost without exception these people face death bravely and even gladly.

Jesus' Suffering Was Beyond What Any Human Being Has Suffered

Something happened in that garden—Jesus saw, felt, sensed something--and it shocked the unshakable Son of God. What was it? It was something beyond physical torment—beyond the most excruciating pain. All human suffering combined is simply a flea bite compared to what Jesus saw in the Garden. Indeed, He began to enter into it. It was the everlasting wrath of the Father.

Luke's account gives us a frightening detail. Luke 22:43-44, "And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Here was the Son of God, facing the everlasting justice of God for my sin. What He saw shocked the unshockable Son of God. Have you ever been in such great pain or in such a great sorrow or trial or temptation that you couldn't think straight? That's where Jesus was. When we are in that state of mind, we often lose it. We make shockingly self-

¹ The Greek verb here is defined by Zodiates as follows: "to be depressed and almost overwhelmed with sorrow or burden of mind".

² Keller, 174.

destructive statements, and we at times undermine the people and the values we love most. We all fall short when faced with God's will in horrifying situations.

But at the most supreme moment of personal pain in the history of the world, Jesus doesn't do fall short. He says, "Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mk 14:36). He's not stoically resigned to God. He's saying, "I trust you no matter what I'm feeling right now". He desires to do the will of the Father. Jesus doesn't deny His emotions. He is the pure, holy Son of God.

Consider the Cup!

Consider the Cup of wrath that Christ drank out of pure love for you. His love was so great that it could dissolve the mountain of rightful wrath for you. Nothing can satisfy you like the cup of Christ's love. Drink of that cup of love. No family love, no romantic love, no matter how strong, no love for a child or a mother or father, no love on earth can compare with the love of Christ. He drank my cup of wrath that I might drink His cup of love.

Drink it! Drink the cup of his love! He calls you to personal relationship. Drink the Cup of His love—He calls you to embrace what He's done for you.

THE SOLDIER'S MOCKING

MATTHEW 27:27-30 | Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ 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!" ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

Jesus had already been slapped repeatedly; his beard torn out by the Jewish leaders. His face was surely already swollen and bleeding. After the scourging His back would be a mass of bleeding wounds and quivering muscles.

The entire garrison of 600 Roman soldiers decided to mock Christ. They found a badly faded tunic that had been thrown aside. Matthew says it was a robe of scarlet. Mark and John say it was a "purple" robe (Mk 15:17; Jn 19:2). It was the closest thing to a royal color they could find.

Jesus is then paraded before the jeering crowd in the purple robe and crown of thorns with the words, "Behold the man" (Jn 19:4).

THE VIA DOLOROSA

Mark 15:20b-21

"And they led him out to crucify him. ²¹ And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross" (Mk 15:20b-21).

The Public Procession

Victims of crucifixion were usually paraded through the streets and made to walk in a public procession in order to maximize the humiliation of the spectacle. **John 19:17** simply records of the Way that Christ carried his cross, “and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. simply records of the Way that Christ carried his cross”. Jesus was forced to carry his own crossbeam to the place of execution until He could not carry it any longer. The crossbeam would have weighed about 125 pounds. But Jesus was in such a state of exhaustion and had such a great amount of blood loss that he could not carry his cross.

Simon of Cyrene at this time is just entering the city as Jesus is leaving Jerusalem for the outer limits to be crucified. Simon must take Jesus’ cross the rest of the way.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Mark 15:21-24

Crucifixion was designed to be the most humiliating and gruesome method of execution. The Romans reserved it for their worst offenders. It was a protracted, bloody, public spectacle of extreme pain that usually ended in a horrible death by shock or asphyxiation. But it is noteworthy that Mark gives us very few of the gory details. He aims his spotlight away from the physical horrors of Jesus ordeal in order to focus it on the deeper meaning behind the events.

MARK 15:21-24 | And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. ²² And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). ²³ And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. ²⁴ And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.

Jesus was offered a mixture of a narcotic. He refused it. He wanted to take in the full wrath of God.

Prophecies

The crowd doesn’t know it, but Jesus is fulfilling prophecy. 600 years earlier, David wrote as the shadow of the ultimate Davidic king something no one could have expected because crucifixion was not yet invented. Yet we read of his hands and feet being pierced.

- Psalm 22:14, “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast.”
- Psalm 22:16–18, “For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— ¹⁷ I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; ¹⁸ they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.,

Imagine what Jesus' followers felt as they watched this scene around the cross, as they watched the man they had followed for years being crucified. Here was a man who calmed storms, banished sickness, and cheated death by the miraculous power of His word. Here was a man who less than a week before had been given a king's welcome to Jerusalem. Here was the Christ. How could this be happening? Mark goes on and describes a supernatural darkness that covers the earth.

Breathing

In order to breath, every minute was agonizing physically. He would have to push up on His feet and pull on His wrists in order to breath. As He did so the nerve pain would shoot through His entire body. This was constant.

THE DARKNESS

Mark 15:25-33

MARK 15:25-33 | And it was the third hour when they crucified him. ²⁶And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!" ³¹So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³²Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. ³³And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

More prophecy is being fulfilled. The crowd even in it's mocking is fulfilling prophecy. Consider again Psalm 22:7, "All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads."

What is happening here? The darkness points to something cosmic. In their depictions of Jesus death, Mark and the other three Gospel writers show a consistent concern for what visual interplay between darkness and light. All four Gospel writers take pains to emphasize that the critical events of Jesus' death happened in the dark. The betrayal and the trail before the Sanhedrin all happened at night, of course, but now at the actual moment of Christ's death, even though it is in the middle of the day, an inexplicable darkness descends. Hell literally descends on Calvary. Verse 33, "And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour." The sixth hour was noon. The ninth hour was 3pm. So from 12 to 3pm in the afternoon, as Jesus was dying, there was total darkness.

Possible Causes for the Darkness

Many have proposed natural causes for this darkness.

Perhaps an **eclipse**. But a solar eclipse can only create darkness for a few minutes.

Others say perhaps a desert **windstorm**. A desert windstorm could obscure the sun for days at a time. But Passover falls in the wet season, so this darkness couldn't have come from that.

This was a **supernatural darkness**. In the Bible, darkness during the day is a sign of God's displeasure. It's a sign of judgment. But look at who God is judging. Mark continues.

FORSAKEN BY THE FATHER

Mark 15:34-35

MARK 15:34-37 | And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵ And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah."

Jesus was fulfilling ancient prophecy. Psalm 22:1, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?" Jesus was being forsaken so that I could be accepted by God.

Jesus is taking away for His people what is described throughout the prophets: the final day of judgment. He is drinking the full cup of the wrath of God (cf. Amos 8:7-10).

So why has God forsaken his Son? Let us ask ourselves this question. Why? It was for you and me he died. He died that we might have life. He exchanged his righteous life for the sentence of death we deserved. He was forsaken by the Father that we might be adopted by the Father. It is the eternal covenant of Redemption agreed upon in eternity past before the world was formed. The Son submitted to the Father's will to give himself as a payment for our sin. This is why he was forsaken. He willingly laid down his life for us. This was the plan from before the foundation of the world.

DEATH, GOD'S FULL WRATH

Mark 15:36-37

MARK 15:36-37 | And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷ And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

Christ is ready to go to the Cross alone. Christ has prepared for this all His life. He warned of it over and over. Now all His disciples would be scattered. ***Jesus would partake of the cup of God's wrath alone.***

There is a cup that Jesus must drink. The Lord's Table cup was only symbolic. There is a cup of God's wrath that is being served up for him. It was a cup of horror foretold by the prophets.

- Asaph said in **Psalm 75:8**, "For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs."

- Job says of the wicked in **Job 21:20**, “Let their own eyes see their destruction, and let them drink of the wrath of the Almighty.”
- In order for Jesus to free the guilty, Jesus must drink the cup of God’s wrath for us.

The Death of Death

Jesus took death for us. The Son of God died. **John 19:28-30**, “After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”²⁹ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

Remember earlier Jesus refused this mixture of sour wine. But now he takes it. Peer into this wondrous mystery for a moment. Jesus was done paying for the second death, and now had no more strength to die the first death. Normally a sinner dies the first death, and if he is unjustified, he dies the second death which is eternal condemnation. Jesus does it in reverse order. He dies the SECOND DEATH, and then says, “I thirst” so that he can have strength to die the first death!

And in Christ’s death, Christ declared death to be dead!

What is Finished?

And he says, “It is finished!” This is a term of payment – *tetelestai*! “It is finished!” There is nothing more anyone can do to earn salvation. Jesus bought it!

At the cross, the Great Exchange took place (2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 2:13-15). The eternal debt owed for the sin of mankind was paid in full. God the Father looked upon His perfect, precious, and priceless Son as if He had lived the filthy, detestable, sin-stained lives of fallen mankind. And, for those who repent and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, God the Father looks upon them as if they had lived His Son’s perfect, precious, and priceless life.

THE MIRACULOUS SIGNS

Mark 15:38-39

The Tearing of the Curtain

MARK 15:38 | And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

At the moment Christ died, this massive curtain was ripped open. The tear was from top to bottom, just to make clear who did it. This was God’s way of saying. “This is the sacrifice that ends all sacrifices, the way is now open to approach me now.” Now that Jesus has died, anybody who believes in him can see God and touch God and connect to God. It’s only possible because the price has been paid. Anyone who believes is applied with His blood and is “declared righteous” and justified before God.

The Testimony of the Centurion

But now we see another miracle. There was one person when observing Christ's death got it right. This is a surprising occurrence because this centurion was a Roman. Every Roman coin of the time was inscribed with "Tiberius Caesar, son of the Divine Augustus." The only person a loyal Roman would ever call Son of God was Caesar but look at this testimony.

MARK 15:39 | And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

3. OUR **RESPONSE** TO THE CROSS (ISA 53:5C).

ISAIAH 53:5 | But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

The Son of Righteousness comes with healing in his wings! The secret to the power of the cross is that "Jesus died for ME". Look at all the personal pronouns: "**our** transgressions, he brought **us** peace, by his wounds **we** are healed...."

DEFINITION OF FAITH

These personal pronouns indicate that we must place personal faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ for ourselves. Wayne Grudem in his **Systematic Theology** says defines faith as "turning to Christ." It is not merely intellectual faith. It is this but it is more than this, for "the devils believe and tremble." This faith includes: "a knowledge, an approval, and a personal trust."³

When the Philippians jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?", Paul and Silas responded in **Acts 16:31**, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." Now this is not a mere intellectual acknowledgement. The devils acknowledge Jesus is Lord. But this is a repentant faith. You turn from sin to Jesus and trust him and approve of him. You are glad for him to be your Savior.

RECEIVE CHRIST BY FAITH

Without faith in the sacrifice of Christ we have no hope of escaping the judgment from God. It is of the utmost importance that Jesus died for us *personally*—because without it, we are damned. You must receive Christ—all that he is and all he has done for you personally (Jn 1:12). If you are to be saved, it must be by faith in him (Eph 2:8-9).

³ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 709.

Conclusion

What shall we say then? “He was wounded for my transgressions, crushed for my iniquities”. He paid it all. I can’t add anything to it. It is indeed finished!

His death should be personal for all of us. “By his stripes we are healed”! Hallelujah!

Brothers and sisters, it’s Friday, and our sins have been paid for! This is the day death died! Remember it may be Friday, but Sunday is coming!