

He Shall See the Labor of His Soul

Call to Worship: Psalm 22

1st Scripture: Isaiah 53:1-9

2nd Scripture: Isaiah 53:10-12

Introduction

One of the most rewarding experiences is the joy that comes with obtaining the prize for a hard-earned victory. Indeed, one of the great benefits of hard work, is being able to enjoy the fruit of your labor, after you have sweat and struggled to complete a particular task. This experience has a value that just cannot be comprehended or achieved by those who would cheat their way to fortune. There is something so precious and valuable about standing before a completed task, and being able to reflect and look back, at the labor that you have done to bring about the completed project.

Perhaps the builder reflects upon the first nail that was driven, or the first girder that was laid, as he stands before the mesmerizing, towering, magnificent completed building. Or the MVP shortstop, holding the World Series trophy in his hand, looks back at all the practice and hard work that has brought him to this present success. Or maybe, while glancing upon the beautiful, bright colored, true to life painting, the artist reflects upon his early brush strokes when it almost seemed as if nothing could possibly come of this dull, lifeless canvas. We can all come up with hundreds of illustrations, and I am sure that we have all experienced such joy that comes with hard-earned accomplishment.

But brethren, when we consider what the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished, and when we consider the final outcome of His glorious labor, we have entered into another whole dimension of attainment, have we not? When we consider the plight of fallen man, and the great extent that our blessed Savior had gone to redeem man, the profound wonder of our Lord's reveling joy is something so glorious, well deserved, and yet, beyond comprehension for us to grasp. The Scriptures tell us that our Lord does indeed experience a deep joy over what He has done, and when the fruit of His labor comes to its completion, while we will be so overcome

with our joy in Him, we will witness something so profound, as He looks upon and rejoices over the full harvest of His labor.

As we celebrate Resurrection Sunday in a special way this morning, brethren, I hope to give us even a small, but sweet taste of our Lord's joy to this end, as we behold a wonderful glimpse of it in the Scriptures. So often we limit ourselves to pondering the great benefits that *we obtain* from our salvation, but brethren, I think it is more than proper to also gaze into the eyes of our beloved Savior, and to behold Him in all of His glory, gazing upon, and rejoicing in, the fruit of His blessed labor. Brethren, let's celebrate His joy this morning!

I. Setting the Stage: The Context

In one sense, I recognize that I probably do not have to set the context for the main portion of this prophecy that we will be considering, found in verse 11. We all know very well what is happening in Isaiah 53. It is one of the Old Testament's most clear and striking descriptions of the suffering, sacrifice and death of our Beloved Lord and Savior. However, I want to emphasize one critical, theological truth that thoroughly flows out of the whole of Isaiah 53, which will help set the stage for our main text. And that theological truth centers upon the fact that Christ's suffering was *vicarious*, in nature. Now, what do I mean by "vicarious?" I mean that His suffering was not as a consequence of *His* sin, but as a substitute on behalf of His people. Furthermore, Jesus's suffering, friends, was not a mere example of faithfulness under fire, as some would say. It was also not simply the product of the hatred and the wicked acts of the Jews and the Romans. And Jesus's suffering, at it's height, was not limited to the terrible cruelties that were done to Him prior to His death: the beatings, the whippings, the crown of thorns pressed down onto His head or even the crucifixion itself, where He continuously struggled for breath while feeling the agonizing pain of the nails that impaled Him, or His raw back chafing against the wood. Those realities were terrible, and nothing to be taken lightly, but the height of His suffering was when the wrath of His Almighty God and Father was poured into His soul, during those darkest hours, when terror filled His eyes and He screamed aloud, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me!"

You see, all in all, the deepest and most agonizing blow that struck Christ, was the sword of God's judgment, which struck Him for the sins that *we* have committed against God. We violated the good and just Laws of our Holy God; we sinned against pure light, and justly brought the wrath of God down upon our sins... but Christ became the object of that wrath for us. And so, the theme that blares out of Isaiah 53, which sets the context for verse 11, is the theme of Jesus being offered up as a vicarious (a bloody, substitutionary) atonement. It is the substance toward which, every bull, lamb and goat that had its innocent throat slit and was brutally cut in pieces at the Old Covenant Temple, looked, as the only true atoning and reconciling offering that could actually bring sinners to God. This is the very substance of Isaiah 53. It's horrific blood shed; the life poured out of the innocent Lamb of God, but it's not just that. It's all of that, *specifically done for us*, brethren!

Follow the pronouns again with me, and see this to be the case. Let us just read through the entire text, once more, emphasizing the pronouns, to see this theme of vicarious, substitutionary, "Him for us," atonement bursting off of the pages! (Read Isaiah 53 again).

II. He Shall See the Labor of His Soul

It is because of the vicarious nature of the Lord's sacrifice; it is because the Lord was actually standing in the place of a very specific, chosen group of sinners, that we are told in verse 10, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise (literally "crush") Him; He has put Him to grief..." Now, at first glance, these words sound absolutely horrendous and grossly offensive, don't they? The Lord's suffering was horrifying; it was full of torment and torture; it was agonizingly brutal and crushing; it was bloody and horrific... and how might we immediately think of His Father's response to His suffering, in the light of such a painful and horrific reality? What if you looked upon the murder scene of your own child or loved one? And what if you endured beholding the actual slow and painful, massacring of this loved one, until his/her very life was squeezed out of the body? What would be the best way to describe your emotions? Angry, perhaps? Better, furious, grieved, sorrowful, broken, right? But, here we are told, "Yet...yet, in spite of the utter humiliation, mockery, shame, bludgeoning and death of the Lord, *it actually pleased the Father to crush Him*; indeed, *He* was the One who ultimately *put Him to grief!*" This was ultimately

the Father's doing? What kind of a God is this? Is He some sadistic deity like the unstable gods of the Greeks and the Romans? No, but again, we read the next verse, "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 was not excited or overjoyed about viewing the literal suffering of His Son, or in fact, in causing the worst part of it. He saw the big picture! Indeed, He beheld the deep and profound love that the Son had for the Father, as He was doing this, as a means of satisfying God's justice, so that, all of the Father's chosen people, would be redeemed from their sins and reconciled to God! It was an offering! It was a sweet smelling aroma, which satisfied the justice of God, allowing Him to propitiate His righteous wrath and anger, so that, sinners could be justified and declared righteous in His sight! And so, God was pleased, because the love of His Son was so magnified by His willful and passive obedience, and the result of this great love, would produce offspring for the Father... it would produce a seed; a seed among fallen mankind which would germinate and produce new life for all who would come into fellowship with God and be adopted into His family forever! And the suffering involved in this offering would come to a conclusion; it would not endure long. After satisfying the justice of God, the great and glorious fruit of new life would come to a great multitude; a people as numerous as the stars and as the grains of sand by the seashore! Indeed, this offering, after being made, would be raised up from the dead, so that, He could see His seed; He could see the fruit of His labor, and His days would be forever prolonged! And the pleasure of the Lord would prosper in His hand.

You see, the Father looked beyond the suffering, with the Sufferer, to the joy that was set before Him; He knew that the suffering, as terrible as it was, would soon end. And it would spill into an eternity of unending satisfaction and delight for the Son, as well as the Father. Indeed, anticipating this reality, the Father Himself, was excited for the Son, in knowing that He would soon be able to look back forever, always being able to rejoice in the fruit of His labor! That joy of the Son was also the great joy of the Father. And both, would be overjoyed by the glory that would come upon all who would benefit from this offering! Indeed, it is the very vicarious nature of this sacrifice which gives birth to the pleasure that the Father obtains in temporarily putting His Son to grief.

And brethren, this is what leads right into our main text. We follow Christ beyond the cross, beyond the tomb, beyond the ascension, and to the right hand of God, beholding the glory of what He has accomplished by His suffering and death. “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.”

The Lord, as it were, now looks out, and He sees the fruit of His terrible sufferings, and there is no regret. Indeed, to the contrary, there is great, great pleasure! The seed has died; it has fallen to the ground, it has been buried beneath the soil... but, it has taken root again, and brought up new life. A glorious church; a purified body, of redeemed, transformed sinners sprouts up and brings Him glory! Former God-haters; former law breakers; former lost, wretched, fallen, dead sinners, are washed, purified and made beloved children of the Most High God! And what will that look like at the culmination of all things, when the Lord has redeemed the last of His Father’s elect, and He returns to close out history, and this world, as we know it? What will that look like to see so numerous a body of redeemed, standing before the throne of God, offering Him genuine and heartfelt praise, casting their crowns before His throne, as the Lamb looks on, and sees the fullness of what He has accomplished; the labor of His soul! He poured out His soul unto death, but here is the reward! What will He see! His heart will be filled with incomprehensible joy; He will see the labor of His soul; He will view the complete purchase in its state of perfection... and He will be satisfied! No regrets, at all, brethren! As sinful as we are, and have been, He will be satisfied! He will be satisfied with you and me, brethren; with all of us, individually and together... He will be satisfied!

Isn’t this what drove the Lord to endure the suffering and the cross? Was it not His completing the purchase of His love gift to the Father, and the desire to secure this fruit? Hebrews 12:1-2, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, *who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God!* [Read Psalm 22:21b-31 & Isaiah 53:12]

III. Concluding Thoughts

1) Brethren, we have so much to look forward to, and it is all just up ahead... just beyond a handful of trials and battles and labor for the Kingdom. We are told not even to compare the sufferings of this world to the weight of glory that will be revealed in us, because the sufferings in the present, as painful as they can be, are but a scratch on a steel wall, compared to the glory that is soon to come.

But, but, let us take time to revel in, and to be filled with excitement for the great satisfaction that will fill the heart of our Lord, on that Day, when His glorious Bride is brought to Him, perfect, purified and complete. We are told to share in the joy of others, are we not? And ought we not to share in the joy of Christ, Himself? Indeed, ought we not to be jealous to see the look of pure delight and satisfaction on His brow? This is all His doing, brethren! We are here because of, and for Him! We don't naturally belong here, do we? If we had our way, we would be continuing to trek straight to hell! But, we are part of a bigger plan; a Trinitarian love plan, where our great and glorious, infinite God is doing something so wonderful, in each Person's love expression toward the other! We belong to Him! Let us tap into His joy, and revel in it, now, and let us long to see the completion of His will, for the sake of His Name! And let us be fired up unto serving that will now, in the present, while we still have breath. Because like our Savior (only not in a vicarious sense), our sufferings and our death can and will serve a greater and more glorious purpose unto His Name! And like our Savior, our suffering is limited. It is temporal, and God is pleased to bring us through it, because He sees the big picture fruit that is soon to come by it! No, God never rejoices in our sufferings, but He rejoices through them, because of what is being produced in and by them! Indeed, some of the greatest expressions of love and faith are birthed through suffering!

Brethren, let us finish the race well, looking beyond the cross, to the unending joy that is set eternally in glory! Let us live and die for His glory! For He has lived and died for our salvation! And He will complete the good work that He has begun in us! His satisfaction is bound to our completed sanctification. His joy is bound to seeing His bride, without flaw and without defect!

2) In closing, let me just ask you this morning, have you been redeemed by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you been forgiven for your sins, and have you repented and committed yourself to following Christ?

If not, it is absolutely critical that you understand this. That massacre that took place at the cross is a picture of your eternal reality, if you die in your sin. Jesus died as a substitute for sinners, but only those who repent and believe into Him, will receive the benefits of His atonement. And what He accomplished, as God in flesh, will never be exhausted by your suffering in hell. Friend, this is not a joke or some Disney fairytale. This is reality, and it has everything to do with you. You were born into a world, which including you, was designed by God and for the glory of God. You are not your own. And you will have to give an account to God, when you stand before Him, for how you have lived this short life. And eternity is in the balance! You must seek Christ now, before it is too late! He is your only hope of being reconciled to your Creator and obtaining eternal life in glory! You need His vicarious sacrifice; you need Him to stand in your place, and to take away the condemnation that you deserve. If you die in your sins, you will pay for eternity, what He paid at the cross.

[The Gospel!!!]

Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25