

The Suffering Savior (Radio Broadcast)

Radio Broadcast

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Bible Text: Isaiah 53:3-5

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Welcome to the Grace Abounding Broadcast sponsored by the Shreveport Grace Church here in Shreveport, LA. I'm Pastor Ken Wimer and it is my privilege to bring to you again the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ both in word and song. May God graciously bless this word to your heart as you listen.

I want to read for you from Isaiah 53 and verses 3 through 5. My subject today is "The Suffering Savior." Now this is a message that I delivered to our congregation this past week as we met around the Lord's Table and here in Isaiah 53:3-5, we read,

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

This is the text that the Lord directed one of his servants, Philip in the book of Acts, Acts 8, directed Philip to go and explain to that Ethiopian eunuch who was really high up in the Ethiopian government and the Lord had done a work in his heart and given him an interest in the things of Christ and as he was riding along in his chariot reading this particular portion without fully understanding how it pertained to the Lord Jesus Christ, God directed Philip to him and brought him up into his chariot and for this passage and many others in the Old Testament, the Scripture say that he taught unto him Jesus. I know this is an offense to many Jews today who still read this particular chapter and assume that it pertains to their suffering as a nation, but there is no question that as we read this passage, it has nothing to do with the suffering of a nation but it has to do with the suffering of a person, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the substitute for sinners.

He is God in the flesh, and yet as men looked upon him, as it says in verse 3, they saw nothing but a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. I understand from a natural standpoint how some without the Spirit of God will look at what they did to the Lord

Jesus Christ on the cross and say, "Well, he was just a man. Look how he died." And I recognize that this is why this message is such an offense to many because the manner in which the Lord Jesus Christ died, he died just as the worst of criminals would die. He was numbered with the transgressors and yet, dear friend, all that was necessary in order that he accomplish the salvation of his people.

I trust by God's grace that he will give us eyes to consider this together today. As I prepared this, I thought, "How do I begin to portray for us the suffering that our Lord Jesus Christ endured on that cross? What language do I employ? Which words most aptly describe that suffering in a way that may honor and glorify him?" Well, I'm thankful that I don't have to come up with any words, but these words are clearly set forth here in our text. In fact, in verse 4 and 5, we have nine particular descriptions of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and what he accomplished by his death. In a few moments, I'd like to give these for you as we consider this passage together and may God be pleased to bless it to our hearing.

"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

"My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.

"Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

"Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Savior come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

"Ye blind, behold your Savior come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy."

Come with me now to our text in Isaiah 53 and let me give you nine descriptions of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ here and what he accomplished for his people by his death.

First of all in verse 4 it says, "he hath borne our griefs." That word "borne" there means to literally "lift up a burden." As John the Baptist said of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He has lifted it up as one would take off a burden and it's interesting here that the sense of this particular verb, the tense of

it, it refers to a completed action once for all. This is in contrast to those sacrifices that were offered in the Old Testament daily. Those could not take away sin, but in Hebrews 10:10, listen as I read this. It says, "By the which will," speaking of the very will of God for which Christ came into this world, "By the which will we are sanctified," set apart unto holiness, "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Now, when you read the Scriptures and you see these personal pronouns "we" and "us," it's referring to those who are the Lord's people. You say, "Well, how do you become one of the Lord's people?" Well, in Scripture, it's by, first of all, his electing grace. Those who are the Lord's, God has chosen unto salvation from all eternity. And it's by his redeeming grace, that's what we're looking at here, how Christ came and died in order to redeem every one that God the Father gave him and those that Christ came to represent are those that the Father has chosen. There is no disunity between the work of Christ and the work of the Father.

Any that are the Lord's people are so by his electing grace, by his redeeming grace, and thirdly, by his regenerating grace. To "regenerate" means "to quicken; to make alive." To those that God has chosen, Christ has redeemed and in time the Spirit of God comes and works faith into their heart; gives them life that they might believe. A dead person can't do anything and all are dead in their sins so it takes the quickening power of the Spirit of God to raise up the spiritually dead and give them life in Christ and it's that life in Christ which causes them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's who is referred to here when these personal pronouns are used.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs." Not everybody can enter into that. Unbelievers know nothing of this and should they continue on in their unbelief and God just pass them by, then they'll have no part of this. They never did. You see, the death of Christ accomplishes something. That's what this means, "he hath borne our griefs." He has taken up the burden of sin which lay upon the shoulders of his people. He has taken up the law which condemned them and he has fulfilled it.

"He hath borne," it says here, "our griefs." Now, that word means "infirmities or sicknesses," and, dear friend, there is no greater affliction or illness than sin. Just as a terminal illness is to the body, so sin is to the soul and let me say this: there is no such thing as a little sin because every sin is an offense to a great and holy God. How great is my sin? Well, so great that it cannot be measured except by the standard of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what it required to save a sinner such as me, the very death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he assumed that true human nature capable of sorrow, hunger, thirst, weariness and pain. He not only bore the penalty of sin but its curse and its consequences, both in his life and in his death.

So that's the first description, "he hath borne our griefs." Secondly, it says here he "carried our sorrows." Now, this is connected to the first. It's one thing to lift up a burden, but then what is to be done with it? Well, it's to be carried away and that's what this word here indicates. It's to bear something away and this then gives us the complete picture. The Lord does not merely lift up the sinner's sin and put it in Christ's hands for a while

only to set it again back down on the guilty one. You see, this is how so many today are presenting the death of Christ, it's as if he has lifted up everybody's sin on himself but now he still holds it over their heads and if they don't believe, then he's going to set it back down on them and cause them to bear it.

No, it says here he "carried our sorrows," and the word means literally "to take something completely out of the way." In fact, in Leviticus 16 as it describes the Day of Atonement, there were two goats that were to be brought: one was to be offered unto the Lord in death, and the other, the high priest was to lay his hands on its head and symbolically that was to take the sin of the people and to put it upon that goat and then he was to be carried way out into the wilderness away from the camp and to be let go. That was to typify how God in his Son would take the sins of his people and in placing them upon his Son by his death and by his life, those sins be completely carried away never to be remembered anymore. Everyone for whom the Lord Jesus Christ died, the Scriptures are clear, the Lord has taken, borne their sin and carried their sorrows.

In Micah 7, listen to this. In verse 18 it says, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity," not just tries to but does, "pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities," not just cover them for a while but subdue them, and then it says, "and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Every one of them, past, present and future, cast into the depth of the sea.

That's the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He carried our sorrows. That word "sorrows" means literally "pain." I know people make much of the physical pain that our Lord suffered and I certainly don't want to take anything away from that, yet his physical suffering is nothing compared to the agony of the soul that he suffered. The cries that Christ made from the cross had to do with bearing the sin of his people. There has been many a martyr who has died singing as the flames of fire burned the flesh from their body. You read this in history and you say, "Well, how could a man do that?" Well, by the grace of God. So if a martyr can die that way by the grace of God, I'm sure that our Lord Jesus Christ was not crying out simply because of the physical pain from the cross, but it was the spiritual.

It says here in Isaiah 53:11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." That word "travail" means "labor pains." It's the word that's used of a woman that goes into labor before delivering a child. And that's a beautiful word there pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ because his suffering in death was to bring forth a people, a seed, that God had chosen. I'll tell you this, dear friend, the Lord Jesus Christ has no stillborn children. He shall be satisfied, it says. He's going to have every one that he died for.

But this gives us a picture of the anguish and agony of being lost and perishing. If you want to have an idea of just what it is to suffer under God's eternal wrath, don't go looking for pictures of hell or end time holocaust like we see so many of these filmmakers making. No, look to the cross. What Christ suffered at the cross is a clear

indication of the wrath of God against sinners because at that particular moment, God poured out all his wrath upon his blessed Son. He drank that cup dry for his people and those who are outside of Christ who die in their sin, they're going to know an eternal separation from God because they have no ransom. They have no Redeemer. They have no representative. But he carried the sorrows of his people, that pain. That's what it's referring to.

Thirdly, it says he was stricken. Now, what does that mean? That means to be beaten or plagued. Now, here's a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ as the believer's high priest and as the high priest, he took upon himself the judgment due unto his people and that's why he's a sympathetic high priest, a compassionate high priest. Over in Hebrews 4:15 it says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." That word "touched" means "to suffer" as Christ did, and this is why he can understand the sinner that he died for. He can bear with him in grace and patience because he himself was stricken already with their disease, with their sin.

Whenever you go through a difficult situation, who is it that can be of the most comfort and consolation to you? Well, it's somebody that has already been there, that has been through it, so that when you speak to them of what you're enduring, they'll say to you, "Well, I understand. I've been there." Well, this is the Lord Jesus Christ who has been there in a way that his people will never have to know because if he has borne their sin, then they'll never have to bear it and as the Holy Spirit gives them eyes to behold him and they are brought to him, then they see him as being stricken in their place. No one can understand and bear with the sinner more than this one who has already been there. He was stricken with their punishment.

Then fourthly it says he was "smitten of God." Now, the word "stricken" and "smitten" are the same word but notice the addition, he was "smitten of God." Who killed the Son of God? Well, God did. Now, does that surprise you that God would kill his own Son? You think, "Well, what on earth would ever bring a father to put his son to death?" Now, if a man did this, he would be guilty of a horrible crime, but here God himself put his Son to death, why? That he might be a just God and a Savior.

Way back in Genesis when Abraham was told to offer up his son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah and as he walked up that mountain his son noticed that there was the fire and there was the wood but there wasn't any sacrifice and as he addressed his father about this matter, his father responded and said, "The Lord shall provide himself a lamb." Now, that Mount Moriah was the very place where several thousand years later God himself would offer up his own beloved Son on Mount Calvary. He didn't require it of Abraham, he provided a ram to take Isaac's place, but God himself did kill his Son and the reason was that in order to save a people, Christ being that representative, he had to die the death and that death was the death of his own Son.

That's what Abraham prophesied when he said, "The Lord shall provide himself a lamb." The Lord himself being that lamb, and the Lord providing for himself the lamb. It was for

God himself. That's why Christ died, that God might be just and justify those that he purposed to save. So he was "smitten of God."

Then, fifthly, it say he was afflicted. That verse 4, he was afflicted. That means to be cast down; to be humbled or browbeaten. It speaks here of humiliation. It comes from that Latin word "humilis" which means "low." Now, this is what our Lord Jesus Christ did, he humbled himself and that humiliation was not just at the cross. You think about from the conception all the way up to the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, that was a period of humiliation. Over in Philippians 2:5-8 it says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God," was he God? Yes. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," so being God he was made in the likeness of men, "And being found in fashion as a man," it says, "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." So he was afflicted. His whole life was a humiliation. Why? That he might save the worst of sinners.

Then sixthly it says, "he was wounded for our transgressions." In 2 Corinthians 5:20 it says "he was made to be sin for us who knew no sin." I don't pretend to understand the full implication of that but I do know this, that when Christ died on the cross being the sin-bearer of his people, God punished him as the sin-bearer, the worst of sinners. Why? Because he was their representative and God was just in putting him to death in order to save his people. "He was wounded for our transgression." That means rebellions. People aren't just sinners, they're rebels and those that Christ died for were rebels before God and yet, by God's grace, Christ bore their sin.

Number seven, "he was bruised for our iniquities." Here in verse 5, that word "bruised" means literally "to be crushed, shattered and broken." Is not Christ the bread of life? Well, just as that seed must be sown in the ground and then as it grows and matures it is cut off and it is sifted and then passed through the miller's stone and ground into flour, so Christ was bruised and crushed. He said in John 12:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." As the sinner's representative, the full weight of God's law and the penalty of it fell up him. "He was bruised for our iniquities." That word "iniquity" means "depravity or guilt." So he died.

Then the eighth description: he was chastised for our peace. That word "chastisement" means "the correction or rebuke due his people." Now, this is not the correction of a father with a son. No, when God dealt with his Son there on the cross, he was dealing with him as a just and angry judge taking vengeance on the criminal with the full force of the law, the maximum sentence. That's how Christ died, but it was for our peace, the peace of his people. That word "peace" means "to be complete" in order that the whole number of the elect be saved. The word "peace" means "safety and soundness in body and mind." That's what was required in order for his people to be saved. It refers to that quiet tranquility and contentment that is the result of Christ's death. Reconciliation with Almighty God. All of this is by his death.

Then finally the ninth description, it says, "by his stripes we are healed." That word "stripes," it refers to "a wound that is black and blue." Now, when it's black and blue, that means it has been beaten and yet it's for the healing of his people. The word is a passive word, "healing," it means "by his stripes we are healed," it means that another has done it, has done that great work. Now, many people look at this verse and say, "Well, it has to do with Christ's physical healing of bodies when he was on earth," but dear friend, his healing of physical bodies was but a visible illustration of his power to heal the soul. He healed all sorts of hereditary, despicable and incurable diseases. Why? To show his power to forgive the worst of sinners for Christ is the great physician of the soul. Forgiveness and healing are the work of his hands, not mine.

As we come to the end of this particular message, let me review. Who is it that Christ died for? Well, he died for sinners. How do we recognize these sinners? God gives them faith in his blessed Son and I pray that the Lord would be pleased to open your eyes and give you faith in his Son, the Savior. Apart from faith, that faith, it's impossible to please him. Why did he have to suffer? Because sin required it and the law required it and God's holy justice required it for the salvation of his people. Do you know the Savior? Is he yours?

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