

Family Worship Guide – Week 30

READ

- Isaiah 53:2-12
- This chapter is perhaps the most famous and forthright passage in the Old Testament concerning the death of the Messiah. It not only predicts Jesus' death on the cross, but it also offers one of the most jaw-dropping explanations of the event. It pierces several preconceived ideas we sometimes entertain about Jesus Christ and the cross.
- First, there is a tendency to assume that Jesus was an attractive human being. This is a popular American assessment where beauty and value go hand-in-hand. We tend to think that people were naturally drawn to His appearance. We assume the Savior of the world would be physically attractive. However, this passage contradicts this idea. It says, Jesus Christ "had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him" (v. 2). He was as "one from whom men hide their faces" (v. 3).
- What we find in the Messiah is God's preference to choose and to use the least likely candidates. All that God does is designed to bring Him the most glory. One way to do that is to cause people to fall in love with someone that they are not naturally drawn to.
- A second tendency is to think that Jesus Christ died as a victim of a religious-political conspiracy or as the tragic result of betrayal. It may seem that the cross was accidental in God's purposes rather than the crux of His redemptive agenda. However, consider what Isaiah writes in verse 10: "It was the will of the LORD to crush him." Jesus did not necessarily die according to the will of sinful people but according to the will of Holy God. God's plan centered on the cross of Christ! Through Jesus' death, many unrighteous people are "accounted righteous" because He bore "their iniquities" (v. 11). The cross was not an accident but the divinely appointed means of salvation.
- Many people are attracted to certain things they like about Jesus. They love the picture of Him holding children and heralding virtues of love and sacrificial service, but they are not as interested in Him hanging on a cross. The cross reveals that we are not as attractive as we might think. It exposes the heinousness of our sin and reveals the heart of God's holiness.
- We are not naturally drawn to an unattractive Jesus nor are we naturally drawn to an unattractive cross. Yet, Christians are people who somehow find Jesus attractive not only in His person but also in His work on the cross. "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

The Bottom Line: A Christian is someone who falls in love, not with an American assumption about Jesus, but with the counter-intuitive, yet divinely revealed truth of Jesus – a truth that causes people to be still and know that the LORD is God (Ps. 46:10).

Questions:

How does this picture of Christ undermine how we assess beauty and value?

What does the cross reveal about us? About God?

What other American assumptions prevent us from recognizing the counter-intuitive, yet divinely revealed truth of Jesus?

How does it affect you to know that God chose to become an unattractive man and use an unattractive cross to save unattractive people?

How does the picture of Christ and His cross presented in this passage cause us to "be still and know that the LORD is God" (Ps. 46:10)?

PRAY

- Read *Window on the World*, pg. 104-105 *Lesotho*
- Use Prayer Card

SING

- Use lyric sheet and mp3 download of "O Sacred Heart Now Wounded"
- The lyrics for "O Sacred Heart Now Wounded" were originally penned around 1,000 years ago by a man named Bernard of Clairvaux. Later, in the early 1600s, music from a secular love song was applied to Clairvaux's poem. Eventually, the song was translated from Latin to German to English, and Johann Sebastian Bach arranged the melody with which we are familiar today. We traditionally sing only three of the original eleven verses of this hymn.

This song is the perfect conclusion for today's devotional. We cling to the pleasant images of Jesus because they are easy to grasp. We tend to look for His beauty only in these pictures because they better fit our ideas of what is appealing, and they don't necessarily convict us. The purpose of this hymn, though, is to help us focus on Christ's physical and spiritual suffering as He died on the cross. It is difficult to dwell on this picture because of the glaring

spotlight it shines on our sin. Yet this very same image displays the magnitude and immeasurable grace that reconciles us to God which He has so mercifully and lovingly poured out to us through Christ. That is the most beautiful thing of all. As you sing this hymn, feel the weight of your sin, the suffering of Christ, and the amazing redemption His death and resurrection accomplished. Let these truths compel you to love, worship and praise our great God and Savior.

MEMORIZE

- Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These activities and questions can replace or serve as a supplement to the questions under the “Read” section on Page 1. Remember that these suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship Him together.

Preschool (Birth-Kindergarten)

- Before you begin, gather your child’s Picture Bible or some other pictures of Jesus. You might print some from the web.
- Show your child the pictures and explain that these are just an idea of what Jesus might have looked like while He was here on Earth. We don’t know what He really looked like. Talk about some of the differences in the pictures. Even His disciples and the people who saw Him everyday didn’t tell us in the Bible exactly what He looked like.
- Talk about how it’s not important to “know what Jesus looked like.” It’s important to know more about what He did for us. God loved us so much that He sent His son to Earth to help us and save us!
- Jesus was different from everyone else. When we follow Jesus and turn away from our bad choices and sin, we will be different, too. We can know Jesus and show His love to others all over the world.

Children (Grades 1-5)

- Before you begin, gather together several different picture of Jesus from around the world. Use the internet as a resource.
- Ask your child to describe what Jesus looked like. Was he attractive? Did he look like us? What color were his eyes, skin and hair? Then ask you child why they think Jesus looked the way they described.
- Next show them the photos that depict Jesus as others see Him around the world. Which image best reflects what He looked like? What made you choose that picture? Remind your children that the Bible says very little about Jesus’ appearance, and that Isaiah 53 even describes Him as having “no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him” (v. 2). Discuss why you think that is, and what it means. Is it important to know what Jesus looked like? Can you tell what kind of person He was just by looking at Him? What was his character like? Do you think the way Jesus looked determined His behavior and whether or not He was nice? Why do you think the Bible talks more about what Jesus was like as a person, how He acted and what He did for us instead of His appearance?
- Jesus may not have been physically attractive, but His heart was beautiful. He was perfect in love, obedience, kindness, goodness and more. Because He was perfectly beautiful on the inside and in how He treated others, He was able to take the punishment for our sins. That makes Him worthy to be loved, praised, worshipped and obeyed.

Students (Grades 6-12)

- Begin your family worship time exploring how we, as Americans, view Jesus. This can be done in a couple of ways. One idea is to give everyone a piece of paper and pens, crayons, or markers and challenge each person to draw Christ as they picture him. Another idea would be to do a family Google search. Search for images of Jesus to see how he is often depicted. (Note: You may want to do this ahead of time and print some of the images available to share with your family.)
- Then read through Isaiah 53:2-12 and contrast the description given with the pictures.
- Discuss the following questions together:
 - Why do you think we often have such a “pretty” picture of Jesus in our minds? How does the Biblical physical picture of Jesus affect your thoughts about Him?
 - Do you think of Jesus looking like an American? Why do we often think of Jesus looking like us? What are the good things and bad things about that concept?
 - What are some of the truths about Christ that oppose the image we may have of Him?
 - How should these truths affect how we live as Christ-followers?

Prayer

Week 30

Thanksgiving

When we play a prayer of thanksgiving, we are expressing our gratitude to God. Prayers of thanksgiving can be lifted up in response to who God is, what He has done for us through Christ and for the blessings He continually bestows upon us.

Biblical Basis for Thanksgiving:

Psalm 69:30, Psalm 100:4, Philippians 4:6, Revelation 7:12

Take some time for each of those gathered with you to express their thanks to the Lord.

Nations: Lesotho

- For generations the people of Lesotho have been predominantly Christian. Pray for the church in Lesotho to seek Christ and remain faithful to the Gospel.
- There are about 180,000 orphans in Lesotho. Pray for the church in Lesotho to demonstrate the Gospel by caring for these children in need.
- Lesotho suffers from declining food production which has resulted in serious hunger conditions. Pray for God's providence for those in need.
- Ask God to establish the believers in Lesotho in the Scriptures to live changed lives.

Source: *Operation World* by Johnstone and Mandryk

Scripture Memory

Week 30

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

O Sacred Head Now Wounded

Lyrics by Bernard of Clairvaux

Music by Hans Leo Hessler

Arrangement by Fernando Ortega

O sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown
How pale thou art with anguish,
with sore abuse and scorn!
How doth Thy visage languish
which once was bright as morn!

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered,
T'was all for sinners' gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever,
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love for Thee.

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