

A Chronicle of Redemption

Chapter 28: The Scandal of the Gospel
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CHAPTER 28: THE SCANDAL OF THE GOSPEL

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Well, if you have a Bible, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to Isaiah 53. We're really going to start at the very end of Isaiah 52 that really is lumped into...when you hear most people talk...Isaiah 53. We come today to what some have called "the crowning jewel" in Isaiah's theology. Haven't you enjoyed reading through Isaiah? Just so rich, and today, we come to, what one person said, "This is the Mount Everest of Messianic prophecy." It is...it is the mountaintop message of the Bible.

I would go so far as to say this chapter contains the mountaintop message of the world. Spurgeon called this chapter, "The Bible in miniature, and the gospel in essence." What I want us to see today is a gruesome, yet glorious, picture of the cross that was written 700 years before the cross was even thought of. Before Christ even came, we were given these words, and I want you to see this gruesome, glorious reality. At the same time, I want your soul to be overwhelmed with the reality that God planned and ordained this gruesome, glorious reality known as the cross.

What we're going to look at really brings all of Isaiah together. When you think about it, what we see of God in Isaiah, there are some verses where we see some of the most vivid descriptions of the wrath of God, the justice of God. At the same time, there are other passages where we see some of the most beautiful displays of the love of God, and the mercy of God. There are times that we are just stunned by His wrath, and other times where we're just silenced by His love, and you think, "Which one is it?"

How can a God who is so wrathful be so loving? How can a God who is so loving be so wrathful? What we're going to see is all of this coming together in one head today at Isaiah 53...the wrath of God, the love of God, the justice of God, and the mercy of God. It's the question we posed last week that we're really going to dive in depth into this week. How can God be true, and just, and right, and take guilty sinners and say, "You're innocent"? How is that possible? How can God be true and call that which is guilty, innocent? That's a scandal when you think about it on a divine scale.

It doesn't matter what type of person you are in this room, whether you are a conservative, or a progressive, or a liberal, we all have a sense of right and wrong, and we all believe that which is right should be praised, and that which is wrong should be condemned. We expect God to do the same...to lift up that which is right, to condemn that which is wrong. However, the scandal of the gospel is God takes that which is totally wrong, and says, "Right." How is that possible? The answer to this scandal is a servant.

The Servant of God...

I want you to look with me at Isaiah 52:13. That's where we're going to start in just a second. We're going to read through the end of Isaiah 52 and the end of Isaiah 53. However, if you look at Isaiah 52:13, what you'll see, at the very beginning, it says, "Behold, my servant..." You might underline or circle "servant" right there. I just want to draw your attention to the fact that in the book of Isaiah, there are times where we see this word "servant" mentioned and the servant is actually signifying the people of Israel.

Isaiah 41:8, the servant, for example, is a reference to the people of God, the nation of Israel. There are other times in the book of Isaiah when you see "servant" mentioned when the servant is actually referring to Isaiah himself. Isaiah 49:5 is one example where the servant is Isaiah. So, every time you see "servant", it doesn't mean that's talking about the Suffering Servant who we know as Jesus. Sometimes "servant" refers to the people of Israel. Sometimes "servant" refers to the prophet Isaiah.

However, right here in Isaiah 53, and a few other places...Psalms, parts of the poetry, particularly, in this last part of Isaiah...the servant is a reference to someone who will come in the future. We know this is pointing to Jesus, particularly here in Isaiah 53. Seven different times in the New Testament, Isaiah 53 is quoted in reference to Jesus. Eight out of the twelve verses in Isaiah 53 are all attributed to Jesus somewhere in the New Testament. So, we've got this picture 700 years before Jesus even comes, and I want you to read it with me. Isaiah 52:13:

Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you – his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind – so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form nor majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. 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. 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 crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with 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; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before his shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the

LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

God, we pray that you would help us to understand, in this room, this morning, the wonder of what we have just read. Help us to see your glory, and your goodness, and your greatness on display in the crushing of your Son. We pray this morning that your people in this room would be encouraged, and comforted, and strengthened by this portrait of this Suffering Servant. We pray that there would be many in this room who, over the next few moments, for the first time, have their eyes opened to the depth of their sin, and their heart opened to the love of Christ. We pray that many today would be saved from sin as a result of your truth in your Word. In Jesus' name we pray these things. Amen.

Most scholars take these 15 verses we just read, and divide them into five stanzas of three verses each. So, that's what I want us to do. I want to walk you through five truths about the Servant of God in three verse segments all throughout end of Isaiah 52 and Isaiah 53.

He will repulse, but He will redeem.

Truth number one about the servant of God. Isaiah says, "He will repulse, but He will redeem." He will repulse, but He will redeem. These last three verses in Isaiah 52 set the stage, really, for the whole of Isaiah 53. From the very beginning, we see this strange and seeming dichotomy in the servant.

On one hand, He is a human servant. Clearly this is talking about a man, an individual person, but not just a man; this is a human servant with an appalling nature. Not in and of Himself, but as a result of what is done to Him. "He is marred," verse 14 says, "beyond human semblance." He is physically disfigured, and we know when we read the Gospels and the account of the cross, that Jesus was slapped repeatedly. He was spat upon. He was beaten in the head with fists. Isaiah 50 has already told us that He will give His back to those who strike, and His cheeks to those who pull out the beard. Literally, He will be mangled by men.

So, this is a human servant whose appearance is appalling, but He is also a divine sovereign at the same time. We're going to see all throughout this passage this appalling portrait of the Servant, but look at how He's introduced in verse 13, "*Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.*"

Does that sound familiar to what we saw last week in Isaiah 6:1? "*In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord...*" what? "*High and lifted up*"; exalted. That's two of four times in the book of Isaiah where this description is used. Outside of this time, the other three times are all a reference to God. So, what we see from the very beginning is that this servant is not just any man. Although He is definitely a man, He is also divine. He is a human servant whose nature is appalling. At the same time, He is a divine sovereign who will astound the nations.

Kings will shut their mouths when they see Him. He will "*sprinkle many nations,*" verse 15 says. That's a picture of Old Testament sacrificial imagery that we've already seen this year. We've talked about how the blood of sacrifice would be sprinkled either over the atonement cover, the altar, or sometimes it would be sprinkled over the people. We talked about how

that would be kind of weird for us to practice in our day, to just sprinkle blood over everyone, but the picture was that blood would be sprinkled as a picture of a sacrifice given on behalf of someone, something. The reality is what Isaiah is saying is that His blood, the blood of the servant, will be sprinkled over the nations.

Paul quotes from Isaiah this passage, verse 15, in Romans 15, when he has talked about how he must go to the nations to proclaim the gospel, because the blood of Christ is sprinkled, offered, on behalf of peoples, tribes, tongues, nations everywhere, and he is their king. The last part of verse 15 is talking about "*that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.*" That's a reference to Gentiles who don't have this prophecy, who don't have the Old Testament anticipation. The Gentiles, the nations, will see Him, will understand what He has done. He will repulse, but He will redeem. The human servant, whose nature is appalling, disfigured beyond human semblance...He will astound the nations. Ladies and gentlemen, the servant is not to be pitied by you. He is to be worshiped by you. He is the one who repulses and redeems.

The Lord will reveal Him, but we will reject Him.

Second truth, the Lord will reveal Him, but we will reject Him. The Lord will reveal Him, but we will reject Him. Second set of three verses. First three verses in Isaiah 53 begin with rhetorical questions. "*Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*" Literally, the "power" of the Lord been revealed. The picture is the arm of the Lord, the power of the Lord is revealed up close and personal in this servant, and yet, the people to whom He is revealed reject Him.

Look at the end of the set of three verses. "*As one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*" Literally, "considered" Him not, wanted nothing to do with Him. So, see His humiliation here. Verse 2, "*He grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground...*" The servant will not burst on the scene, Isaiah says, like a mighty oak, or a fruit tree in blossom. Instead the servant will come on the scene "*like a young plant, like a root in the middle of dry ground...*"

When you read this, do you not think immediately of a back stable behind a village inn, in a manger where a little baby is born in the midst of total obscurity? This baby is going to shake the Roman Empire. This baby is going to alter the course of human history forever. This baby that lives in relative obscurity for close to 30 years, and then comes on the scene going to some weird guy in the wilderness saying, "Will you baptize me?" There's nothing here. "*No form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.*" This is no Savior with flowing hair and impeccable features that just radiates when He comes on the scene.

See His humiliation. Familiar with grief and sickness, man of sorrows, despised, and rejected as one from whom we hide our face. See His humiliation, and see our condemnation of Him. We despise Him. We want nothing to do with Him; consider Him worthless. Esteem Him not. Everything about Him...His appearance, His way about doing things, His approach, what He says about life, and money, and possessions, and pride, and humility. We want nothing to do with Him. In a world blinded by selfishness and power, He doesn't even deserve a second thought from us. The Lord will reveal Him, but we will reject Him.

He will be slaughtered so that we can be saved.

Now, this leads us into the third section of three verses, which is really the center section. Everything comes to a climax right here. So, I want us to camp out a little more on this third truth. He will be slaughtered, Isaiah says, so that we can be saved. The servant will be

slaughtered so that we can be saved. Now, we've seen this, haven't we? All throughout this year, as we've been reading through the Old Testament, we have seen the sacrificial system that God ordained, orchestrated, set up for His people. Multitudes of different sacrifices, but in particular, every year, two stand out, right? You've got the Passover celebration where a lamb is brought into your home; a nice cuddly lamb for you and your kids to love on, and then slaughtered.

Sacrifice the lamb as a picture of blood that covers over our sins. That's the Passover, and then you've got the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16, which we looked at a couple of months ago, where an offering is brought in and sacrificed. The blood of that offering is sprinkled over the atonement cover, and the Most Holy Place as a picture that the price, the payment of sin, has been doled out. Death has occurred, and the picture is the atonement...literally means covering...the people's sins are covered by the blood of the sacrifice.

Then, if you'll remember, after they sacrifice this animal, then they come out to another goat, this goat that is alive, and the high priest would put his hands on the head of the goat, and would confess the sins of the people of God over this sacrifice. As he did, it was a picture of the sins of the people passing over to what became known as the scapegoat. Then, the goat would be taken out to a solitary place in the wilderness to be gone forever. A picture, a symbol that God gave before His people year, after year, after year. Your sins passed onto the head of this goat and taken away, carried away, never to be seen again.

So, it's the exact same word that we see in Leviticus 16 when the Bible says, "*This goat will carry away the sins of the people*," that comes here in Isaiah 53:4. "*Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...*" You might circle that "carried" and put a little note out to the side, Leviticus 16. He will carry away our sins. He will be slaughtered so that we can be saved. What does that mean?

First, it means that the servant will endure the penalty of sin. Jesus is going to come to endure the penalty of sin. It says in verse 4, "*He has borne our griefs...*" Griefs of sin. He has "*carried our sorrows...*", the sorrow of sin. He will be wounded, and crushed, chastised, stripes upon His back. Realize this: all of the physical pain and all of the spiritual suffering that we see in the cross are visual demonstrations of the penalty due sin.

He will come to endure the penalty of sin, but it is deeper than just this. We can't just stop there. We will miss the point of Isaiah 53, and miss the entire point of the cross. He will not just endure the penalty of sin. Isaiah says, "He will take the place of sinners." He'll take the place of sinners. Now, here's where I want you to get your pencil or pen out, whatever, and circle with me...in verses 4-6, I want you to circle with me every time you see "us" mentioned. It will either say "we", or "us", or "our"...first person plural, brought into this picture. We are brought in.

Every time you see "we", "us", or "our", just circle it in verses 4-6.

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 crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with 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.

No less than ten times. You should have ten places circled there in a matter of three verses where Isaiah is reminding us over and over and over again, that what He is doing is for us, in our place...He is bearing sin and iniquity, enduring chastisement, and wounds, and crushing, instead of us, in the place of sinners. He is not just enduring the penalty of sin. He is taking the payment due sinners upon Himself.

Now, here's the deal. I wrote this little orange book that has a bit of publicity, both locally and nationally, and one of the places locally was in *The Birmingham News*. I don't know if you saw that article, but in the article, the guy who is writing the article wrote this: "While it is a common pulpit truism that 'God hates sin, but loves the sinner.', Platt argues that God hates sinners." Then, the article just moves on. It's a quote from the book, and some of you have been asking, others have wondered, "Our pastor believes that God hates sinners?" It doesn't make you particularly popular in Birmingham, Alabama. This is just another one of those places where I find myself in a bit of trouble for quoting the Bible. Even among Christians that doesn't always go over well.

So, does God hate sinners? Psalm 5...you don't have to turn there, just listen. Psalm 5:5-6, "*The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you...*" talking about God "...*you hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.*" Maybe I should have said "abhor." Maybe that's a better word. "No, God doesn't hate sinners. He destroys them and abhors them. Could you write that down?" You look at it, and 14 times in the first 50 Psalms alone, you see that God hates evildoers. His wrath is on the liar, and so on, and so on, and so on. Fourteen times in the first 50 Psalms alone.

It's not just Old Testament. You get to the New Testament, John 3, the chapter that contains one of the most famous verses concerning God's love for sinners, John 3:16, also contains one of the most neglected verses describing God's wrath for sinners, John 3:36.

So, does God hate sinners? Well, it says it. Well, does God hate the sin, but love the sinner? In a sense, certainly that is true, but that doesn't mean that there is also not a sense in which God hates sinners. "Well, how is that possible?" This is so key to understanding the meaning of the cross. When we see God's holy hatred of sin, and holy judgment of sin, we must be careful not to think that this is something outside of us. Sin is a part of who we are. It is who we are. We are sinful, rebellious men and women against a holy God. Sin is ingrained into who we are.

So, when we see God's holy hatred due sin, holy judgment due sin, yes that rests upon sin, but not as if it were outside of us, like our lying, or our cheating, or lustng. That's where His judgment, and therefore, His holy hatred of sin therefore rests on the sinner. The beauty of the cross is that, when Jesus went to the cross, He did not just pay the price for lying, or cheating, or lustng, or whatever it is. Brothers and sisters, He stood in your place, and He took the holy hatred, and holy judgment, and holy wrath of God that was not just due your sin, it was due you and me, and Jesus stood in our place, and He took it upon Himself. So, let us be very careful not to lean on comfortable clichés that sound good to us and rob the cross of its power. Take that *Birmingham News*. He endures the penalty of sin, and He takes the place of sinners.

Now, we're going to talk more in a minute about how can God love sinners and hate sinners at the same time. We'll come back to that, but here at this point, see this key to understanding the cross. The essence of sin: man substitutes himself for God. This is verse 6; verse 6 is the gospel in a verse, just underline it. Verse 6, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one of us - to his own way.*" "Give me my own way. I'm in control. Give me my own way." That's what we all do.

Now, there are a lot of teachers and preachers who will tell you today to trust in yourselves, and be confident in yourselves, and believe in yourselves. They are lying to you to get you to come back. Do not trust in, have confidence in, believe in yourself. You are a dumb sheep; clueless. The smartest, wisest, richest, most wonderful person in this room...you're a clueless sheep that turns aside to your own way and are proud of it. You turn away from the God who is infinitely good, and infinitely glorious, and infinitely worthy of your obedience and you say, "No."

Man substitutes himself for God. The essence of salvation: God substitutes Himself for man, and God puts His Son, His divine servant in the place of you and me. He takes the payment of our rebellion that is due, not just our sin, but ourselves. He takes it upon Himself in order that we might be saved. Isaiah says, "He will be slaughtered in your place, so that you can be saved by His blood." That's truth number three.

He will suffer in sinless silence.

Truth number four: He will suffer in sinless silence. Verse 7, "*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*" That is bookended at the last part of this group of three verses. "*Although he had done no violence...*" second half of verse 9 "*...and there was no deceit in his mouth.*"

These verses remind us that Jesus had no sin in Himself to warrant such suffering. It talks about how He made His grave with the wicked. The good was given a grave with the guilty. He was a lamb walking to His slaughter, and a sheep standing before His shearers. He was stunningly quiet. Notice the detail of this prophecy. It's all throughout this chapter, but especially here when you consider the details that are given us in these three verses, and what happened precisely 700 years later.

We don't have time to turn to all of these places, but you might write them down. Matthew 26:62-63, trial in the middle of the night before Caiaphas, and Jesus was being accused by false witnesses. So, the high priest said, Matthew 26:62-63, "*Have you no answer to make?*" Matthew says, "*Jesus remained silent.*" Later, early the next morning, Pilate said to Jesus, in the middle of the Roman headquarters, Mark 15:4-5. Pilate said, "*'Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.*"

Pilate sends Jesus to Herod. Luke 23:9 tells us Herod questioned him at length, but Jesus did not answer him. He said nothing when soldiers mocked Him and scourged Him. Even Pilate himself said of Jesus, as he listened to Him in silence, He said, "This man is innocent." It was as if he had read the script in Isaiah 53 the day before and was following it to a "T". It says here that He "*made his grave with the wicked...*" in verse 9 "*...and with a rich man in his death.*" Matthew 27:57, "*When it was evening [after his death], there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph...He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus...And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own tomb...*"

You see the detail here? This is all coming together according to plan. Whose plan? We'll see that in a second. Notice the detail of this prophecy, and then, remember the effect of this prophecy. Oh, the effect of this prophecy; think about it. I hope that every follower of Christ in this room, at this moment, your heart is just welling up with encouragement to realize that that which you have placed your faith in...cross of Christ...this reality was prophesied 700 years before to its exact details. To know that God ordained this for your sake, and to see places in the New Testament where...we don't have time to turn there...Acts 8.

You remember the Ethiopian eunuch? Ethiopian eunuch. Now, you know, I am assuming, what a eunuch is. This is a man who had, literally, been stripped of his ability to reproduce; violently stripped of his ability to reproduce. So, he's in a chariot, and the Spirit of God says, "Philip, there's a guy in the middle of the desert. Go talk to him." The Spirit brings him to the desert where this guy's riding in his chariot, and you'll never guess where he's reading: Isaiah 53:7-8. It starts, "Like a lamb..." right there. I want you to read this again with me, and I want you to just imagine reading this from the perspective of a eunuch. *"Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living..."*

The picture there is if you were childless when you died, it was better as if you had not been born; there is no evidence that you were even here. So, for a eunuch to read these words, and he looks up at Philip, and he says, "Who is the prophet talking about?" Acts 8:35 says, *"Beginning with this Scripture, [Philip] told [the eunuch] the good news about Jesus."* Remember Philip told the eunuch the good news about Jesus. The reality for this eunuch, and for every one of us...that the one who is familiar with your suffering is also your Savior.

All will be satisfied in His substitution.

We'll see all of this coming together, leading to truth number five: All will be satisfied in His substitution. Isaiah says, "Of this servant, all will be satisfied in His substitution." These last three verses are awesome for they describe the satisfaction of God the Father in the cross, the satisfaction of God the Son in the cross, and the satisfaction of every single one of our souls in this room that we can find in the cross.

We'll start with the Father. The Father will be satisfied. In verse 10, Isaiah says, *"It was the will of the LORD..."* literally, "the desire of the Lord. The delight of the Lord. The pleasure of the Lord." *"It was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief."* I swear, Isaiah just opens our eyes to this reality that this suffering servant, and what happened to him, was not some human strategy. This was a divine plot. Who is responsible for orchestrating the death of Christ on a cross? Is it the Jews? No. Is it the Romans? No. It is the Father on high who orchestrated the death of the Son on the cross, who willed it, who found delight and pleasure in it.

Now, how can it be, that God would find delight, satisfaction, in the crushing of the Son? This is where we see the indescribable wonder of the glory of God. Think about it with me. God is infinitely holy and infinitely honorable; He is infinitely great. He is infinitely good, infinitely glorious. Right and perfect in every way. So, with this picture, He is perfect in His justice, which means...as we have talked about...sin evokes the infinite wrath of a just and good God. Sinners evoke the infinite wrath of a perfectly just, perfectly good God.

So, it is not possible for God in all of His glory to say about sin in your and my life, about sinners, "Oh, no big deal. I'll just look past that. Just look over that." No, that would compromise the very essence of what it means to be God, and diminish the very glory of what it means to be God, the value of what it means to be God. You think about it...and I have two boys, four years old and two years old. They occasionally sin...occasionally. I won't say how often, but it is clear that a sinful nature resides inside of them. Now, if you were to watch our family, and you were to see one of my boys start yelling in defiance of my wife, their mom...start yelling at her, berating her, and you were to watch, and I were to sit back and do nothing, "No big deal. I love you guys.", you would clearly question my discipline of my children, but on a deeper level, you would question my value for my wife. To see her defied like that, and berated like that, and to sit back and do nothing would show clearly that I don't think she is worthy of better. As a result, if you were to actually see this

hypothetical situation, you would hypothetically see me respond with zeal toward my kind...I hope holy zeal to my sons to make it clear that she is worthy of much more than that. It's natural for me to do that.

Here is the deal: God is infinitely glorious, and God is infinitely valuable, and He knows that. Therefore, the smallest sin toward Him is infinitely wrong, and to treat it casually, to say, "No big deal," would be to show that He is not infinitely glorious, and not infinitely valuable, in addition to throwing out the window the infinite justice that is due even the smallest sin.

So, then the question is how can God be infinitely glorious, infinitely valuable, infinitely just, and save sinners? The answer is in the crushing of the servant. This is why it was the will of the Father to crush the Son, because in the crushing of the servant, what Isaiah's saying to us is He, God the Father, will display the full extent of His justice. God the Father will not act as though sin is no big deal. He will demonstrate that sin is a huge deal. You want to know how big a deal sin is, look at the verbs in this passage: marred, despised, rejected, stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded, crushed, chastised with brutal stripes, oppressed, afflicted, slaughtered, sheared, crushed by God. Not by man, by God. Does God hate sin? Absolutely. Does God hate sinners? Does He show wrath towards sinners who have defamed His beauty, and His glory, and His majesty? Look at the one who's standing in our place, and the answer is clear: yes. Yes, He does. Jesus is taking what is due us, what we can be delivered from, but what we will receive if we do not trust in Jesus. He's taken it upon Himself.

The Father is demonstrating the full extent of His justice, and...and...and...ah, this is glorious: "He will demonstrate," Isaiah says, "the full expression of His love." He will do all of this in love for sinners, and mercy towards you and me. Does God hate sinners? Yes, look at the cross. Does God love sinners? Yes, look at the cross. Here we see all of the glorious attributes of God demonstrated clearly; His seriousness about sin and sinners, His mercy and love towards the least deserving, all brought into one glorious picture of a suffering servant. This is why it was the will of the Lord to crush Him, because in that, God would satisfy Himself and save sinners at the same time. When I say "satisfy Himself", I mean He will demonstrate with perfect consistency all of His attributes...all of them together...and He will do it in a way that saves us from our sins.

I want to be careful here. In all this talk about the holy hatred, holy wrath of God due sin, I don't want to give us the picture that God is some out-of-control tyrant. That's not the picture we see in Scripture. We see God as absolutely consistent in all of His attributes; a glorious God who desires a relationship with a sinful world so much that He would send His Son to bear His wrath in their place. His glory would in no way be compromised or diminished; it would be demonstrated, and at the same time, sinners would be saved. This is where we realize that before the cross is for anyone else's sake, brothers and sisters, the cross if for God's sake. What we're seeing in the cross is, yes, a picture of His love for you and me, but even deeper, we are seeing in the cross a picture of Himself, of His glory and all of His attributes.

Who did Christ die for? You and me? Yes, but not ultimate. The nations? Yes, but not ultimate. Ultimately, Christ died for God. It's Romans 3:25. He died to demonstrate the character, the justice of God. So, the Father will be satisfied. One quote there real quick. Watchman Nee, he said, "If I would appreciate the blood of Christ, I must accept God's valuation of it. For the blood is not primarily for me, but for God." The Father will be satisfied.

The Son will be satisfied. This is the beauty that the Son does this willingly. This is not the Father just saying, "Son, you must do this." It's the Father and the Son, part of the Holy Trinity, working in complete harmony. You see the Father's will and the Son's willingness coming together in this picture for the satisfaction of the Father and the satisfaction of the Son. How will the Son be satisfied? Well, number one, He will rescue the children of God in His death. "When his soul," verse 10 says, "makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring..." I love that. Earlier, it said "he was cut off out of the land of the living," like childless, better if you'd not even been born; no evidence you were here. He is not childless. In His death, He gives birth. In His death, He gives new life to men and women from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation who become the family of God, children, offspring.

He will be satisfied when He will see His offspring, rescuing the children of God in His death. He will show the power of God in His resurrection. "He shall see his offspring", verse 10 says. Then, it says, "He shall prolong his days." Literally, He will live for a long time, which is pretty good for someone who has died. Because if you've died, and then you live for a long time, then clearly you have overcome death, and this servant does.

He will show the power of God in His resurrection. He will accomplish the will of God in His exaltation. "The will of the LORD," verse 10, end of the verse, "shall prosper in his hand." What is the will of the Lord? It says right after that, "Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous." Here's the will of God. Don't miss it, and it's the satisfaction of the Son. The will of God is that men and women throughout history, throughout this room, who are guilty in their sin and deserving of His wrath would look to the servant, trust in His sacrifice, and be counted righteous, and in so doing, the Son will be satisfied, and the Father will be glorified. Ah, this is beautiful.

Think about it: the will of the Lord being accomplished by the Son at every moment. At this moment, all around the world, as people are turning to faith in Christ and trusting in the righteousness of Christ over, and over, and over again, the Son is receiving satisfaction in the salvation of men and women. The suffering servant will become the sovereign Savior.

The Father will be satisfied, the Son will be satisfied, and we will be satisfied. We who see ourselves in this passage...this is the key...to every single person in this room, to every single person in all of history who looks at the "we," and the "our," and the "us" in this passage and says, "That's me.", and who realizes, "I am one of these sheep that has gone astray.", and in humility confesses this, and says, "But the Lord has put on Him the iniquity and the payment that I'm due to all who confess their need and trust in His provision.", we will be vindicated before God the Father; justified, declared right, pronounced not guilty anymore. Just think about that. In verse 11, "By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous." After this whole book full of sin, after sin, after sin, rebellion after rebellion, after rebellion, all of that, and in one sentence...righteous.

All of the sin in your life, all of the sin in my life, every sinful thought, every sinful deed, all of them piled up just thousands, upon thousands, upon thousands of them. You know sin in your life. You know the depth of sin in your life, and to see it before an infinitely glorious God, and to see just like Isaiah saw, "Woe is me if this sin is in my life." To see all of that, and then in an instant...you trust in Christ...in an instant God on high says, "Righteous, innocent, not guilty, sins gone." Just like that, they're all gone, and you are vindicated before God the Father, and not just made right before God the Father, but listen to this: we will be victors with God the Son.

"Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong." In Christ, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3, *"In Christ, all things are yours."* Romans 8, *"You are heirs with God, and co-heirs with Christ."* Victors, victors with God's Son. This is the scandal of the gospel. It makes no sense, but it is graciously, gloriously true based on the person and work of Christ, the suffering servant.

The Scandal of the Gospel...

Here is the scandal: God accepts unacceptable people. He accepts unacceptable people. God honors shameful people. God treats rebels as royalty. You're heirs of a kingdom. God calls sinners His sons and daughters. Is this not breathtaking? God declares the guilty innocent. Look up here. Just picture this. God says, the holy God on high, looks across this room, and He says, "I love guilty people. So, here's the deal. You trust in my love for you, and I will take all your guilt away on Christ, and instead of guilt, I will give you His righteousness. Does that work for you? Or will you, in your pride, carry the weight, and shame, and guilt, and eventual penalty due sin yourself?"

This is the mountaintop message of the world. Charles Simeon, a pastor, wrote these words to describe his conversion. He said, "In Passion Week, as I was reading on the Lord's Supper, I met with an expression to this effect – 'That the Jews knew what they did, when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering.'" You remember that? The picture of the priest representing the people; put hands on the head of the goat, and the goat would take away the sins of the people. "The thought came into my mind," Simeon said, "What, may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an Offering for me, that I may lay my sins on His head? Then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one moment longer. Accordingly I sought to lay my sins upon the sacred head of Jesus."

This is what I want to invite you to do this morning. To any and every person in this room who has never trusted in Christ, and His sacrifice on the cross, know this: He is there. He is here to take your sins upon Himself. Trust in Him. Do not carry the weight of your sin anymore. Trust in Him as your Savior, and your King, and your Lord. Do it today. Do it now in this moment. I urge you, trust in Christ.

It's His faith alone that saves. There's not anything we can do. In an instant like that, God says, "Righteous," when you trust in Him. Just do it. Put your sins on His head. Let him take them away, and Christian brother or sister all around this room, do not live another moment under the guilt of your sin, another moment under the shame of your sin. It has been taken away. It has been taken away. Live in the freedom of the sacrifice of Christ that has been bought, paid for your sins. Live in the freedom He has given you from them.

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