

Sermon Notes 3/24/24
“Man of Sorrows”
What did Jesus do for us?

1. He became familiar with _____.

Isaiah 53:3

John 12:37-38

Hebrews 4:15

2. He brought us peace and _____.

Isaiah 53:5

1 Peter 2:24-25

3. He was put to death for our _____.

Isaiah 53:8

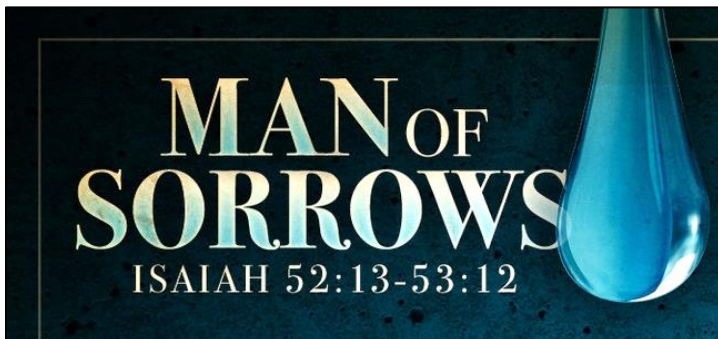
2 Corinthians 5:21

4. He continues to _____ for us.

Isaiah 53:12

1 John 2:1-2

Acts 8:32-36



Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 48: March 24-31

Isaiah 53

Isaiah chapter 53 is the greatest prophecy ever written. It is quoted in the New Testament by many inspired authors and speakers including Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul. In Acts chapter 8, Philip used this passage to lead the Ethiopian eunuch to faith and baptism into Christ. This prophecy is the fourth and final “Servant Song” in the book of Isaiah. The “Servant Songs” are prophecies about the Messiah. They are recorded in Isaiah 42, 49, 50, and 53. The first three songs give us brief descriptions of the Messiah as God’s faithful Servant. The last “Servant Song” is the grand finale. In this song, God reveals specific details of how His faithful Servant would suffer and die for the sins of the world and then come back to life.

As with all good songs, it reaches into our hearts and speaks to our souls. It is filled with intense emotions and graphic images. And yet, it also draws us into God’s heart and invites us to sing with Him as we experience the overwhelming sacrificial love of Jesus.

The song actually begins in Isaiah 52:13. Ray Ortlund shows how this passage forms a literary structure known as a “chiasm.” He writes,

In this famous passage, Isaiah portrays the success, the sufferings, and the significance of the servant of the Lord, with five paragraphs of three verses each:

- A. The Servant’s success: he was repulsive but redemptive (52:13-15)
- B. The Servant’s suffering: he lived in rejection (53:1-3)
- C. The Servant’s significance: he was our sin-bearer (53:4-6)
- B. The Servant’s suffering: he died in innocence (53:7-9)
- A. The Servant’s success: he was crushed but victorious (53:10-12)

Isaiah is answering the question, how can the gracious promises of God come true for guilty people? How can the glory of God come down to people who deserve the wrath of God? That question has been lingering in the background. It is the question of life. How can God love us? Isaiah explains this in his fourth and final Servant Song. (Ortlund, 353-354)

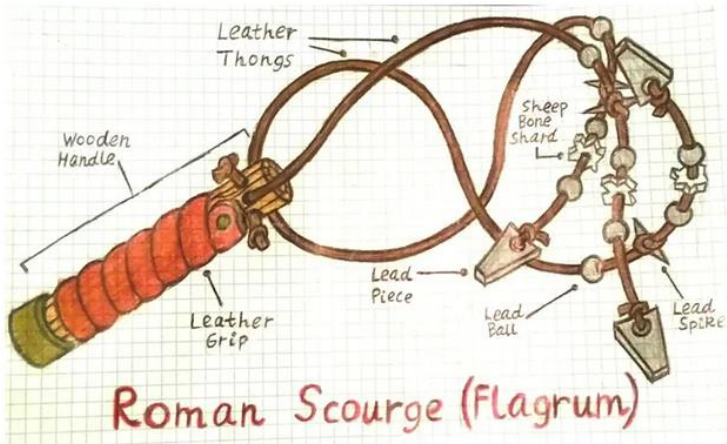
Read Isaiah 52:13-15

1. What would God's Servant do in verse 13?

2. Why would people be appalled at the appearance of God's Servant? (52:14)

James Smith observes,

The Servant would be successful in his mission. First, however, he would be disfigured to the astonishment of onlookers. In his suffering, however, he would "sprinkle," i.e., cleanse, many nations. Because he succeeds in this priestly ministry in spite of suffering, the kings of the earth would be in awe of him and his accomplishments. (Smith, 149)



In addition to being hit in the face several times, Jesus was scourged with a Roman flagrum. This was a whip made with leather straps. At the end of each strap there were pieces of bone, spikes, and balls of lead designed to bruise and tear the flesh. The Jews were only allowed to give a criminal 39 lashes, but the Romans could whip a criminal as many times as they wanted. After a Roman scourging, the victim's back and sides could be ripped open exposing his bones and internal organs.

3. How did Paul use verse 15 when he quoted it in Romans 15:21?

Read Isaiah 53

4. Who is speaking in verse 1?

While 52:13-15 should be included as the first part of chapter 53, there is a transition that takes place between 52:15 and 53:1. In chapter 52, God is the speaker. God introduces the song when He says, “Behold My Servant” (52:13). However, in chapter 53, the speaker changes from first person singular (My) to first person plural (we, us, and our). The central part of the song is written from the perspective of those who believe and proclaim God’s message of salvation. That’s us! God has given us a part to sing in His song about Jesus and what He has done to save us.

5. How did John use verse 1 when he quoted it in John 12:38?
6. How did Paul use verse 1 when he quoted it in Romans 10:16?
7. Why would God’s Servant be a “man of sorrows”? (53:3)

Most of the suffering in this song describes the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. However, verses 2-3 describe a life full of human weaknesses and struggles. When the divine “Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” He emptied Himself of His invincibility and put on our vulnerability. The Bible encourages us to come to Jesus with confidence because He knows what we’re going through, and He sympathizes with our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15-16). Terry Briley writes,

The word for “sorrows” (מְאֵבוֹת, makōbōth) refers primarily to the experience of pain. It describes the “suffering” God observed in the experience of the Israelite slaves in Egypt (Exod 3:7). “Suffering” (הָלִי, ḥōlî) refers to human weakness, normally as it manifests itself in sickness. This suffering is “known” to the servant in the sense that he has experienced it. (Briley, 213)

8. Why would so many people reject the message about God’s Servant? (53:1-3)

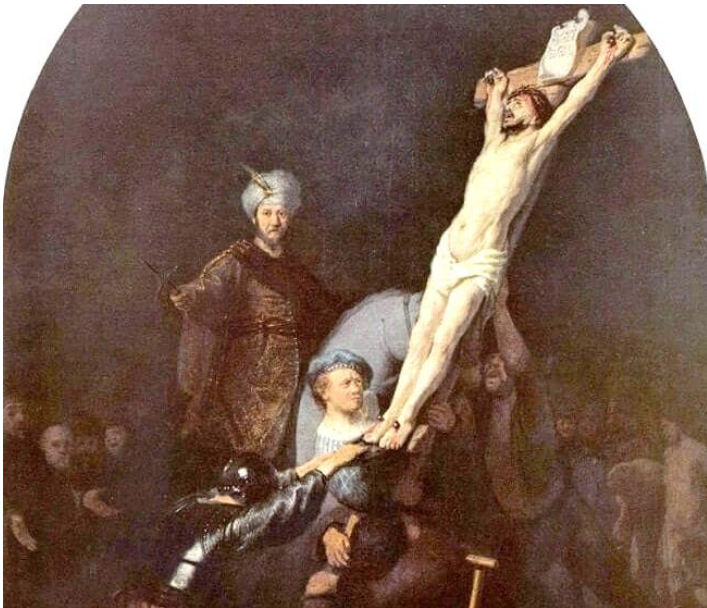
John Oswalt notes,

Isaiah makes it explicit that this Servant is “the arm of the LORD” that has been promised (53:1). But that report is clearly disbelieved. Why? Three reasons are given. (1) He comes onto the scene in a quiet and unassuming way (53:2). (2) He has no extraordinary beauty or attractiveness to draw people to him; his “appearance” is quite ordinary. (3) Finally, he is rejected because he takes on himself the pain and “suffering” of the world (53:3). (Oswalt, 584)

9. What would people think God was doing to the Servant in verse 4?
10. How did Matthew use verse 4 when he quoted it in Matthew 8:17?
11. Why would God's Servant be pierced and crushed? (53:5)
12. What would the wounds of the Servant accomplish for us? (53:5)

Ortlund observes,

Isaiah writes as if we were there at the cross, because we were. If it wasn't our guilt that required the death of Jesus, what did? Remember Rembrandt's painting, "The Raising of the Cross," how he paints himself into the picture as one of the men crucifying the Lord? He not only portrays Jesus; he includes himself in the scene. Isaiah is doing that here, not with a brush on canvas but with a pen on paper. He's not only describing Jesus; he's telling our story too.



"The Raising of the Cross," by Rembrandt 1633

13. How are we all like sheep? (53:6)
14. What has God done with "the iniquity of us all"? (53:6)

Briley notes,

The last line of verse 6 acknowledges that God is indeed responsible for these hardships, but he inflicts what “we all” deserve, not what the servant deserves. Verse 6 thus also makes it clear that the work of the servant has an extensive application (We all, each of us, of us all). Considering the universal need for cleansing and forgiveness, which applies even to Isaiah (6:5), the servant emerges more clearly as an individual (not the collective Israel or faithful remnant) who acts on behalf of the straying sheep. (Briley, 214)

15. How would God’s Servant respond to being oppressed and afflicted? (53:7)

16. According to verse 8, why would God’s Servant be put to death?

17. When the Ethiopian eunuch was reading this passage, who did he think the prophet may have been talking about? (Acts 8:34)

The Ethiopian eunuch was not alone in his struggle to understand who Isaiah was talking about. For centuries, most of the Jews rejected the idea that the suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 could be the Messiah. They have always thought of the Messiah as someone who would never be defeated. Even Peter thought that the Messiah would never suffer. When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to suffer and be killed and then be raised to life, Peter took Him aside and said, “Never, Lord! This shall never happen to You!” (Matt. 16:21-22)

18. What was unusual about the Servant’s grave? (53:9)

19. How did Peter use verse 9 when he quoted it in 1 Peter 2:21-23?

Many times, the Bible points us to the cross when it tells us how we can be forgiven and saved. However, the Bible also points us to the cross when it tells us how to live godly lives. Peter was writing to Christians who were being persecuted for their faith. He encouraged them to follow in the steps of Jesus by enduring times of injustice and insults without seeking revenge.

20. How would God’s Servant prosper after He was crushed? (53:10-11)

Smith comments,

That the Servant should suffer was part of the plan of God. He was to be a sin offering. Yet the Servant would live after death, “he shall see his seed,” i.e., his disciples. God’s purposes would then prosper in his hand. Many would be justified before God when they learn of what he had done. For this reason, the Servant could look with satisfaction upon his work. (Smith, 150)

21. How would God’s Servant justify many? (53:11)
22. What did God promise to give to His Servant in verse 12? Why?
23. How did Mark use verse 12 when he quoted it in Mark 15:28?
24. How did Jesus use verse 12 when he quoted it in Luke 22:37?
25. What is your response when you think about the suffering Jesus was willing to endure for you?
26. How can you use this chapter to strengthen your faith or encourage someone to believe in Christ?

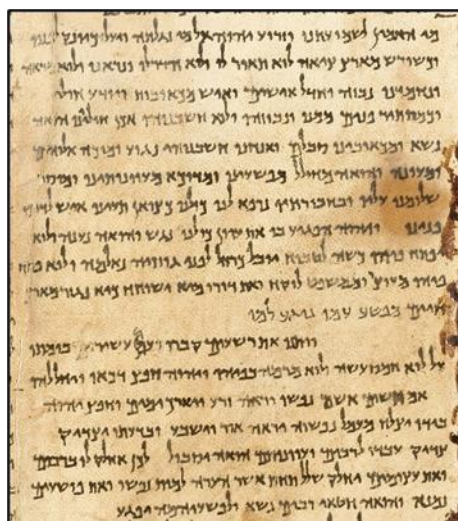
Arguably the greatest archeological discovery ever made was that of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Josh and Sean McDowell write,

In late 1946 or early 1947, Bedouin shepherds found several scrolls in a cave near an ancient site called Qumran, about one mile inland from the western shore of the Dead Sea, and 13 miles east of Jerusalem... The Dead Sea Scrolls are very ancient indeed: the earliest ones found at Qumran date from about 250 BCE or a little earlier; the latest were copied shortly before the destruction of the Qumran site by the Romans in 68 C.E. (McDowell, 102)

About 230 of these manuscripts are books from the Old Testament. The book of Esther is the only Old Testament book that was not found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. There were 22 different copies of Isaiah found in the Qumran caves. The most famous of all the scrolls is the *Great Isaiah Scroll*. It is the largest (24 feet long and 10 inches high) and best-preserved scroll. This scroll is the central display in the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. This ancient manuscript (which includes Isaiah 53) dates back to 150 years before the birth of Christ.



The Great Isaiah Scroll is on display in the Shrine of the Book.



This is a portion of chapter 53 from the Great Isaiah Scroll.

Sources cited:

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