

- ***READ Isaiah 53:7-12*** Even though this church is not participating in the religious holiday of Easter, I am confident that nearly every person here has the resurrection on their to one degree or another. It is just how it is going to be when we are surrounded by religious people who are all focusing on the resurrection on this particular day this year. However, I am not going to stand here this morning and tell you to stop thinking upon the resurrection because we ought to often think upon the resurrection. In fact, just two weeks ago we considered I Corinthians 15 and the importance of Jesus's resurrection to our resurrection on the last day. It is because of the resurrection that Jesus was able to ascend into heaven and take His rightful place at the right hand of God as Lord, Christ, and King. **(Acts 2:36)** It is not uncommon for kings to be crowned and established following a great victory, and there is no victory that could be had that is most substantial than the victory that Jesus achieved over death through His resurrection from the grave.
- What this means to us is that there could be no victory over death through the resurrection without their first being the losing of a life. To say that Jesus lost His life simply wouldn't be accurate. Instead, His life was unjustly taken from Him in a manner that ought to be reserved for only the most heinous of criminals. The way in which Jesus died was in no way befitting of a King, and yet our King suffered in nearly unspeakable ways before He was glorified in His resurrection. This morning, we are going to take those thoughts of Jesus's glorious resurrection and work a few steps backwards to consider the sufferings of our King from the text of **Isaiah 53**.
- It is important for us to recognize and understand the many ways in which Jesus suffered prior to His exaltation as King, so that we might come to appreciate all the more just how much He loves us and wants to have us as a part of His kingdom. We surely recognize Jesus as our great King, but this morning we are going to look at Him as our great Suffering King. This text was written over 700 years before its fulfillment in Jesus, and it comes in the latter stages of Isaiah's book that focuses on promises of restoration to Israel and all people that would come through the promised Messiah of God. We will first look at the text and ask how it foretells of Jesus's sufferings. We will then look at those predictions fulfilled in the New Testament, and following those considerations we will look at answering why Jesus would be willing to go through everything He was foretold to experience. Considering this chapter in view of the total big picture of Scripture, it is easy to see that this text is most certainly referring to Jesus, but even John realized this was the case as he attributes to Jesus the writings of this text in **John 12:38-41**, *"These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him."*

I. How did Jesus suffer?

A. His divine form was given up. (v.2)

1. With this in mind, consider that this prophecy is foretelling of the Messiah existing in this world in an unimpressive manner. He was like a root that was lacking nutrients. He was not particularly great to behold and he did not come from royalty or privilege. **(Isaiah 5:2)** Surely we recognize that God coming to earth and existing in such a way was an expression of His willingness to allow for His divine form to be given up.
2. When we consider this verse along with the fact that Jesus experienced the totality of human weaknesses in His existence on earth, the fact cannot be escaped that though He was God...He allowed for His existence in the form of God to not be present while on earth. This can be seen in Jesus on earth in the fact that He became hungry **(Mark 11:12)**, thirsty **(John 4:6)**, and tired **(John 4:6)** among other things that divine supernatural beings simply can't experience.
3. The summation of Jesus's willingness to suffer through having His divine attributes lessened is found in **Philippians 2:6,7**. *"Although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and be made in the likeness of men."* Paul clearly states that while in heaven Jesus was in the fullness of His divine state. He held every divine characteristic that the Father possessed, and yet He didn't see those qualities as something that He just had to hold on to. Instead, He was willing to suffer through giving up some of those divine qualities so that He might come to earth and experience the fullness of human existence.

He was willing to come live as an average man who was not anything special in the eyes of men. No one saw Him as glorious or worthy of praise and worship. He was simply Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph the carpenter. What a sacrifice of suffering that Jesus was willing to endure...to have existed in such a form that when people on earth came into Your presence that they trembled with fear, but now when they saw You they only saw a normal everyday man. And yet that is exactly what we see happening to Jesus. He was willing to take on a form that was so much less than He deserved.

B. His heart was pained. (v.3)

1. Not only was Jesus willing to exist in this form, but He was willing to endure hateful and poor treatment from the very people He had taken part in creating. How His heart must have hurt when *"He was despised and forsaken of men."* The very people that He had come to earth to serve through giving His life were the very people who gave Him no respect. Surely this was the reason Isaiah was able to predict, *"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hid their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."*
2. Building off of our first point, consider that God in the flesh willingly gave up some of His divine nature in order to come earth and yet when He arrives...He is outright rejected by many of those whom He came to serve. Consider these examples of Jesus being rejected by men:
 - a) When Jesus came back to His home town of Nazareth following His stint in the desert in **Luke 4:16-30**, He came to the synagogue and read to the people from Isaiah concerning the times of refreshing that were coming through the Messiah. He announces that those times of refreshing were at hand, but after convicting the people of their unbelief, we find the people being filled with rage. They sought to throw Him off a cliff, but He was able to escape.
 - b) In **Mark 6:1-5** we have another account of Jesus going back home to Nazareth, and the text tells us that He was teaching in the synagogue, but they were shocked by His wisdom and power. Instead of recognizing Him for what He was, the people questioned Jesus because of who they knew Him to be. The text goes so far to say that *"They took offense at Him."*
 - c) In **John 7**, we find Jesus once again teaching the multitudes with great wisdom and authority, but the Jewish authorities and some of the multitude wanted Him to be stopped. The chief priests and Pharisees even sent officers to arrest Him, and they judged Him as guilty amongst themselves without allowing Him the ability to answer their accusations.
 - d) It all could be summed up by the prophecy of **Psalm 118:22** that Jesus quotes in **Mark 12:10**, *"Have you not even read this Scripture: 'the Stone Which the Builders Rejected, This Became the Chief Corner Stone.'"* Jesus left heaven in order to come serve men, and yet His heart was continually pained by their rejection of Him and what He was trying to accomplish.

C. His body was tortured & broken. (vv.4-6)

1. Of course, the ultimate rejection of Jesus that was displayed by men is what can be seen in the Jewish people committing Jesus to death by the hands of Pilate and the Romans. As they were presented with the opportunity to have a prisoner released at the Passover, instead of calling for innocent Jesus to be set free *"They cried out all together saying, saying, 'Away with this man and release to us Barabbas.'"* (**Luke 23:18**) From this moment on what was foretold of in **Isaiah 53:4-6** becomes a reality in the life of Jesus as He is tortured before being killed.
2. Isaiah foretells of Jesus being pierced, crushed, chastened, and scourged, and all of these things surely did fall upon our Lord as He was wrongfully charged with crimes worthy of death.
 - a) With this sentence being handed down, we then see Jesus's physical agony begin by Him being shamefully stripped naked, wrapped with a mocking scarlet robe, and crowned with thorns. (**Matthew 27:28-30**)
 - b) He was then beaten by the soldiers to the point that **Isaiah 50:6 & 52:14** foretell of Him not even resembling a person because of the beatings.
 - c) Not only was He beaten, but he was also further mocked and beaten upon the head with a reed before having the robe ripped off and His own clothes being put back on. (**Matthew 27:30,31**)

- d) From there He would have been forced to carry the crossbar of His cross which probably weighted about 100lbs, but it seems as if He was unable to carry it from the torture, so they made another man carry it for Him. **(Matthew 27:32)**
- e) Upon arriving at the crucifixion site, Jesus would've been raised upon the cross and crucified. This practice was perfected by the Romans to insure the maximum amount of pain and suffering over the longest period of time.
- f) The crucifixion involves the cross being laid on the ground and seven inch nails were driven into His hands and feet before He was lifted up into the air. Once in the air, Jesus's body weight not being adequately supported would've led to shallow breaths causing the lungs to collapse. This decreased oxygen would've caused a carbon dioxide buildup in His body. Fluid would've filled His lungs and eventually His heart was stressed to the point of failure which is why He was already dead once the soldier pierced His side and blood along with water came out. This was by no means a simple death, but it was one of the most barbaric in man's history. And yet it was God in the flesh that was willing to suffer such a death...but why? Thankfully, Isaiah answers this question.

II. Why did Jesus willingly suffer?

A. He suffered to be obedient to the Father's plan. (vv.7-10)

1. Jesus was not just willing to endure such suffering and pain, but He was willing to do so as it is described in **Isaiah 53:7** where He is foretold of going through this suffering without opening His mouth in complaint. Why would Jesus do this? It must be because He knew that this was His role to play in His Father's plan. This is seen in **Isaiah 53:10,11** where it is said that The Lord was pleased and satisfied by what was done to Jesus.
2. If you're like me then you might be left initially puzzled by such a thing being something that pleased God, but we must recognize that this was a part of God's plan all along. All the way back in **Genesis 3** as God is handing down the punishments to Adam, Eve, and the serpent for their sins, we see God tell the serpent that he would indeed bruise the seed of woman on the heel. **(Genesis 3:15)** I take this to be the first foretelling of Jesus and His sacrifice. This prediction would continue to live on in the promise to Abraham concerning His seed blessing the world **(Genesis 12:3)**, and Paul recognizes that everything that had taken place with Jesus was done according to a predetermined plan set in motion by God before even the foundations of the world. **(Ephesians 1:4)** Jesus was willing to go through everything that He went through as a sheep before its shearers because He was completely willing to do whatever it was that His Father had asked Him to do even if it meant death on the cross. **(John 8:29)** The reality is that the cross was necessary for Him to have the crown as King of God's people.

B. He suffered to endure the punishment that we deserve. (vv.4-11)

1. But this still leaves us wondering why it was that Jesus had to endure this cruelest of tortures and deaths, and it all comes down to the fact that He suffered in this way to show us what it is that we actually deserve because of our sin. Notice the different ways in which our guilt and His innocence is stated in **Isaiah 53:4-11**:
 - a) (4) *Surely **our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.***
 - b) (5) *But He was **pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.***
 - c) (6) *All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But **the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.***
 - d) (7) *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.*
 - e) (8) *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 For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?***

f) (9) *His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because **He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.***

g) (10) *But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.*

h) (11) *As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, **As He will bear their iniquities.***

2. We cannot read these verses with the emphasized portions and come away with anything less than the understanding that Jesus was fully and completely innocent of any wrongdoing. He had not sinned, He was not guilty, and He did not deserve even the first ounce of punishment. And yet He was treated as if He was guilty of every sin present in the world. The plain reality is that He was treated as we deserve to be treated because of our sin. He suffered and endured what we all deserve because of our rebellion against God. He endured it not only so that we could avoid the torture of hell fire and eternal separation from God, but He did so to show us just how far He was willing to go for us! Specifically, He wanted to show what He was willing to endure for our salvation and justification.

C. He suffered so that we might be justified and saved. (v.10-12)

1. Within the last three verses of this chapter after all of the detail of what Jesus endured, we come to the main reason as to why He was willing to endure such misery...and it all has to do with us!

a) (10) *But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would **render Himself as a guilt offering,** He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.*

b) (11) ***As a result of the anguish of His soul,** He will see it and **be satisfied;** By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, **will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.***

c) (12) *Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet **He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.***

2. The wrath of God that must be satisfied by the death of the sinner was carried out by Jesus on that cruel cross at Calvary. The sins of the entire world were laid on His shoulders, and He died the death that the sinner deserves so that we, the sinners, might not have to die it through our repentance and turning to God. Yes, we might have to die to self as sinners, but that surely beats enduring what Jesus did for us on that cross on that dark day. How could someone be willing to endure such hostility, evil, wickedness, and hatred for His enemies? Further, But that is exactly what He was willing to go through so that we might have a chance at salvation and reconciliation before God through faith. It is only possible because our King was willing to endure the cross and despise the shame so that He might sit down at the right hand of the throne of God as King over His church that He gave His life for. (**Hebrews 12:2**)

While we often make remembrance and highlight Jesus's resurrection all throughout the year and not just on a specially appointed day, I do hope that we consider His triumph over death while also recognizing what was involved with such a death. It was my no means humane or durable, but it was the absolute worst that sinful man could conjure. May our King's willingness to suffer in such ways only motivate us to live for Him in all that we do. Yes, He was our suffering King, but it only allowed for Him to be even more qualified as our worthy King. He is worthy of our lives, so may we be offering them up to Him day in and day out as disciples and committed followers.