

**Subject: *The Suffering of Christ***

**Scripture: *Isaiah 53:1-12***

This week before Easter is often referred to as Passion Week. You probably remember a famous movie of the last days of Christ's life including His death that was called "The Passion of the Christ." The word "passion" refers to His suffering. Most of our attention in recent days has been focused on the physical, emotional, and financial suffering caused by the coronavirus, but we ought to pause and think deeply about the suffering of Christ—why He suffered and how He suffered. In order to do that, let's look at the prophecy of Isaiah 53. Martin Luther once said that Isaiah 53 was so valuable it should be written on leaves of gold in letters of diamonds.

### **1. Christ suffered by being ignored and unwanted (vs. 1-2)**

When Isaiah refers to the arm of the Lord, he is referring to Jesus. Jesus is the power of God to save men from sin. When we sing "Love Lifted Me" we are singing about Jesus. He is the arm of the Lord. When God made the universe, the Bible describes it as the work of His fingers (*Psalms 8:3*), and when He delivered Israel from Egypt, it was by His strong hand (*Ex. 13:3*). But to save lost sinners, God used His mighty arm. Salvation is the demonstration of His mighty power.

The questions in verse 1 suggest that the prophecy of Christ and His suffering was not believed. Although Christ was "the arm of the LORD" in all His power, He was not recognized as God's Son or the promised Messiah.

Verse 2 tells us that Christ had no visible majesty. The world didn't even know who He was. There was nothing in about Him that was attractive to the eyes of men. Only people with eyes of faith could see His glory and the beauty of His character.

**John 1:10-11** <sup>10</sup> *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. <sup>11</sup> He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

### **2. Christ suffered by being despised and rejected (vs. 3-4)**

Long before He suffered the beating and the nails of crucifixion, He suffered the rejection and hatred of men (vs. 3). He was truly a man of sorrows (lit., pains) and one who knew grief firsthand. We esteemed him not (did not value him at all). When He was beaten and crucified, many people insulted Him (vs. 4) and claimed He was punished by God. We see the same rejection in *Psalms 22*.

**Psalms 22:1** *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

**Psalms 22:6-8** <sup>6</sup> *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. <sup>7</sup> All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, <sup>8</sup> He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

### **3. Christ suffered in the place of sinners (vs. 5-6, 8-9)**

This is the heart of the gospel. Christ died in the place of sinners. He died as the sin-bearer. He died as our substitute. He had no sin of His own. He was the sinless one.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

**Hebrews 4:15** *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

**1 Peter 2:22** *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*

**1 John 3:5** *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

When God ordained the OT animal sacrifices, He said the sacrifice must be without blemish.

### **4. Christ suffered in silence and submission to God's will (vs. 7)**

**1 Peter 2:21-24**<sup>21</sup> *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: <sup>22</sup> Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: <sup>23</sup> Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: <sup>24</sup> Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

This portion of Isaiah 53 was what the Ethiopian man read in his chariot (Acts 8) when Philip came along and explained Christ and the gospel to him. This verse tells us that Christ did not resist or protest or complain about the way He was treated unfairly. He was obedient to the Father and His plan of redemption. The night before in the Garden of Gethsemane Christ poured out His heart and even His blood in agonizing prayer.

**Matthew 26:39** *And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

He prayed three times with the same words. There was no other way, no plan B. Jesus understood that and surrendered to the will of God. The whole history of man involves two men in two gardens. The first man is Adam in the Garden of Eden who said to God, "Not your will, but mine be done." The second man is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane who prayed, "Not my will, but thy will be done."

### **5. Christ suffered to satisfy God's justice (vs. 10-12)**

Whenever we read verse 10, we need to pause and think, "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." We know the cruel Roman soldiers were pleased with His suffering, and we know the evil Jewish religious leaders were pleased with His suffering, but this says that the LORD was pleased. God the Father was pleased with Christ's suffering in the sense that His justice was satisfied and the penalty for sin was paid in full. There is a Bible word for this: propitiation. God's justice and His wrath against sin is satisfied once for all in the death of Christ.

**Romans 3:24-26** <sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: <sup>25</sup> Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; <sup>26</sup> To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

**1 John 2:1-2** <sup>1</sup> My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: <sup>2</sup> And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

**1 John 4:10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Thinking about our sins and our guilt before God will drive us to despair, but thinking about Christ bearing the punishment for our sins will give us peace. We must place our faith where God has placed our sins...on Christ alone.

Christ suffered in many ways (physical, but also the emotional suffering of rejection and shame, and worst of all, the spiritual suffering as He took the wrath of God. His suffering satisfied God and rescued us from the suffering we all deserved. In Luke 16 we see a picture of lost people suffering in Hell: "I am tormented in this flame." Jesus suffered so we won't have to suffer forever. Hallelujah what a Savior!

If Christ suffered like this for us, what does He expect and deserve from us? He commands us to repent and believe. Repent of our sins and surrender our lives in trust and obedience to Him. This is not a shallow commitment. It is a complete surrender of our lives. He gave Himself completely for us. We give ourselves completely to Him.