

# Sermon Outline

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 2013-2014

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## HE HAS BORNE OUR GRIEFS (ISAIAH 53:4-5)

### I. Introduction

### II. A Review of Our Previous Lesson

- A. Previously, in Isaiah 53:1-2, we were treated to a portrait of the Servant of the Lord.
- B. As we pointed out, the Servant of the Lord is a significant figure in Isaiah because he is the agent by whom God accomplishes salvation both for Israel as well as for the rest of the world.
- C. Isaiah gives us a compressed vision, or else a general impression, of how the Servant of the Lord will go about accomplishing his mission of global restoration.
  - 1. The Servant is going to be a *Teacher* to the nations of the world.
  - 2. The Servant is going to be a *Liberator* of the oppressed of the world.
  - 3. The Servant is going to be the *Restorer* of Israel and *Purifier* of the nations.
  - 4. The Servant accomplishes our salvation by becoming a *Man of Sorrows*.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) According to Isaiah, what would the Servant of the Lord do?

### III. He Has Borne Our Grievs and Sorrows (Isaiah 53:4)

- A. Verse 4 has two parts to it.
  - 1. First part: What the Servant has done.
  - 2. Second part: How Israel and the rest of the watching world would interpret what was happening to the Servant.
- B. So let's start with the first part. The Scripture says,

*Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;*

- C. This verse explains what was said in verse 3, namely that the Servant would be “despised and rejected by men” and that he would be “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”
- D. But why would the Servant of the Lord, the great manifestation of the mighty Arm of God, be in such a sorry state? As verse 4 makes clear, it is because “he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.”
- E. So the disfigurement, the suffering, and all the misery that the Servant undergoes really does not originate in him, but in us—the very people he has come to save.

- F. It is having the Servant carry our sufferings that the arm of the Lord will function in this world.  
—When God flexes his mighty arm to do away with the sins of the world, it is not simply by wiping sinners out. But it is by gathering all their sins and sorrows unto himself—and extinguishing them in his own person and by his own judgment.
- G. This is what makes the messianic vision of the Jewish-Christian Scriptures so very different from the salvation stories of the world.
1. In many ancient societies, salvation is usually accomplished when a deity or deities destroy or punish their enemies.
  2. But in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, we see that the God of Israel accomplishes salvation, not simply by wiping out all those who opposed him, but by reconciling them to himself. (And this he does by taking their punishment upon himself.)
  3. Of course, this is not to say that there is no concept in the Bible of God destroying his enemies. But this is to say that in the Bible, God makes it a very big point to save his enemies by drawing them home to himself.
- H. Having such a God changes the way your religion “works.”
1. Most religions have some notion of forgiveness in them.
  2. But how greatly forgiveness and mercy shines in your religion depends on how merciful your central deity is.
  3. Only in Christianity can there be mercy that is deep and certain because we believe that all the evil, hatred, and anger in the world was truly addressed and dealt with in a just way.
    - a. The God at the center of reality did not just forget that sins existed. He truly addressed the evil of his people.
    - b. But instead of simply destroying them as they truly deserved; he paid for their sins himself—in the person of the Servant of the Lord.
    - c. That is why grace, kindness, mercy radiate brilliantly from the Christian Faith—because the Christian Faith is itself based on the mercy of God.
    - d. Thus, Christianity is not merely about a code of ethics. It is a religion that is first and foremost a product of God’s mercy. Unless God had shown mercy to us, the Christian Faith would not exist.  
—How would a religion based on divine mercy look like? Feel like?

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What are the two parts of verse 4? (2) Why would the Servant of the Lord be in such a state of sadness and pain? (3) What makes the messianic vision of Christianity so different from the vision of salvation in many other world religions?

#### IV. We Esteemed Him Cursed by God (Isaiah 53:4)

- A. But having said that, let’s go on now to see how the world would react to the Servant of the Lord when they do see him. The Scripture says, “yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.”

- B. Instead of seeing his work for what it is, as a payment for all the evil that we have done to God as well as to one another, the knee-jerk reaction of the world toward the suffering Servant of the Lord is simply to write him off—by declaring that God has cursed him, by pronouncing that Christ has been rejected by ultimate Reality himself.
- C. We know from the New Testament, this was precisely how the Jews treated Jesus.
1. The Jewish authorities executed Jesus on the grounds of blasphemy (because he claimed to be the Son of God).
  2. The means of execution, namely crucifixion, was also significant because crucifixion was a form of hanging, which communicated that the person hanged was cursed by God.  
—Deuteronomy 21:23: “his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.”
  3. And so, as our Lord Jesus went to the cross, he was seen as being “stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.”
- D. This is a word of encouragement to all of us who have suffered for our faith in some way:
- We, who have been shunned by our families because we chose to cast our lot in with Jesus Christ and his Church.
  - We, who have been patient with evil and pray for our enemies.
  - We, who are counted as irrelevant to the Larger Scheme of Things, because of our faith in Christ.
- If they treated Christ in that dismissive and hurtful way, we can expect that they will treat us similarly as well.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How did the world esteem the sufferings of God’s Servant? (2) In what sense can Christians expect the same kind of judgment from the world? How have you experienced similar judgments from your friends and loved ones? (3) What was the significance of Christ’s death on the cross? How does Dt 21:23 teach us to view execution-by-hanging in Jewish culture?

## V. He Was Pierced for Our Transgressions (Isaiah 53:5)

- A. What is the real reason for the suffering of the Lord’s Servant? Scripture states the reason yet again: “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities...”
- B. So it was our sins that did it. Our transgressions, our iniquities—those were the things that made their mark on the Lord’s suffering Servant. And we thought that we were the innocent ones and he the guilty one.
- C. Both “transgressions” and “iniquities” are words that have to do with sin.
1. The word “transgression” (*psha*) means “rebellion” or “revolt.” In this case, it refers to the rebellious infraction of God’s Law.
  2. The word “iniquities” (*avn*) means “transgression,” “guilt,” or “punishment.”

- But either way, it is our sin that is being painted upon the person of the Servant.
- D. The Scripture makes clear that it is for our sins that the Servant was “wounded” and “crushed.”
1. Those words indicate a breaking-down and a violation of something or someone.
  2. Because the Servant carried the full load of our sins upon himself, all the just destruction, violence, injury, and damage that those sins deserved have now been applied to him.
- E. God has indeed reversed the curse—but by backing it into his Servant.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What was the real reason for the Servant’s suffering? (2) What are the meanings of the words “transgressions” and “iniquities”? (3) How has God reversed the curse?

## VI. His Torment, Our Shalom (Isaiah 53:5)

- A. In the next part of the verse, we learn what has happened as a result of that: “upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”
- B. The Servant carried our chastisement, our punishment. And this punishment shows up in the form of wounds.
- C. But as a consequence of those injuries, as a result of reversing the curse upon his own Servant, God gives us something else in place of the curse—peace and healing.
1. The word for “peace” is *shalom*. Shalom is much more than just an absence of war. It is wholeness and wellbeing.
  2. The word “healed” means to make whole and healthy.
  3. Thus, in place of the curse (which has fallen upon the Servant), you and I receive peace and healing—the very blessings that were deprived us so long as the curse was upon us.
- D. The fact that the Servant’s wounds bring wholeness is a clear indication that God desires his people to be made completely whole.
1. The wholeness in view is spiritual and physical wholeness.
  2. In Scripture, salvation is not merely about going to heaven when you die, living the rest of your life as a disembodied spirit.
  3. Salvation in the fullest biblical sense is the total healing and restoration of both spirit and body. Salvation in its fullest expression is *resurrection* and *glorification* (cf. Rom 8:30; 1 Cor 15:20-22).
  4. Salvation is revealed in all its grandeur and fullness in Revelation 21 and you will see. This is the outcome of the great work of the Servant of the Lord:

*<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as*

*their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What resulted from the chastisement of the Servant? What blessings are released to us now that the Servant has suffered our punishment? (2) What does Revelation 21 teach us about the full scope of our salvation?

## VII. He Makes All Things New

**This, then, is the work of the all-powerful Arm of the Lord. This is how the Servant of the Lord brings salvation to our grieving world: By his suffering our punishments, punishments for every conceivable sin in the world, the Servant of the Lord makes all things new. From his broken body, his atoning blood, and the water that flowed from his gaping side, a new heavens and a new earth is brought into existence. The curse is lifted. Creation is reborn. As God exhausts his curse once and for all in the Servant, the human race is allowed to live again—beyond the curse, in peace and health. That is what it means to be saved. That is salvation in all its biblical, God-exalting, life-affirming, Christ-dependent glory.**

What should our responses be?

- A. First: We need to recognize the seriousness and gravity of our sins.
1. Sin is so serious that God could not just wish it away.  
—For God to do so would be to seriously compromise something in himself. It would be to compromise his very character, the very sanctity of his being.
  2. Sin is ultimately against the Lord. It is not first a transgression of man's traditions. It is a violation of God's Word and a grieving of God himself.
  3. Unless we see sin in this light, we will always be taking sin lightly. We would always be living according to our own desires rather than God's.
  4. As we behold the Servant of the Lord carrying his cross to Golgotha, and then finally surrendering himself to the nails and the full onslaught of judgment, we must see that that is what our sin truly deserves.
  5. The cross of Christ is an invitation for us to examine ourselves; to stir us to gaze at our sins long enough to make us know and feel our own sense of guiltiness as well as helplessness.
- B. Second: As we see our sins placed upon the Servant, we are also to see the end of our sins.
1. God does not want us to see only our sins and nothing else. God wants us to see our sins in the context of what happened on the cross.
  2. What happened on the cross was nothing less than a miracle of cosmic proportions.  
—God, out of the boundless expanse of his life-giving love, chose not to be bound solely by his own righteous anger. Instead, God was determined that sin would not have the last word.

3. As we see our sins placed upon the Servant, we are also to see the end of our sins.

*<sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom 8:3, 4)*

4. The destruction of the Servant was the destruction of sin. Jesus Christ, Servant of the Lord, became the ultimate Exile.

*as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us (Ps 103:12)*

5. To benefit from the Servant's death, God calls us to entrust the punishment of our sins to the Servant; that is, to trust Jesus Christ to remove all our sins from us by his death.

*<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom 3:23-26 NKJV)*

C. Third: We now live in the freedom of our salvation.

1. The freedom the Servant has purchased for us is freedom to return to God.
2. Thus, to live in freedom is to live in a state of repentance and consecration—a life that is characterized by a continual turning away from sin to God, a life of increasing devotion to the God who loves us so much.
3. Paul describes such a life in Romans 6:2-4:

*<sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How should we respond to the cursed death of the Servant of the Lord? (2) What does the suffering of the Servant teach us about the gravity of our sins? (3) Why should we see the end of our sins in Jesus? What is the basis of this? (Consider Rom 8:3, 4.) (4) What does it mean to live in the freedom of our salvation? (Consider Rom 6:2-4.)