

Isaiah 53:1-6 – “Man of Sorrows”

Isaiah 53 (and really beginning in Isaiah 52:13) details the suffering of the Messiah. It's an incredible thing to have a Saviour that has come down to this world on an incredible rescue mission to save us. As we've been in Matthew 24 on Sundays recently, we've been looking at the second coming of Christ. And when He returns, He comes back in power and great glory.

But His first coming took on a very different look. So much so that many did not believe Him to be the Messiah. You see that rescue mission at His first coming required a death in order to save us. And it's easy to skip ahead at His future coming and the reality of life in Him now, but we often don't take enough time to meditate on the depth of His sacrifice by which He's brought forgiveness and freedom.

So today we're going to take some time and look through this important passage that so amazingly details what our Saviour went through in order for us to be saved.

- It's such an accurately detailed report that many thought this could only have been written after the crucifixion. They'll say the second half of Isaiah was written by a different author hundreds of years later and wrote in hindsight of the life of Jesus. But make no mistake about it, Isaiah wrote this incredible prophetic passage about 700 years before it happened.
- It's so wonderful to see the plan of God's salvation laid out so clearly. It allows us to see He has everything worked out and provided for in our lives.

53:1 - *Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

Now the fact that God would send His Son to come to this world in such a humble fashion would go against all human wisdom. He should come as the Saviour and Lord that He is. He could demand worship and allegiance. But He didn't do this. He came in humility; He came in gentleness. He was meek and lowly.

People in Jesus' day struggled to accept Him as their Messiah because He wasn't fitting the image they had drawn up in their minds. Isaiah prophesied of this saying ***who has believed our report***. Nobody would think this was the way that salvation and deliverance would come into the world.

- Do you ever struggle with this? Do you have a hard time believing what God is doing or is able to do in a particular situation in your life? Perhaps He's at work in ways that are so different than how you imagined it would go. Don't

dismiss God in those times but ask Him to grow your faith to trust the plans He has. He works in ways that are not our ways.

Jesus was born into an earthly family, though miraculously conceived. He grew up with people seeing Him as a carpenter's son. He got dirty in the trade Himself. Nobody believed that this Man with calloused hands could be their Messiah.

- **John 1:11**, *"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."*

And the crazy thing is that the arm of the Lord was revealed to many. This meant the power and might of God was evident through Jesus, yet people still chose to ignore the obvious signs.

- **John 12:37–38**, *"But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?""*

53:2 - For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

Jesus grew up as anyone else. He was susceptible to pain, to sickness, He was **as a tender plant**. He didn't have some super shield around Him that made Him impervious to hardship or affliction. He was able to experience these things as you and I would.

He came **as a root out of dry ground**. He sprouted at a time that Israel was barren. They had the Romans ruling over them. The culture of Roman and Greek polytheism was not satisfying anyone. It had been 400 years since God spoke to the nation through a representative. Their religious system had become a system of dead works. It was difficult days in Israel. But it was in the seemingly tough times that God brought forth a Saviour. It was hard ground to crack, but it was the right time.

- **Galatians 4:4**, *"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,"*

And again, much of this passage is being written to reveal the humiliation of God's Servant. He came as a Suffering Servant and for many it was not understood why.

He has no form or comeliness... When Jesus came to this world, He wasn't put in a body that would put the Rock to shame.

He came without the need to stand out. There was no form or comeliness. This means that He was no stately figure that we would desire Him from an outward level. There was no majesty or splendour (**comeliness**) attached to Him that was fitting of the King He was.

Nobody was looking at Jesus and saying, you must be a god! He was ordinary. He was just like you and me.

There was **no beauty that we should desire Him**. That shocks me. Now I know that we can all look at Jesus this side of the cross and see what He has done for us (and we'll see a clearer picture of that as we move through these verses) and we see His beauty. We truly desire Him. But the idea here is that there was nothing about Jesus to those first century witnesses that drew them in from an appearance standpoint.

- He wasn't walking around with a shiny halo. There was no glow to Him as though He was walking out of the sun when you saw Him coming.

53:3 - He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Jesus came to bring us freedom, life, peace, yet He was rejected by many. He did not fit into their way. The religious leaders didn't want any disruptions to how they were conducting themselves, so they rejected Him. Jesus would have only brought a better hope and reality, yet they didn't want to change. And because many were being confronted of their need for Him, they **despised** Him.

- That's a strong word. It means to have contempt; to detest another.
- We can have people come and say things that aren't very nice to us. Maybe someone has even said to you, *'I don't like you.'* But has anyone ever said, *'I despise you!'* That's a whole other level. And it's repeated 2x here in vs. 3.

Matthew 26:67, *"Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands,"*

- What an awful thing to do. To spit on someone is to say, *'you're beneath me. You're like the dirt I walk on.'* This is how Jesus was treated.

Matthew 27:39–44, *"And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."⁴¹ Likewise the*

chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ⁴² “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. ⁴³ He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” ⁴⁴ Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.”

Jesus was a **Man of sorrows**. This speaks of the suffering He had to endure. Jesus wasn’t sorrowful over having to come on this mission. He knew what it was going to entail. It was recorded for Him here in Isaiah to mull over for the next 700 years before He broke into time.

He was sorrowful because of the pain that sin brings. It separates you from the Father, it brings brokenness, hurt, and grief. Jesus experienced all these things.

- **Matthew 26:37–38**, *“And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.””*
- Jesus wept at the funeral of Lazarus, not because He was at a loss, but because it revealed the hurt that sin brings. Sin destroys.

Jesus was going to bring an end to sin, but its cost was death. Jesus experienced the ultimate weight of sin by taking the sin of the world upon Himself. He uttered from the cross, ‘My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?’ (Matthew 27:46), because Jesus felt that separation from His Father because of sin. This I believe was the greatest of difficulties for Jesus.

Because He went through all of this, He is **acquainted with grief**. He’s not a Saviour that doesn’t understand what you’re going through. He knows your pain, and struggle. He’s acquainted with these things more than we’ll ever be.

- **Hebrews 2:17–18**, *“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”*
- **Hebrews 4:15**, *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”*

Though Jesus was offering blessing and peace, people turned away, they hid their face from Him. They didn’t want to deal with their sin.

Jesus came to provide salvation and bear our griefs (or sickness as it's translated). Our sickness was sin leading to death. We needed healing. But notice what we see as we read on...

53:4 - Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

We dismissed all that Jesus was doing by believing that He was just struck down by God. He was the one being punished for something.

But then we see the clearer picture develop...

53:5 - But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

Jesus took all this suffering and shame because He was providing the atonement for our sins.

The word **wounded** is literally *pierced*. The nails pierced through His hands and feet and fastened Him to the cross. The cross was the most brutal, torturous way to be executed. Jesus could have chosen any other way, but He willingly laid His life down to suffer this sort of death. But it was all to pay the penalty for our sin. Sin is brutal. Sin is a destructive force. Jesus allowed this type of death so that the payment for that sin through His death would be on an equal level.

He was **bruised for our iniquities**. That word for bruised is *crushed*. This was more than just a little bumping He took, He was literally crushed under the heavy load of sin and the judgment of God towards that sin. This is what you and I deserved.

The **chastisement for our peace** was taken by Jesus. The correction, discipline, and judgment that we deserved for sin was poured out on Jesus so that we could be forgiven and healed!

- Every stripe laid against His back that left Him in agony, every thorn that pierced through His scalp inflicting great pain, every hit on that nail that drove those spikes through His flesh was done to spare you from the fallout of sin.
- Our healing is not about physical healing for today, it's about the healing we needed from our sin to make us whole.

Theologians call this the vicarious Atonement of Christ. This simply means a substitution. Jesus became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- **2 Corinthians 5:21**, *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

53:6 - *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.*

You may be thinking that this is all good and everything. But Jesus didn't have to do this for you. Perhaps you feel like it's the really evil people that Jesus had to die for. But like this verse says, we're all like sheep and have gone astray. Sheep are natural at that. Sinning is something that is natural for us, we're born sinners. But we've also all made a conscious choice to go our own way at one time or another. We've rebelled against God. And because of our sin we're guilty before God.

But the great thing is that God doesn't lay the judgment on us. He's given us His Son Jesus to stand in our place. Our sin (***iniquity***) has been laid on Jesus so we can be forgiven and set free from sin.

But you must choose today to receive Jesus as your Saviour. You must repent of your sin and put your trust in Him. When you believe in your heart that Jesus died on a cross to pay the penalty for your sin and rose again three days later, you will be saved and given eternal life as a free gift. Will you accept Him today?