

'The Suffering Servant Savior' (Isaiah 53:3-5)

Companion Paper to the Sermon by Pastor James Moriello, Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket RI, 3/7/2021

*“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.
Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
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.”*

(Isaiah 53:3-5, NKJV)

The context of these three verses is that of the passage of [Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#). These words were penned by the prophet Isaiah about 700 years before Christ. And they speak clearly of Jesus Messiah, the God-Man. He is the “[righteous Servant](#)” who is able to “[bear iniquities](#)” of sinful men. Some folks read this portion of Scripture and see a mere man, perhaps David or Isaiah himself. But the honest reader who is truly seeking divine truth and salvation will find a clear description of Jesus of Nazareth, God the Son, Savior of the world. Time would fail us if we were to attempt to preach through the whole passage in our brief time together, so we shall focus upon three verses in particular. These three verses shall constitute our three areas of meditation and application today: “[Man of sorrows](#)”, “[He has borne our griefs](#)”, and “[By His stripes we are healed](#).”

“Man of Sorrows” (53:3)

The suffering Servant Savior was “[despised and rejected](#)” on earth. “[When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their \[unbelief\]\(#\)” \(Matthew 13:54-58\). The hardest people to share the gospel with are often those who know us the best. The strongest opposition to Christian ministry begins at home, and this Jesus knew full well. “\[But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”\]\(#\)”](#)

They said, “Barabbas!” Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!”” (Matthew 27:20-22). These folks “**crucified the Lord of glory**” (1 Corinthians 2:8). Are we not guilty of the same? Have we not rejected the ways of God and chosen our own ways to our own hurt? Do we not still do so? “**O wretched man that I am!**” (Romans 7:24). We think that we have not despised and rejected Jesus, but we must ever be alert and penitent, for our sinful flesh and worldly pursuits lay us bare before the Almighty.

Jesus was a “**Man of sorrows**”, for great is His sadness over the fact that so many people reject Him and in so doing, lose their souls. “**The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance**” (2 Peter 3:9). The Savior’s acquaintance with grief is vividly seen at the tomb of His friend Lazarus, where “**Jesus wept**” (John 11:35). His grief over sin in general is seen by His intense prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, in which “**His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground**” (Luke 22:44). It was necessary that these things would be so. “**For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted**” (Hebrews 2:18).

“**We hid our faces**” is best understood within a distinctly Jewish context, since this is the way the gospel portrays it. “**He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him**” (John 1:11). Today He comes boldly to the church folks in this house, standing at the door of your heart, weeping for your soul, and knocking fervently (**Revelation 3:20**). Will you receive Him? Or will you keep Him at bay a while longer, because you love your sin too much (**John 3:19-21**)?

“**He has borne our griefs**” (53:4)

“**Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.**” “**Griefs and sorrows**” may also be translated “*sicknesses and pains*”. This Scripture is applied to Christ as being fulfilled in His earthly healing ministry. “**When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.”**” (Matthew 8:16-17). Jesus proved His ability to deal with all of our physical, mental, and emotional sicknesses, and to grant us healing if that is according to His will (**1 John 5:14-15**). If He can heal you and I on all of these levels according to His will, how much more can He heal every one of you of your greatest infirmity, that of separation from God!

In the face of such obvious power, those in His generation nevertheless “**esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.**” Notice that this Scripture points to Jesus alone as the One who can do these things. Modern day ‘faith healers’ and their ilk blaspheme His name and His work when they apply this prophecy unto themselves.

“By His Stripes we are Healed” (53:5)

The Lord prophesies through the pen of Isaiah that the Servant would be “wounded”, and indeed He was pierced through (Psalm 22:16). The reason for this is that it was necessary that this be done “for our transgressions” to be forgiven. In fact, a blood atonement is required to appease the wrath of the Holy God. “It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Romans 4:24-25). Jesus paid it all because of you. It was necessary that the Mediator of the New Covenant of your salvation be put to death. “For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.” Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:16-22). There is no forgiveness for you and I apart from the blood of Christ. And His blood He has shed for us.

“He was bruised for our iniquities”, the righteous paying the penalty for the unrighteous. “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Such was the only way that men and women might be reconciled to and be at peace with God (2 Corinthians 5:18). “The chastisement for our peace was upon Him.” Jesus Christ is pictured as the bringer of spiritual healing. He did it generally and universally in His first advent (Luke 4:18). He does it in response to prayer and confession of sin (Psalm 41:4; 1 John 1:9). Where Christ is, healing comes (Revelation 22:2). Notice the past tense verb in our text: “healed”. This is the spiritual position of believers in the sight of God—*healed already!* This speaks of spiritual healing, not the physical. You can pray for physical healing, but it is not guaranteed. Do not fall into the false teaching that the atonement guarantees physical healing in this life, lest you surely be disappointed when you and every believer one day prays and the healing does not come, for the time has expired, and surely death comes to visit you, even all men.

But rather, rejoice in Christ’s loving work while you can! Let us take a moment to marvel at the power of Christ’s blood and the permanence of God’s salvation! “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption

through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:3-14). The Bible says that “all we like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6). If there are any lost sheep in here, it’s time to get found. This very day, Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd is looking for you. Believe upon Him and be saved. Wandering friend, repent of your own ways and get back into communion with God. Today is the day to get serious about spiritual matters, even your own soul.