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The Servant's Great Exchange

Isaiah 53

Series: The Suffering Servant (Communion Series)

The Village Church

July 4, 2021

I. Introduction

- A. It is customary for there to be a eulogy in funerals and memorial services
 - 1. A eulogy – when someone who knows the deceased, stands up and speaks well of the departed
 - 2. **Eulogy** literally means **“to speak well of”**
- B. Sometimes eulogies can contain surprises
 - 1. There is the story of the funeral of a notorious man in a particular community – whom we shall call Mr. Brown
 - 2. Mr. Brown was indeed notorious
 - a. He was known to have cheated his way to success in business, ruthless in his competitive practices
 - b. He was a noted philanderer, unfaithful to his wife on multiple occasions
 - c. He had trouble with alcohol consumption
 - d. And was an all-around selfish and unpleasant person
 - 3. Mr. Brown passed away and a local pastor was arranged to conduct the funeral
 - a. Always the most difficult kind of funeral to conduct
 - 4. At the visitation, Mr. Brown's brother came up to the pastor and said, “I know my brother was a selfish and unpleasant person. I realize that he cheated on his wife, was shady in his business dealings, and was often intoxicated.
 - 5. “But I will give your church \$10,000 if you will say in the funeral that my brother was a saint.”
 - 6. The pastor said, “I don't know if I can do that. Let me think about it.”
 - 7. The time came for the funeral, the pastor stepped up to do the eulogy
 - 8. He said, “Mr. Brown was a ruthless businessman, cheating his way to financial success. He was unfaithful to his wife on numerous occasions. He was often drunk, and was a selfish and unpleasant person.
 - 9. “But compared to his brother, he was a saint.”

II. **Encomium**

- A. A eulogy is related to a particular type of literary genre known as an encomium
 - 1. And encomium is a speech given in praise of a person or thing
 - 2. It's classic form includes a **prologue**, an account of one's **origin** and development, a description of a person's **notable acts** or the thing's

laudable characteristics, **comparisons** used to praise the subject, and an **epilogue**

3. 1 Corinthians 13 is an encomium on love and essentially follows that kind of outline

B. Isaiah 53 is an encomium

1. It is a treatise of praise for the Servant of the Lord

a. But it also has its surprises

2. Just as it begins to praise the Servant for His exceptional laudatory qualities

a. It turns those qualities on their head

b. And many of them are the opposite of what the world would expect

3. So this encomium is shocking to the sensitive hearer

a. It brings us up short

b. Its contrasts are stunning

c. We can't help but be startled by them

III. **The Text**

A. Prologue of the encomium

1. **Isaiah 52:13** (NASB95) —

a. 13 Behold, My servant will prosper,

b. He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.

B. Then the surprise

1. **Isaiah 52:14** (NASB95) —

a. 14 Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man

b. And His form more than the sons of men.

C. When would you ever regard one as “high and lifted up”

1. When His appearance is grossly disfigured

D. When would you ever “greatly exalt” someone

1. When His appearance is so marred beyond personal recognition

2. Indeed, disfigured to the extent that He no longer looks human

E. The praises of God are so often unlike our praises

1. Let us explore and see why God would turn our values upside down like He does

2. What is it that the Servant accomplishes through His disfigurement

IV. **The Servant Hymns**

A. Began a communion series based on Isaiah 53

1. Recall that this particular passage – which we know of as Isaiah 53 – actually begins in Isaiah 52 and includes the last three verses of that chapter

B. Isaiah 53 is one of four Servant Hymns in Isaiah

1. A series of poetic descriptions of the person and ministry of One known as the Servant of the Lord (Servant of Yahweh)

a. A series that is decidedly Messianic in its purpose

b. In which the Messiah's identity and the nature of His ministry is increasingly unveiled

c. Until you get to Isaiah 53

- d. And it's clear that the Servant of Yahweh accomplishes His ministry through suffering (**The Suffering Servant**)
 - 2. And explains why Isaiah 53 is one of the most often used OT texts in the NT
 - a. As Jesus Christ is the One clearly identified as the Servant of Yahweh
- C. The hymns begin in Isaiah 42
 - 1. **Isaiah 42.1-9**
 - a. Shows the delight God has in His Servant
 - b. Referred to in Matthew 12.18-20
 - c. Alluded to in Jesus' baptism
 - 2. **Isaiah 49.1-13**
 - a. Alluded to in several passages in the NT
 - b. Shows how the Servant displays God's splendor, restores God's people, and is honored by God
 - c. At the same time it refers to the severe loss experienced by the Servant – a hint of His suffering
 - d. It also indicates that the Servant's task is too magnificent, too broad, too consequential simply to provide for the welfare of Israel
 - e. No – the Servant would be a light also to the Gentiles, and salvation would be brought to all people
 - 3. **Isaiah 50.4-11**
 - a. Indicates that the Servant will experience persecution, but will be vindicated
 - b. He will be found innocent of all wrongdoing
 - c. And He will be helped by God the Father
 - 4. **Isaiah 52.13-53.12**
 - a. The climax of the Servant Hymns
 - b. Indicating the death and resurrection of Messiah
 - c. And the fruit of what the Servant accomplished through His suffering
 - d. As James Durham put it, the **Marrow of the Gospel**
- D. We begin to unpack this extraordinary description of the person and work of Messiah
 - 1. Recognizing first that this is an encomium – a act of worship on the part of those who read it and hear it
 - a. For it is an act of praise for the Servant of Yahweh
 - b. Providing us with rich categories through which we recognize what our Savior did for us
 - c. As He pursued the cross in a work of redemption wrought in the mind of the Triune God

V. **The Voice**

- A. First notice that the voice is God the Father
 - 1. **Isaiah 52:13** (NASB95) — 13 Behold, My servant will prosper...
 - a. The Servant is God's Servant

- b. And God will exalt Him
- B. The whole notion of a Suffering Servant comes from the Mind of God
 - 1. The suffering of our Messiah is no accidental event
 - a. It is not the confluence of the conspiracies and machinations of human beings
 - b. While the Jewish religious authorities and the Romans would be guilty of carrying out their diabolical impulses and dispositions
 - c. The Sovereign God is behind all of it
 - 2. **Acts 2:23** (NASB95) — 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.
 - a. Indeed, the Roman and Jewish authorities are guilty
 - b. But God Himself, through the wicked acts of these human beings, was orchestrating His predetermined plan
 - c. A plan which would result in the salvation of all those who would believe in Him
- C. **Isaiah 52:13** (NASB95) — 13 Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.
 - 1. It is God who would exalt His Servant
 - a. He would do so in response to His Servant's fulfillment, the completion of His Servant's work of redemption
- D. The NT parallel to these verses in Isaiah is Philippians 2
 - 1. **Philippians 2:8-9** (NASB95) — 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name...
 - 2. God Himself would do the exalting!
 - a. God would lift Him up – high and greatly exalted
- E. Because God is the voice of Isaiah's prophecy, there is no doubt regarding its truthfulness
 - 1. You may believe it without reservation
 - a. Indeed – you must believe it if you don't want to be guilty of the sin of unbelief
- F. You must believe, not just His exaltation by the Father
 - 1. But you must also believe the humiliation on which it was based
 - a. For it is the same Father who makes that declaration as well
 - 2. **Isaiah 52:14** (NASB95) — 14 ... So His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men.
 - a. Literally – “His form was marred beyond human recognition”
 - b. **Philippians 2:8-9** (NASB95) — 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- G. This is the declaration of God the Father
 - 1. It is the truthful declaration of the person of the Servant of Yahweh – the Messiah, the Christ

2. It is to be believed because God said it

VI. **The Subject**

- A. The subject is the Servant of Yahweh – the Messiah
 - 1. Jesus Christ Himself
 - 2. The NT is clear – every occasion for the quotation of Isaiah 53 is about Jesus Christ
 - a. There is no other human being – no being period – who so meets this description
 - b. Any honest appraisal of Isaiah 53 would admit the identity of our Savior
- B. **Isaiah 52:14** (NASB95) — 14 ... So His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men.
 - 1. In the presence of Caiaphas and the Jewish leaders they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists, and slapped Him
 - 2. After Pilate had interrogated Him, the Romans had Him scourged
 - a. Stripped naked and tied to a pillar
 - b. Scourge made of leather thongs, weighted with sharp pieces of bone or metal
 - c. The flesh was literally torn off of His back and breast
 - 3. On the way to the crucifixion he was mocked, spat upon
 - a. He was made to carry His own cross-beam as long as He was able, until He eventually collapsed
 - b. Beaten on the head with a reed, which was like a piece of bamboo
 - 4. In the crucifixion spikes were driven through His hands and ankles
 - a. All while continuing to mock Him and spit on Him
 - b. A soldier pierced His side to make sure He had expired
 - 5. His appearance marred more than any man – indeed
 - a. This was the Servant of Yahweh
 - b. This was the Christ, the Messiah
 - c. Your Savior
 - d. The Savior of all those who would ever believe in Him

VII. **The Reward**

- A. We've already alluded to it!
 - 1. **Isaiah 52:13** (NASB95) — 13 Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.
- B. The Servant would be exalted above all – because of His willing suffering
 - 1. **Philippians 2:9–11** (NASB95) —
 - a. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
 - b. 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 - c. 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- C. The exaltation of the Servant was earned

1. We will learn as we continue through this passage what was accomplished in His suffering
 - a. But for now know this...
 - b. That the Servant Himself received a reward for His suffering
2. He has been highly exalted
 - a. Given the name above every name
3. That name is **Lord**
 - a. **Kurios (Gk)**
 - b. Relation to Hebrew – either **Adonai (the Sovereign One)** or **Yahweh (the sacred name of God)**
 - c. The same name as God!
4. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is God!
 - a. The Son of God incarnate always was God
 - b. But His identity was largely hidden in His earthly ministry
 - c. But in His exaltation there would be no doubt
5. Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father!
 - a. His earned exaltation
 - b. Granted to the Son by the Father

VIII. **The Shock**

- A. It's remarkable that the text in Isaiah begins with His exaltation
 1. **Isaiah 52:13** (NASB95) — 13 Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.
- B. And then comes the shock
 1. The text reveals what has happened to the Servant to earn the exaltation
 2. **Isaiah 52:14** (NASB95) — 14 Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men.
- C. The appearance of Jesus on the Via Dolorosa and in the crucifixion was shocking to everyone
 1. As He passed by, people gasped
 2. On the cross, they were repulsed by His appearance
 - a. “Was this really the Jesus we heard teaching in the temple?”
 - b. “Look at Him now!”
 - c. “I can't! I can't bear to do more than a brief glimpse out of the corner of my eye – then I must look away!”
- D. Isaiah would have expected a similar reaction to the words of the God in this prophecy
 1. Exalted – praise God!
 - a. But marred and disfigured!
 - b. How appalling!
- E. If you're not shocked by the condition of our Savior – you're no Christian
 1. If you have no sense of His humiliation, no understanding of His disfigurement – you don't belong to Him
 2. Your Christianity is mere formality – a going through the motions
 3. You may have your doctrinal statements in order

- a. But unless you sense the humiliation of the Suffering Servant of the Lord – your doctrine is just words
 - b. Words that have no meaning
 - 4. His appearance was marred more than any man
 - a. And His form more than the sons of men.
 - F. His physical appearance was shocking
 - 1. And we are not spared its description in this eulogy, in this encomium
 - 2. We are surprised by its inclusion
 - a. More than surprised – we are shocked
 - G. We will learn that the physical suffering of the Servant was only the tip of the iceberg of the suffering that secured our redemption
 - 1. That the spiritual suffering – the separation from the Father – was even more excruciating to Jesus
 - H. But His physical appearance – which is what our text highlights – was meant to shock
 - 1. His physical appearance was shocking to the onlookers on that day of His passion
 - 2. The verbal description of His physical appearance was meant to shock Judah in Isaiah’s day
 - 3. And it is meant to shock us today
 - I. When you see these elements – the bread and the cup – what do you see?
 - 1. They are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus
 - a. And as symbols they are meant to incite our imaginations
 - 2. Imaginations that lead us back to that day
 - a. The day of His crucifixion
 - 3. So that when we look into the bread and the cup we wouldn’t see just a wafer and juice
 - a. But we would see the marred disfigurement, the broken form, of our Suffering Servant
 - J. Whose suffering wasn’t pointless
 - 1. But whose suffering was purposeful
 - a. Whose suffering was for us
 - b. So that we might have life eternal
- IX. **The Great Exchange**
- A. This is the great exchange
 - 1. Him for us
 - a. His suffering instead of our eternal suffering
 - b. Suffering which we all so rightly deserve
 - B. This text in Isaiah compresses the narrative of the Servant’s redemptive act
 - 1. The Servant suffers – unimaginably
 - a. But He is exalted by the Father as a result
 - 2. The Philippians text echoes that
 - C. But the Philippians text starts earlier
 - 1. **Philippians 2:6–7** (NASB95) — 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied

Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

2. The Servant started in glory!
 - a. He came from glory
 - b. He left His glory behind
3. **Philippians 2:8** (NASB95) — 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 - a. His suffering – His appearance marred more than any man
4. And then comes the glory
 - a. **Philippians 2:9–11** (NASB95) — 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

D. That is the Great Exchange

1. God the Son
 - a. Becomes the Son of Man
2. Exchanges His glory
 - a. For our despicable shame and wickedness
 - b. And scandal of scandals – takes upon Himself the suffering we deserve
3. And then is exalted to His rightful place of supremacy
 - a. Lifted up to even more glory