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## **The Servant's Redemption**

### **Isaiah 52.15**

#### **Series: The Suffering Servant (Communion Series)**

#### **The Village Church**

**August 1, 2021**

#### I. Introduction

- A. Surprise and astonishment at communion elements
  - 1. Unfortunate that we are no longer surprised, no longer astonished at the communion elements
  - 2. We've been to worship services so long, we've come to expect some presentation of the body and blood of Jesus
    - a. In this congregation – as in many others – we do it once a month
    - b. In other congregations, it's every week
  - 3. Our surprise would be if we came in on the first Sunday of the month, and communion hadn't been prepared
    - a. Then we would be surprised
    - b. Then we would start asking questions
- B. Truth be told – if we really understood what these elements represented
  - 1. If we really understood the kind of news they are intended to communicate
    - a. We would be astonished
    - b. We would be stunned
    - c. Every time we walked in here and thought for five minutes about what Jesus Christ did for us in dying on the cross
- C. We were in Paris a number of years ago
  - 1. We spent a month there caring for the ministry of our dear friends – your neighbors – Fred and Carrol Henry – at the Trinity International Church
  - 2. One of the things we did was attend one of their Life Groups
    - a. We met in someone's living room and studied the Bible with a small group of about 6-8 others
  - 3. Can't remember what the text was – my vague recollection was that it was the 8<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Mark
    - a. **Mark 8:34** (NASB95) — 34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."
    - b. There was discussion about what it meant for a believer to take up his cross
    - c. All kinds of interesting opinions shared
    - d. Many of them about making some level of sacrifice
  - 4. I listened for a while – it was a good discussion
    - a. A lot good points were made
    - b. But I was concerned that it really didn't quite hit the mark

5. So I asked, “How many of you, from time to time, wear a cross?”
    - a. And I think all of the women, and maybe even a guy or two, acknowledged that they did, from time to time, wear a cross
  6. Then I asked, “How many of you would consider wearing a guillotine around your neck?”
    - a. We were in France; these weren’t French people – mostly ex-pats
    - b. But I assumed that, living in France, they would be aware of the rich history that the guillotine has in France
    - c. So I asked, “How many of you would consider wearing a guillotine as part of your ensemble?”
  7. They were stunned; they couldn’t believe I had asked such a thing
    - a. None of them would every consider wearing a gold or silver guillotine as part of their costume jewelry
  8. I said, “Why not? The guillotine in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century in France had the very same function as the cross did in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century in the Roman world.
    - a. “They were both gruesome means of execution.
    - b. “You wear a cross; why wouldn’t you wear a guillotine?”
  9. And then I said, “Now that you understand the function of the cross, how does that knowledge affect your understanding of the text when Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.’?”
- D. We are so accustomed to the artifacts of the death of Christ, that we’re no longer surprised or astonished at its presentation
- E. We’re in a series on Communion Sundays entitled The Suffering Servant
1. Exploring the classic Messianic passage in the OT – Isaiah 53
    - a. One of the most oft-quoted OT passages in the NT
    - b. Because it, perhaps more than any other OT text, lays out the person and work of Messiah Jesus
    - c. His person – who He is
    - d. His work – how His death provided the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all those who would ever believe in Him
  2. When I introduced this series we discovered that Isaiah 53 doesn’t actually start in Isaiah 53
    - a. It actually begins in Isaiah 52, beginning in v. 13
    - b. And consists of five stanzas of three verses each
- F. The opening stanza
1. **Isaiah 52:13–15** (NASB95) —
    - a. 13 Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.
    - b. 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. 15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand.

2. That stanza has as its primary emotional surprise, or astonishment
    - a. V 14 – “just as many were astonished at you...”
    - b. V 15 – “Kings will shut their mouths...”
  3. Witnesses of the Messiah would be struck dumb by what they have seen
    - a. And would be rendered speechless
  4. Because in just these three verses the essence of the gospel is laid out
    - a. And it contains the solution to the decrepit, sinful human condition that the best of all possible human minds could never, on their best day, ever have conceived
- G. My prayer is that, as we consider this passage this morning, that we will also be stunned, surprised, astonished at the Gospel which is so encapsulated by the death of Messiah Jesus on the cross

## II. The Great Exchange

- A. In the last message in this series we considered vv 13-14 – The Great Exchange
1. **Isaiah 52:13–14** (NASB95) —
    - a. 13 Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.
    - b. 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.
  2. It was the radical contrast that was so astonishing in these verses
    - a. The Servant – high and lifted up and greatly exalted
    - b. The Servant – His appearance marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men
- B. These verses prefigured the great hymn of Philippians 2
1. **Philippians 2:6–9** (NASB95) —
    - a. 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.
    - b. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
    - c. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name...
- C. We observed that in the Isaiah passage the appalling spectacle of suffering assumed the astonishing condescension of Messiah from His glorious origin as the Son of God
1. And then based on His willing suffering, was then returned to glory, exalted with the highest name above every name – Lord
  2. It was, indeed, the Great Exchange
- D. In this message we focus on v. 15
1. **Isaiah 52:15** (NASB95) —
    - a. 15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations,
    - b. Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;

- c. For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand.
- E. Once again, we will be surprised, shocked, stunned to see how the gospel is displayed to a humanity so desperate for redemption
  - 1. More importantly, we will see how vv 13-14 feed into v 15
    - a. Showing how the Great Exchange provides for the Servant's Redemption
    - b. Establishing dimensions of the gospel inconceivable to the human mind apart from the Spirit's revealing grace

### III. **The Effect of His Suffering**

- A. If vv 13-14 speak about the nature of His suffering, v 15 speaks of the effect of the Servant's suffering
  - 1. And they are inextricably connected
    - a. **V 14: "Just as many were astonished..."**
    - b. **V 14: "So His appearance was marred..."**
    - c. **V 15: "Thus He will..."**
  - 2. So v 15 flows directly from the Great Exchange
- B. **Gospel Sprinkling**
  - 1. "Thus He will sprinkle..."
    - a. The suffering of Messiah Jesus functions to cleanse from the stain of sin
  - 2. This was what priests would do under the Old Covenant
    - a. And it was associated with a sin offering of one kind or another
    - b. Sprinkling was a visible manifestation that one's sins were atoned for
    - c. That indeed, the sinner was cleansed
  - 3. Perhaps the best example of such sprinkling was what was done for lepers
    - a. Remember that lepers were, by definition and by reality, unclean; their disease was seen to be communicable
    - b. They were quarantined from the rest of society, much like we quarantine Covid patients today
    - c. Once lepers were assessed by the priests and determined to be no longer leprous, the priests would sprinkle him with the blood of a sacrificed bird
    - d. **Leviticus 14:7** (NASB95) — 7 "He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy and shall pronounce him clean..."
  - 4. The same kind of sprinkling was done by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement
    - a. When he would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies
    - b. Making Israel ritually clean and able to live with God residing in their midst. (**Leviticus 16.14**)
  - 5. Even the priests themselves had to be sprinkled with the water of purification (**Numbers 8.7**)

6. But Messiah Jesus is our Great High Priest
  - a. And He, unlike the OT priests, doesn't need Himself to be cleansed
7. But in His suffering, in His sacrifice, He, the innocent One, has cleansed us moral lepers
  - a. Cleansing us unclean sinners by His sanctifying work
8. This is Gospel Sprinkling
  - a. Where these elements, representing the death of Jesus Christ, declare to us – and to the world – that the death of Messiah Jesus cleanses us from all our sins
  - b. **Hebrews 9:14** (NASB95) — 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
9. Is this what you see when you look at these elements?
  - a. Do you see the cleansing of the blood of Messiah Jesus?
  - b. If you do not, there is no other cleansing available
  - c. For the blood of bulls and goats can never take away the sins of a human being
  - d. Such sacrifices were temporary, merely prefiguring the ultimate sacrifice of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
10. Do you see the cleansing of the blood of Christ in these elements?
  - a. Taking you moral lepers from a state of uncleanness and separation to declaring you clean and included in the family of God?

C. **Gospel Expanse**

1. The second dimension of the Servant's Redemption is the Gospel Expanse
  - a. **Isaiah 52:15** (NASB95) — 15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations...
2. The suffering of the Servant would not just sprinkle or ritually cleanse the priests, or even the healed lepers, or even, temporarily by the sacrifice of bulls and goats, the sins of Israel
  - a. No!
  - b. The suffering of the Servant would cleanse many nations!
  - c. Not just Jews, but Gentiles
3. This Gospel Expanse is a surprise to these Hebrews
  - a. Who regarded themselves as the exclusive recipients of God's special favor
  - b. These words of Isaiah would have produced great astonishment
  - c. "Thus He will sprinkle many nations..."
4. Of course, such surprise would be the result of willful ignorance on the part of the Jewish people
  - a. The very promise to Abraham envisioned such a redemption
  - b. "And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed..." (**Genesis 12.2**)
  - c. "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed..." (**Genesis 22.18**)

5. The overflow of God's favor to the nations of the world is a common theme throughout the OT
    - a. **Psalm 22:27** (NASB95) — 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations will worship before You.
    - b. **Psalm 67:2-4** (NASB95) — 2 That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. 3 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness And guide the nations on the earth. Selah.
  6. Of course the sprinkling of many nations would require the astonishing disfigurement of Messiah Jesus
    - a. As He took upon Himself the just punishment for all the sins of all those – from every nation on earth – who would ever throughout time believe on Him
  7. Consider for a moment the extent of His suffering
    - a. "... His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men."
    - b. The witnesses to the crucifixion weren't thinking, "Oh my, could this be the Servant of the Lord? Israel's Messiah?"
    - c. No! Their impression was, "Oh my, is this One even human"
  8. It took the complete dehumanization of Messiah Jesus to redeem the humanity of those from every people, tongue, tribe, and nation
    - a. For true Gospel Expanse to all nations it required an extent of suffering inconceivable to the human imagination
  9. Do you see such suffering in these elements?
    - a. Do you see the astonishing Gospel Expanse as you prepare to come to this table?
  10. We call this communion because we partake together
    - a. Do you see that we partake with all believers from every nation?
    - b. Do you see that in these elements Messiah Jesus suffered from people who are not just like us?
    - c. That He died for black and white and yellow and brown?
    - d. That He died for sinners of every stripe – including believers who were "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunks, swindlers" (1 Corinthians 6.9-10)?
    - e. That in Christ, those (and more) gather around this table in every nation where the gospel has reached – and they look at these elements too
    - f. And in them they see Gospel Expanse?
  11. Because those are the kinds of people Messiah Jesus cleansed, the kind His suffering sprinkled
- D. **Gospel Dominion**
1. The third element of the Servant's Redemption we see in this text is Gospel Dominion

- a. **Isaiah 52:15** (NASB95) — 15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him...
  2. Kings – not just the common, ordinary human being
    - a. But those who fashion themselves as having power, having influence, having dominion
    - b. They will be stunned
  3. Astonished – not only by the profound disfigurement of Messiah
    - a. Not only by the expense of His atoning work, His sprinkling
    - b. But astonished – even disturbed – by the extraordinary transfer of power
  4. The atoning work of Messiah will indeed displace the locus of power in the world
    - a. His sprinkling is a priestly act
    - b. But Messiah is also prophet and king
    - c. King of kings and Lord of lords
  5. And He comes bringing a kingdom
    - a. A kingdom which we see in bits and pieces today
    - b. A kingdom which begins its reign and rule in our hearts
    - c. A kingdom which reigns and rules in the people of God, in the Church
    - d. But ultimately, when Christ returns, His kingdom will be pervasive over the whole of humanity
    - e. And it has human kings shaking in their boots to think about its prospects
  6. **Psalms 2:10–12** (NASB95) — 10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. 11 Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. 12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!
    - a. Kings of the earth are on notice!
  7. Messiah Jesus will get the attention of the power brokers of our world
    - a. And they will not all take kindly to it
    - b. But the Servant’s Suffering will turn upside down the political ethos of our world
  8. Do you see in these elements the Gospel Dominion which has been accomplished by the Servant’s Suffering?
    - a. A dominion that displaces the power centers
    - b. First in our hearts
    - c. Eventually in our world
- E. **Gospel Surprise**
1. **Isaiah 52:15** (NASB95) — 15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him...
    - a. This is the second voice of surprise
    - b. V 14: “Many were astonished”
    - c. V 15: “Kings will shut their mouths...”



2. It takes a shock to the system to imagine the power brokers of the world stunned into silence
3. Imagine Donald Trump stunned into silence
  - a. Imagine him speechless
  - b. That's not a political statement
  - c. That's not a position for or against him, what he represents politically
  - d. It's simply an observation that I would think everyone, regardless of political persuasion, would affirm
  - e. Imagine Donald Trump speechless
4. But Messiah Jesus will bring all political leaders to a state of incomprehensibility
  - a. They will all find themselves stuttering
  - b. They will all search for words – and find none
5. Their mouths will be silenced
6. But if you really understood the gospel – and understood the essence of the Servant's Suffering – we would all be rendered speechless
  - a. We would all be stunned
  - b. We would all be surprised
7. Why?
  - a. Because the solution to the decrepit human condition is not one that human beings could ever conceive on their own
8. Ray Ortlund: This is something new. All the world's top experts never thought of removing our guilt this way. That the servant of the Lord would judge our evil by bearing it himself in his own sufferings – even we who know the gospel struggle to grasp it. But this was the joy set before him – to cleanse the very ones dehumanizing him. One solitary man, abandoned, ground into the dirt under our heel, giving to us in return life-transforming purity – it's the only way lepers like us are healed. Before him we are left in speechless wonder.

F. **Gospel Revelation**

1. Finally, we find in this passage Gospel Revelation – an unveiling of that which was hidden
  - a. Now revealed in the Servant's Suffering, in the Servant's Redemption
2. **Isaiah 52:15** (NASB95) — 15 ... For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand.
  - a. This is the ah-ha moment
  - b. The moment when it will all make sense
3. **Isaiah 64:4** (NASB95) — 4 For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, Nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.
  - a. This is the astonishing revelation
  - b. Salvation is in the God who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him



- c. Salvation is not something we must work up on our own
  - d. We're sinners – we can do no such thing
  - e. But God acts on our behalf – that's the Gospel Revelation
  - f. And it is utterly unheard of
  - g. It is utterly new
4. Edward Young: The novelty appears in the fact that the kings have come to experience the truth that the servant has died in their stead and has come to life again, thus bringing life to all his seed. This message has never been told to them nor have they ever heard it, but now they have both seen and perceived it. In former prophecies of the Messiah the message of salvation has been presented in veiled form, but now for the first time it is set forth with glorious clarity. It is a message that could not possibly have had its origin in the sinful heart of man, for all religions of human origin find in man himself the answer to all problems, but this message points to the Servant of the Lord as their only Hope.
  5. And it is this glorious revelation we get to share with others
    - a. With our family and friends
    - b. With our communities
    - c. Indeed, with the whole world!
    - d. A glorious Gospel Revelation
  6. Ortlund: Here is the wisdom of God – the undeserved sufferings of Jesus Christ outperforming the best of this world's "sweet oblivious antidotes." And the mission of the church is not to offer the world a Christianized version of their own false salvations but to communicate a good news they've never seen or heard before. If people do not sense that the gospel is saying something unheard of in the usual remedies for human misery, are we speaking clearly?

#### IV. The Servant's Redemption

- A. That's the Servant's Redemption
  1. **Isaiah 52:15** (NASB95) — 15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations,
    - a. Gospel Sprinkling – cleansing from sin
  2. Thus He will sprinkle many nations,
    - a. Gospel Expanse – redeeming lost humanity from every nation
  3. Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;
    - a. Gospel Dominion – rulers and power brokers on notice that the Kingdom of God is unfolding before them
  4. Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;
    - a. Gospel Surprise – the self-confident who fashion themselves in control of human events find themselves stunned into silence
  5. For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand.
    - a. Gospel Revelation – human pretensions at salvation shown to be impotent, but the true God-centered gospel revealed
- B. All because of the Servant's Suffering

1. Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand.