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The Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53.3

Series: The Suffering Servant (Communion Series)

The Village Church

January 2, 2022

I. Introduction

- A. Where was Jesus?
- B. Where was Jesus when multiple tornadoes tore through Kentucky and four other states on December 10 and 11?
 - 1. Killed 92 people; 78 in Kentucky
 - 2. Destroyed essentially the town of Mayfield
- C. Where was Jesus when Hurricane Ida, a Category 4 storm, made landfall on Louisiana's Gulf Coast on August 29 – the 16th anniversary of Katrina?
 - 1. Resulting in 32 deaths along the Gulf Coast
 - 2. Flooding from Ida killed another 56 people
- D. Where was Jesus when a typhoon hit the Philippines on December 16?
 - 1. Displaced hundreds of thousands of people
 - 2. Killed at least 375
 - 3. Rendering hundreds of buildings and residences unsalvageable
- E. Where was Jesus when torrential rain caused floods and landslides in China's Henan province on July 20?
 - 1. Killing at least 300 people
 - 2. Destroying thousands of homes
- F. Where was Jesus when the Cumbre Vieja volcano erupted on the Canary Island of La Palma on September 19?
 - 1. And continued to erupt until just a week or two ago
 - 2. Destroying more than 3,000 properties
 - 3. Displacing more than 7,000 people
- G. Where was Jesus on August 14 when a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti?
 - 1. Killing more than 2,200 people
 - 2. Destroying tens of thousands of homes
 - 3. Exacerbating turmoil in a nation that was already reeling politically from the assassination of its president only a month before
- H. I can tell you where Jesus was
 - 1. He was right in the middle of every single one of those tragedies
 - 2. And not only in the middle of those natural disasters
 - a. But also in the middle of the human-caused disasters spawned by political machinations of corrupt or feckless leaders
 - b. And by ideologically driven movements, organizations, and terrorists
 - 3. 2021 has seen plenty of both natural and human-caused disasters

- I. And if you want to know where Jesus is, you go to the middle of those disasters
 - 1. To the middle of the humanitarian crises
 - a. And there you will find Jesus
 - 2. And you will find Him most often in the form of the Church – the people of God
 - a. Who are acting in mercy and compassion in the midst of those crises
 - b. But who are not likely to show up in the news cycles
 - c. But they are there
 - 3. And you will find Him most assuredly in the person of His Spirit
 - a. Transforming lives that had been disrupted
 - b. Ministering strength and encouragement to the displaced and distressed
 - c. Comforting and consoling those reeling with loss of loved ones
- J. You want to know where to find Jesus?
 - 1. Go to the places that most of us would never choose to go
 - a. To the people who are the most difficult to help
 - 2. And there you will find Jesus
- K. We made much of the first responders on 9-11
 - 1. Who when thousands of people were rushing out of the World Trade Center
 - a. Were running in the other direction
 - b. Heading right into the teeth of the disaster
 - c. So many of them sacrificing themselves on behalf of others
- L. Well, that's just what Jesus does
 - 1. He goes to the hard places
 - a. He goes to the hard people
 - 2. He goes to the sufferers
 - a. He goes to the hardest sinners
 - 3. Why?
 - a. Because that's who He is
 - b. He is the Man of Sorrows

II. The Servant's Character

- A. In our communion series on the Suffering Servant on Isaiah 53 we gain much insight into the nature and character of the Servant of the Lord
 - 1. Who turns out to be the Messiah
 - a. Jesus Christ
 - 2. **Isaiah 53:3** (ESV) —
 - a. **3 He was despised and rejected by men,**
 - b. **a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;**
 - c. **and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised,**
 - d. **and we esteemed him not.**
- B. **Man of sorrows**
 - 1. Jesus is the most titled person in human history

- a. Alpha and Omega
 - b. Apostle and High Priest of our profession
 - c. Author and Finisher of our faith
 - d. Beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased
 - e. Bread of Life
 - f. Bright and Morning Star
 - g. Brightness of His glory
 - h. Chief Cornerstone
 - i. Chief Shepherd
 - j. Immanuel – God with us
 - k. Creator – through Him all things were made
 - l. Wonderful Counselor
 - m. Mighty God
 - n. Everlasting Father
 - o. Prince of Peace
 - p. Holy One of God
 - q. And on and on
2. But it is perhaps the title that most captures the heart of Jesus
 - a. **Man of Sorrows**
 3. Only one text in the NT explicitly describes the heart of Jesus
 - a. **Matthew 11:29** (ESV) — 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
 - b. “... gentle and lowly in heart...”
 4. It is this disposition of Jesus Christ that led Him to leave His glory behind
 - a. Take upon Himself our nature – our human nature, with all it’s weaknesses, save our sin
 - b. And run like the first responders into the chaos and destruction of our broken world
 5. It is this disposition of Jesus Christ who, when the leper says, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean...”
 - a. That Jesus stretches out His hand and touches him and heals him
 - b. Which turns the Jewish law on its head – that if you touch the leper, the unclean leper, you become unclean
 - c. Jesus touches the leper, He doesn’t become unclean
 - d. No – the leper becomes clean!
 6. It is this disposition that leads Jesus to sit with tax collectors and sinners
 - a. The ones the religious authorities believed should be shunned
 - b. Jesus – the One for whom the religionists gave another title – Friend of Sinners
 - c. Meant as a pejorative put-down
 - d. It was instead an accurate portrayal of the heart of Jesus
 - e. Who loves to be with the sufferers and the sinners
 7. It is this disposition of Jesus Christ that led Him to weep for this broken world

- a. For his friend Lazarus when he died (the first time)
 - b. For His beloved Jerusalem, spiritually lost as it was, having had the incarnate Son of God in its midst, and missed Him
 - 8. Dane Ortlund: Time and again it is the morally disgusting, the socially reviled, the inexcusable and undeserving, who do not simply receive Christ's mercy but to whom Christ most naturally gravitates.
 - 9. Richard Sibbes (Puritan): When Christ saw the people in misery, his bowels yearned within him; the works of grace and mercy in Christ, they come from his bowels first.... whatsoever Christ did... he did it out of love, and grace, and mercy – he did it inwardly from his very bowels.
 - a. **Bowels** – Puritans merely echoing the biblical euphemism for “heart” – the central motivating center of the human person
 - b. Jesus was the Man of Sorrows
 - 10. Sorrows started early
 - a. As Joseph and Mary were led to escape to Egypt because of the evil intentions of Herod who purposed to kill the babies
 - b. And kill them he did – hundreds of them – trying to do away with the baby that would be King of kings
 - 11. Then they piled one upon another
 - a. His struggles as a child in a poor carpenter's family
 - b. Whose father had passed away in his prime
 - c. How His closest disciples failed to understand even the most basic of God's purposes in Messiah, even after three years of personal study with the Master Himself
 - d. How his closest friends grieved the loss of the beloved brother Lazarus
 - e. How His disciples deserted Him when He was arrested
 - f. How His mother had to witness His beating, His being paraded through the streets of Jerusalem, the Via Dolorosa, like a criminal, led to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, and there murdered with the most painful, hideous deaths ever concocted by humans
 - 12. He was the Man of Sorrows
 - a. Not the happy-go-lucky sort, for whom all the circumstances of life seem to fall into place
 - b. About whom the psalmist wrote Psalm 16:6 (ESV) — 6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places...
 - c. The lines did not fall for Jesus in pleasant places
 - 13. He was the Man of Sorrows
- C. **Acquainted with grief**
- 1. Grief attendant with a world broken
 - a. Broken with sickness and death
 - b. Broken with corruption and violence
 - c. Broken with destructive relationships
 - d. Broken with political manipulation
 - e. Broken with spiritual disintegration

- f. Broken with sinful rebellion against His holy Father
- 2. And while we might gloss over so much of that as we are able to avoid or ignore it
 - a. Jesus could not, would not, gloss over it
 - b. Every instance grieved His holy heart, His divine yet tender Spirit
- 3. While we might grieve over the consequences of sin – which is what our broken world displays
 - a. He grieved even more over sin itself
- 4. And it was grievous enough for Him that He would give up His own life to reverse the curse
 - a. He would be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
 - b. He would weep great tears, and shed great drops of sweat as if it were blood, in Gethsemane as He gazed into the cup of the wrath of God He was about to drink so you and I would never have to
- 5. This Jesus was, is, the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief

III. The Human Response

A. Despised

- 1. He was despised
 - a. Baza (Heb) – to disdain, hold in contempt
 - b. Used twice in this passage – bookends to v 3: “He was despised”
- 2. More than mere opposition
 - a. But an implication of hatred
- 3. It means, not just opposition to one’s position and prerogatives
 - a. But an actual visceral disgust
 - b. A snarling antagonism toward the Servant of the Lord
- 4. Abundant examples in scripture
 - a. Esau despised his birthright
 - b. Saul was despised as king by the worthless fellows in his kingdom
 - c. Michal despised David as he danced before the Lord – he was an embarrassment to her
- 5. You can relate
 - a. The political left despises Donald Trump
 - b. The political right despises Joe Biden
 - c. You can hear the disgust and disdain in contemporary discourse
- 6. That very same disposition prevailed by many toward the Servant of the Lord – Jesus Christ
 - a. Whose character and disposition was nothing like either Trump or Biden
 - b. But whose heart was humble and lowly
 - c. Who never once transgressed the holiness of God nor of His law

B. Rejected

- 1. He was rejected
 - a. Means to leave or forsake
 - b. Men turned their backs on the Servant of the Lord

- c. The natural result of their disdain and hatred
- 2. Eventually, people get tired of outright expressed hatred and animosity
 - a. And then just determined to put Him in their rear-view mirror – then break the mirror
 - b. They just determined to not take Him seriously
 - c. To ignore Him
 - d. To pretend He has no authority over them
- 3. And if anyone should ever propose following this Servant of the Lord
 - a. Immediately the walls go up
 - b. The defenses are erected
 - c. And every psychological device is employed to avoid even the consideration of the incarnate Son of God

C. **Revulsed**

- 1. And then He was revulsed
 - a. Yes – revulsed in a word
 - b. People held Him in revulsion
- 2. **“... and as one from whom men hid their faces...”**
 - a. He is held in such derision that people cannot bear to look at Him
- 3. Certainly we might imagine that reaction during His crucifixion
 - a. How His sight was so hideous to be beyond the stomach of most people – except possibly hardened Roman soldiers
- 4. But this refers to the common reaction during Jesus earthly ministry
 - a. V 2: “... he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him...”
 - b. This indicates no inherent attractiveness
- 5. But revulsed takes it even further
 - a. The majority of humans who encountered Jesus – especially once His teaching began to convict men of their sin
 - b. They did not only reject Him; they couldn’t even bear to look at Him
 - c. They even hid themselves from Him!
 - d. Maybe if I don’t look at Him, I can pretend He doesn’t see me!
- 6. Some of us have a revulsion to something
 - a. Mine is asparagus
 - b. Yours might be peas or broccoli
 - c. But for most people – they are revulsed by Jesus
- 7. Their stomachs sour even by the mere thought of Jesus

D. **Devalued**

- 1. And then the Servant is devalued
 - a. **“... and we esteemed him not.” (Isaiah 53.3)**
- 2. Everything that we have described about the human reaction to this Servant of the Lord is encompassed by His being devalued
 - a. Undervalued
- 3. George W. Bush used to speak of his being “misunderestimated”
 - a. You can wrestle with whether that is a real word some other time

- b. But the essence is that, and on steroids
 - 4. The One who is the apple of the Father's eye
 - a. About whom the Father said, "You are My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased..."
 - b. About whom the author of Hebrews said, "He is the radiance of the glory of the invisible God, the exact representation of His nature"
 - c. Is dismissed as nothing more than a worm; barely human; hardly worth according value
 - 5. The One with the greatest value in the entire universe
 - a. Is dismissed by the vast majority of humans as less than dust
 - 6. The fundamental human response to this Servant of the Lord, this Messiah Jesus, is one of devaluing, of demeaning His worth
 - 7. If worship is the according of supreme worth of someone or something
 - a. This is the opposite – the rejection of any worth or value in someone
- E. The natural human response
 - 1. Despised
 - 2. Rejected
 - 3. Revulsed
 - 4. Devalued

IV. **Our Response**

- A. How do you feel about this Servant of the Lord?
 - 1. Don't pretend that you would have responded any differently if you were there back in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago
 - a. That somehow you would have recognized this Messiah Jesus as worthy of worship
 - 2. But no – we would have been just as resistant and/or oblivious to His greatness as these people were
- B. If you believe otherwise – that you really do delight in this Jesus
 - 1. That you don't despise Him
 - a. You love Him
 - 2. That you don't reject Him
 - a. You embrace Him
 - 3. That you are not revulsed by Him
 - a. You find yourself attracted to the beauty of His holiness
 - 4. That you don't devalue Him
 - a. You treasure Him beyond any other being in the universe
 - b. And He is the pinnacle of your value system
 - c. And you worship this Jesus
 - 5. If that's the case – it's because God has been working
 - a. He is the One who pierced the darkness of your own soul
 - b. He is the One who convinced you of sin, righteousness, and judgment
 - c. He is the One who made you alive from your spiritual deadness

- 6. And not only do you worship Him
 - a. You fall on your faces – figuratively or literally – and bow in adoration and praise of Him who is the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief
- C. And if you still despise Him, reject Him, hide your face from Him, and disesteem Him
 - 1. Then I pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened
 - a. And you will turn from your wicked, unbelieving ways
 - b. And cast yourself on the Savior
 - 2. The Savior – who is gentle and lowly of heart
 - a. Who is the Man of Sorrows
 - b. Who is acquainted with grief
 - 3. Who wants to meet you
 - a. In your suffering
 - b. In your sin
 - c. In your distress
 - d. In your disappointments
 - e. In your dysfunction
 - f. Even in your despair