

* These notes are provided for personal devotional and study purposes only. They may not be published, distributed, or disseminated to others without the permission of the author.

The Servant's Substitution

Isaiah 53.4-5

Series: The Suffering Servant (Communion Series)

The Village Church

February 6, 2022

- I. Behold the Man – Barabbas
 - A. Pontius Pilate didn't know what to do with Him
 1. The Chief Priests had subjected Jesus to a mock trial
 - a. Declared Him guilty of blasphemy; deserving of death
 - b. But the Jews could not put a man to death; only the Romans could do that
 - c. So they drug Him to Pilate; urged Pilate to condemn Him for pretending to be the King of the Jews – a threat to Roman authority and to Caesar himself
 - d. Pilate's interrogation revealed no such capital crime
 - e. He sought to appease the Jews, and avoid, if he could, executing an undeserving man
 2. But his plans had failed
 - a. So he brought Jesus out to the crowd
 - b. And he declared, **"Behold the man!"**
 - B. But the reason Pilate's plans had failed is that moments before he declared about Jesus, **"Behold the man!"**
 1. The crowd of Jews, enflamed by the chief priests, cried out, **"Not this man, but Barabbas"**
 - C. I usually have a novel going
 1. And I like historical novels
 2. I'm reading one now set in the context of the first Century
 - a. It's about Barabbas
 - D. We know very little about Barabbas
 1. The biblical account regards him as a notorious criminal
 - a. An insurrectionist who has committed murder
 - b. A Jewish enemy of the Roman occupation
 2. There is no extra-biblical record of such a criminal
 - a. So only the gospels record the episode
 3. So any Barabbas stories rely on some level of imagination
 - a. Including the fictional account I am currently reading
 - E. The opportunity that Pilate was hoping to take advantage of in getting Jesus off the hook was a local custom
 1. In which the Roman governor of Judea, in an act of goodwill for the Jewish populace, would at Passover release a Jewish prisoner
 2. So Pilate offered to give them Jesus

- a. Hoping that the Jews would be appeased
 - b. And that Jesus would be spared
 - 3. But the Jewish leaders didn't cooperate
 - a. They cried out, "Not this man, but Barabbas!"
 - 4. So Barabbas, the insurrectionist and murderer, was released; Jesus was condemned; crucified
- F. Whatever became of Barabbas?
 - 1. We don't know
 - a. No record of him following the crucifixion of Christ
 - 2. But let's use our imagination
 - 3. What if Barabbas had been in the crowd gathered around the crosses on Golgotha?
 - a. And watched as the two criminals and Jesus writhed in agony for hours
 - b. Before finally expiring
 - 4. And would it have occurred to Barabbas that the man on the cross in the middle
 - a. Could have been
 - b. Should have been
 - c. Himself
 - 5. That in fact Jesus had taken his place
 - 6. Would Barabbas have shrugged his shoulders, and passed the whole thing off as yet another day in the life of the Roman occupation?
 - a. And gone about his business?
 - 7. Would Barabbas have smirked, and stifled a sinister, mocking laugh?
 - a. And congratulated himself for managing to slip through the tentacles of the Roman justice system?
 - 8. Or would we find Barabbas falling on his face, weeping?
 - a. Struck by the dying image of the One who was his substitute?
- G. **Behold the Man! – Barabbas**
 - 1. Behold the Man! – Barabbas
 - a. Because we are all Barabbas
 - 2. Because the One on the cross in the middle should be me
 - a. And you
 - b. And you

II. **Man of Sorrows – but Why?**

- A. Communion series – The Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53)
 - 1. Last message we considered **"The Man of Sorrows"**
 - 2. **Isaiah 53:3** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
 - 3. We recounted the various aspects of our Savior's suffering
 - a. And how we dismissed His value

- b. “We esteemed him not”
- B. But why?
 - 1. Why did Jesus Christ go through His suffering?
 - a. Why was He the quintessential Man of Sorrows?
 - 2. What was His purpose in all of that?
 - 3. Others have gone through great suffering
 - a. What was significant about Jesus’ suffering?
- C. Text
 - 1. **Isaiah 53:4–5** (ESV) —
 - a. 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
 - b. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;
 - c. upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

III. **Messianic History**

- A. The first thing we notice in this text is how accurate is the portrayal of the historical account of the passion of Jesus Christ
 - 1. Indeed, the entirety of this chapter – which begins, as we have shown, in **Isaiah 52.13**
 - a. Demonstrates a description of Messiah Jesus
 - b. And only Messiah Jesus and none other
- B. This text is about the Messiah
 - 1. Even the majority of Jewish commentators affirm it is about Messiah
 - 2. He is the **“Servant of the Lord”** in Isaiah 52.13
 - a. High and lifted up; exalted
 - 3. Kings will shut their mouths on His account
- C. The **Character** of this Messiah is described and accords with the character of Jesus in the gospels
 - 1. **Isaiah 53:7** (ESV) —
 - a. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth;
 - b. like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.
 - 2. Jesus had **No sin of His own**
 - a. **Isaiah 53:9** (ESV) — 9 ... although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.
 - b. He did not defend Himself
 - c. Willingly subjected Himself to suffering
- D. The **Description** of Messiah’s engagement with humanity accords with the experience of Jesus in the gospels
 - 1. He was stricken – literally
 - 2. His afflictions were real, from the beatings and scourgings all the way to the crucifixion itself

3. He was pierced – again, literally; **John 19.34**
 4. He was despised
 - a. By the Jewish leaders
 - b. Even in the face of incontrovertible signs and wonders
 - c. Only human hatred could explain the responses of his enemies
 5. **Isaiah 53:9** (ESV) — 9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death...
 - a. Buried in a tomb of a rich man
 - b. After His crucifixion with criminals
- E. More could be said – and will be said – as we continue to explore this extraordinary chapter
1. But it is clear that this description is about the historical Messiah Jesus
 - a. 700 years before it happened
 2. Clearly about Messiah
 - a. But about the suffering Messiah
 3. Only one Being in all of human history to whom this description could apply
 - a. It is to Jesus
 - b. Jesus – the Christ
 - c. Jesus – the Messiah
 4. Messianic history
 - a. Told in advance

IV. **The Effects of Sin**

- A. The second thing we notice in this text is that the suffering of Jesus marks the effects of sin
- B. **Isaiah 53:4** (ESV) —
 1. 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...
 - a. Griefs and sorrows
 2. But they are inextricably bound with sin
- C. **Isaiah 53:5** (ESV) —
 1. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities...
 2. Griefs and sorrows are thus the necessary and relentless results of sin
 - a. Transgressions and iniquities are the ultimate cause of suffering
- D. We all suffer to one degree or another
 1. Because we live in a broken world
 - a. We live in the world of the curse
 - b. The curse of Adam
 - c. In which pain and toil are the direct result of humanity's rebellion against God
 2. It's not that every pain and every affliction is the direct result of a specific sin we have committed
 - a. But we all share in a humanity marked by transgression
 - b. And in a world reeling from the effects of sin

- V. **Whose Effects?**
- A. So this Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief
1. Whose afflictions display the effects of sin
 2. But the chief question this text seeks to answer is whose effects?
- B. This is where we need to recognize the key to understanding this verse
1. Indeed, the key to understanding the whole of Isaiah 53
 - a. For vv 4-5 is the fulcrum around which the whole of this chapter revolves
 2. See if you can recognize the key word in this passage?
- C. **Isaiah 53:4-5** (ESV) —
1. 4 Surely he has borne **our** griefs and carried **our** sorrows; yet **we** esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
 2. 5 But he was pierced for **our** transgressions; he was crushed for **our** iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought **us** peace, and with his wounds **we** are healed.
 3. The key word – repeated four times in these verses
 - a. Seven times if you count its synonyms
 4. “Our”
 - a. And the synonyms – “us” and “we”
 - b. He has borne our griefs, our sorrows, our transgressions, our iniquities
 - c. His sufferings brought “us” peace
 - d. And with his wounds “we” are healed
 5. The griefs and sorrows that Jesus bore are ours – not His
 - a. These effects of sin are our effects
 - b. We should be the ones who experience them
 6. The transgressions that caused His suffering are our transgressions
 - a. The iniquities for which He was crushed are our iniquities
- D. The One who hangs on the middle cross is our substitute
1. We should be there
 - a. We are all Barabbas
- E. Puritan prayer
1. Before thy cross I kneel and see
 - a. The heinousness of my sin,
 - b. My iniquity that caused thee to be ‘made a curse’,
 - c. The evil that excites the severity of divine wrath.
 2. Show me the enormity of my guilt by
 - a. The crown of thorns,
 - b. The pierced hands and feet,
 - c. The bruised body,
 - d. The dying cries.
 3. Thy blood is the blood of incarnate God,
 - a. Its worth infinite, its value beyond all thought.
 4. Infinite must be the evil and guilt

- a. That demands such a price.
- 5. Sin is my malady, my monster, my foe, my viper,
 - a. Born in my birth,
 - b. Alive in my life,
 - c. Strong in my character,
 - d. Dominating my faculties,
 - e. Following me as a shadow,
 - f. Intermingling with my every thought,
 - g. My chain that holds me captive in the empire of my soul.
- 6. Sinner that I am, why should the sun give me light,
 - a. The air supply breath,
 - b. The earth bear my tread,
 - c. Its fruits nourish me,
 - d. Its creatures subserve my ends?
- 7. Yet thy compassions yearn over me,
 - a. Thy heart hastens to my rescue,
 - b. Thy love endured my curse,
 - c. Thy mercy bore my deserved stripes.
- F. **Jesus Christ – our substitute**
 - 1. The One – the only possible One – who stands in our place
 - a. Who bore our griefs and sorrows
 - b. Who was pierced for our transgressions
 - c. Who was crushed for our iniquities

VI. **Special Aggravation**

- A. It's one thing to sin
 - 1. But we humans have a tendency to heap sin upon sin
 - a. To aggravate our sin
 - b. To magnify our sin
 - 2. And our text reveals one such special aggravation
- B. **Isaiah 53:4** (ESV) —
 - 1. 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;
 - 2. yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
- C. There is Jesus in His suffering; in His beatings; in His scourging; in His mocking; in His crucifixion
 - 1. And we looked at Him
 - a. And shook our heads
 - b. And said, “God has really stuck it to Him”
 - 2. We esteemed stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted
 - 3. What must He have done to be so marked by God for such chastisement?
- D. The truth is that He had done nothing to deserve any such affliction
 - 1. We were the ones who deserved all of His griefs and sorrows
 - 2. And yet we dismissed, disregarded, and disdained His suffering
 - a. All the while He was suffering for us
 - 3. The very ones for whom He suffered

- a. Cast aside His afflictions as irrelevant and un concerning
- E. It is a special aggravation of sin
 - 1. For anyone to disdain the sacrifice of the One who took their place in affliction
- F. It is one thing to sin
 - 1. It is another to say to God “I don’t care that Jesus suffered and died”
 - 2. When His suffering and death was in my place
 - 3. When His affliction was caused by my sin

VII. **Special Blessing**

- A. And yet the mercy and grace of our Lord, in spite of our disregard of His suffering, has purchased for us special blessings
 - 1. In spite of our sin
 - 2. In spite of our aggravation of sin
- B. **Peace**
 - 1. **Isaiah 53:5** (ESV) —
 - a. 5... upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace...
 - 2. Peace with God
 - a. **Romans 5:1** (ESV) — 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. We who were enemies of God – cosmic rebels
 - c. Have been made friends
 - d. God is not against us; God is for us
 - e. **Romans 8:31** (ESV) — 31 ... If God is for us, who can be against us?
 - 3. Peace of God
 - a. The experience of peace; of restored relationship; of the loving embrace of God Himself
 - b. **Philippians 4:4–7** (ESV) — 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
 - 4. No longer enemies but friends
 - a. Experiencing true friendship
 - b. True loyalty
 - c. True affection
 - 5. All because of our substitute
 - a. All because He was pierced for our transgressions
 - b. All because He was crushed for our iniquities
- C. **Healing**
 - 1. **Isaiah 53:5** (ESV) — 5 ... upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

2. Our healing, which we experience in firstfruits, in tastes, and in glimpses
 - a. Which will be complete in eternity, in the resurrection
3. All has taken place because of our substitute
 - a. All because He was pierced for our transgressions
 - b. All because He was crushed for our iniquities
4. With His wounds we are healed

VIII. **Behold the Man – Jesus**

- A. So, dear Barabbas (I'm referring to all of you)
 1. Behold the Man!
 2. Behold Jesus
 3. Your substitute
- B. Puritan prayer concludes
 1. Let me walk humbly in the lowest depths of humiliation,
 - a. Bathed in thy blood,
 - b. Tender of conscience,
 - c. Triumphant gloriously as an heir of salvation.