

The Gospel Anticipated

Sermon Text: Luke 18:31-33

Study Texts: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Sermon Recap: In this week's sermon, we look at Christ's third prediction (cf. 9:22; 44) of His coming suffering, death and resurrection. Throughout the gospel narratives, we see Jesus resolutely moving towards Jerusalem; He is moving towards the cross. And while the Bible makes it clear that sinful men unjustly seized Jesus and put Him to death, we see the ultimate reason for His sacrificial death as His own willingness to accomplish the will of God. Jesus willingly gave Himself to the work of redemption to accomplish the will of God.

Sermon Connection: This theme—the atoning death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for sins—is the central theme of the Scriptures. It makes sense, then, that we would find this theme all throughout the Bible, even before Jesus was physically born on the earth. During the prophet Isaiah's time on the earth, the Holy Spirit used him to boldly proclaim the holiness of God and the coming of the Lord's Messiah. In Isaiah 52:13-53:12, we find a detailed glimpse of the atoning death of the Lord's Servant, Jesus. We see that He would suffer unjustly at the hands of sinful men, but that He also willingly gave Himself to the work of redemption, and that in the end, praise be to God, He prospered and flourished the Lord's plan of redemption.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Goal: To understand that Jesus Christ clearly and willingly gave Himself to the work of redemption

Lesson Points:

Point 1 - The Servant Achieves Redemption. (52:13-15)

Point 2 - The Servant Lived in Rejection. (53:1-3)

Point 3 - The Servant Bore the Sins of the People. (53:4-6)

Point 4 - The Servant Dies in Innocence. (53:7-9)

Point 5 - The Servant was Crushed but now Stands Victorious. (53:10-12)

The Context: Writing some 700 years before the physical birth of Jesus on the earth, Isaiah, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote these words of prophecy concerning the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross. By utilizing a Redemptive-Historical Hermeneutic,¹ we understand that the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 is the Jesus, the Messiah!

Opening Question: When did you first sense your need for Jesus?
What made you most interested in Jesus?

Point 1 - The Servant Achieves Redemption. (52:13-15)

The phrase “act wisely” can also be translated “flourish/prosper.” How does this idea of Jesus flourishing/prospering through being lifted up and marred help us to understand the work of redemption?

By understanding that “acting wisely” in the context of the verse also means to flourish, we begin to see that Jesus’ wisdom lies in the carrying out of God’s will. God’s plan to save sinners and form a people for Himself is the great work that Jesus willingly gave His life for. It also helps us to understand that God’s work of redemption through Jesus is the main theme of Scripture.

What does verse 15 teach us about the effect of Jesus’ victory on the people of the earth?

This verse is referencing how the world will respond to the redemptive work of Jesus (the gospel). The word “sprinkle” is a reference to Jesus’ position as our Priest, cleansing us from all sin. We see, furthermore, that Jesus’ redemptive work brings a central focus to the world, and that one day, even the greatest among the peoples of the earth, the kings, will shut their mouths and be astonished by Christ.

Point 2 - The Servant Lived in Rejection. (53:1-3)

What does 53:2 teach us about the physical appearance and nature of Jesus? Why did so many miss His true nature because of this?

Jesus was a man of humble beginnings and a lowly lifestyle. He was a tradesman by craft and an itinerant preacher for the last years of His earthly life. He was not an earthly king, He did not live in a palace, and He did not possess a stunning physical appearance. As Isaiah states, He was lowly and normal. This is why the Jews missed Him; they were looking for a warrior-King who would overthrow Rome.

He came instead preaching faithfulness to God, quiet spirituality, and a gospel of suffering. This is why so many miss Him today as well.

¹ Reading the Bible through a Jesus-centered lens.

What does 53:3 lead us to see about the path to redemption that Jesus walked for us? See also 2 Cor. 5:17-21.

The work of redemption, to which Jesus willingly gave Himself, was a tremendously difficult work. Verse 2 tells us that He was rejected, that He bore sorrow, that He was acquainted with grief, and that men looked away from Him in disgust and shame. Why? Because He was accomplishing the great work of redemption.

Paul reflects on this in 2 Cor. 5:21, from which we get the doctrine of imputation. Christ became a hideous creature on the cross because He took on, as His Own, the weight of the sin of the world. Why did men despise Him? Why did they turn away from Him? Because He became, on the cross, the very worst of them in order to make us sons of God.

Point 3 - The Servant Bore the Sins of the People. (53:4-6)

How do verses 4-5 help us understand the nature of Jesus' suffering for our redemption? See also Hebrews 4:15.

The work of redemption involved the suffering of Jesus for the sin of His people. Not only was He hated by His people, nailed to cross and murdered, Isaiah records that He was also smitten by God and afflicted (a point Isaiah expands further in vs. 10). Jesus' suffering was incomprehensible in its fullness for you and I, and yet, through His sufferings, we know that He is able to identify with us as we suffer.

What does verse 6 teach us about why Jesus' sacrifice was necessary to achieve redemption? See also Romans 3:11-12.

Without the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, there would be no hope for salvation from sin. Verse 6 is clear in its condemnation of humanity, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—everyone—to his own way;...*" We are lost without Jesus; further, we do not even recognize that we are lost without Him until He moves on us through the Spirit.

This verse was most likely in Paul's mind when he wrote Romans 3:10-12, "*...None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless...*" Without the hope of Jesus' redemptive work on the cross, there is no salvation.

Point 4 - The Servant Dies in Innocence. (53:7-9)

What do these verses teach us about how Jesus physically suffered and died? See also Luke 23; John 19.

Isaiah does not leave room for imagination here; the cross was physically brutal, designed to inflict a slow, agonizing death. In His sacrificial death, Isaiah notes that Jesus was oppressed and afflicted; and we know from the New Testament accounts what that oppression and affliction looked like...and yet, Jesus willingly submitted Himself to it for the glory of God's

plan of redemption. He did not fight; He did not curse His captors and executioners; He was quiet and submissive.

What do these verses teach us about how Jesus spiritually suffered and died?

In addition to the physical suffering of the cross, and in a far greater way, Jesus suffered spiritually on the cross. Isaiah notes that He was oppressed for the judgment of His people. God the Father, having imputed the sins of the world to Jesus, put Him to death on the cross. Although Jesus was innocent of sin, He willingly took on the sins of the world in order to accomplish the great work of God's redemption.

Point 5 - The Servant was Crushed but now Stands Victorious. (53:10-12)

What does verse 10 teach us about the ultimate reason Jesus died for sin?

Although Jesus physically died at the hands of sinful men, Isaiah is clear that it was ultimately God Who put Jesus on the cross. It was God Who imputed the sin of mankind to the person of Jesus, thereby making salvation and new life possible. It was God who afflicted Jesus and put Him to grief. So we see that Jesus ultimately died on the cross for sins because it was the plan of God. Jesus not only offered the physical sacrifice of His body, He also offered an inner offering for guilt in order that sinners might be cleansed (Heb. 10:4). Jesus willingly and willfully carried out the plan of redemption for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

Note for teachers on how this is connected with 52:13 and the prospering of Christ: It is important to note Isaiah's use of language here. In 52:13, we noted the phrase "act wisely" also translates "prosper." Notice in 53:10 the connection of the prospering of the Lord's servant with the sacrificial death of Jesus. Isaiah is once again reflecting on the accomplishment of God's redemptive will through the prosperous work of the Servant. Through the cross, Jesus accomplished the will of God and now brings about the prospering/flourishing of God's people in the gospel through the Holy Spirit.

What does verse 11 reveal about the ultimate nature of Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection?

We see that Jesus' sacrificial death for sin was destined to succeed in accomplishing the redemptive will of God. Although Jesus willingly put Himself to the greatest suffering in human history, verse 11 records that He saw the outcome of His sufferings, and this gave Him satisfaction. Jesus was satisfied in the accomplishment of the will of God; His victory is divided among the people of God, who are the redeemed of God.²

² This is one place in Scripture from which Parkwood draws its 2nd core belief: The church is the family of the redeemed. We all share in Christ's redemption.

The Big Picture

The atoning death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is the central theme of Scripture. Without understanding Jesus, we can never truly understand the Bible. The fact that Jesus willingly gave Himself to the work of redemption is beyond our full comprehension but a truth that deserves the commitment of our entire lives. We have seen in Isaiah that the death and resurrection of Jesus was the plan long before Jesus actually came to the earth. It was in the mind of God from all eternity, accomplished perfectly by the work of Christ, and will be celebrated for all eternity. Blessed be the Name of the Lord!

Purposeful Prayer: Pray for the unreached and unrepentant. As we approach Easter, we recognize this as a time of celebration and remembrance of Christ and what He has done for the Church. But, we also want to remember the reason for which He made this great sacrifice: the salvation of sinners. Therefore, we want to spend time as a group praying for the lost, those in our own lives and those around the world who have not yet heard or responded to Jesus.

Application Questions

- How am I recognizing that Jesus willingly gave Himself to the work of redemption in my daily life?
- How is my worship influenced by this reality?
- How does Jesus' sacrifice affect my reading of the Bible?