

**Series: Our Suffering Savior #895**

**Title: Isaiah 53**

**Part 5**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world! Today is Good Friday. I am glad you are here with all of us as we remember the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. As we come now to the weekend – Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday (you may call it Easter), let's finish our exposition of Isaiah 53, verses 1-3. Thus far we have studied the context (verse 1) and then in verse 2 these first two insights: Jesus is rejected because He was not born into prominence and because He was not going to be popular.

Yesterday, at verse 3, I added insight number three. I said, because Jesus was not born into prominence and because Jesus was not going to be popular therefore, Jesus is rejected because He had to be the wrong person. He is not the Messiah. In context, this was the perspective, this was the opinion of the Jewish people at the time of Christ's life on earth. They were looking for the Messiah and based on Jesus' lack of prominence and popularity, He could not be their true Messiah. Listen again to Isaiah 53, verse 3, **“He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”**

These are the words of the lament of believing Jews in the future Millennial Kingdom who look back and see that their forefathers and foremothers thought Jesus was the wrong person. He was the wrong man for the job, as it were. Jesus could not possibly be the long awaited Messiah – *but*, He was! He is! In fact, all along Jesus Christ is the One and Only Messiah. If you are a Jewish person tuning in and you are still looking for your Messiah, look no further than Jesus. Your Messiah has come and He is coming again. Believe in Him today.

And we looked at this opening part of the verse: **“He was despised and forsaken of men...”** So let's pick it up now with this: **“[Jesus] was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...”** This is the next phrase in Isaiah 53, verse 3.

Let's highlight four words. The word “man” here is Jesus. The word “sorrows” means pain. The word “acquainted” means familiar. And the last word is “grief.” What is meant by grief? In context this word means disease or sickness. So Jesus was a man with pain and familiar with sickness and disease. But, let's be careful, by this we do not mean that Jesus suffered from some sort of physical illness. Jesus was never even sick. He did not contract diseases. He was not sickly. Not at all. What the text means by this word grief is that Jesus bore the disease, the sickness of *sin*. The world's greatest disease is sin. It is not a coronavirus, friends, it is sin. And every person is sin sick! Everyone has this disease and cannot be vaccinated against it. But, *only* through Christ, we can be healed of it.

How so? On the cross Jesus bore the sins of all people who will ever believe in Him. And being our sin bearer means that He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. God set on Him the wrath, the punishment intended for you and I, and in those agonizing hours Jesus made atonement for the forgiveness of *our* sins.

To be very clear Jesus never became a sinner. Never. But He did bear punishment for sin. God treated Jesus *as if* He was a sinner. Perhaps the Scripture that best captures this is 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21. In the New Testament I am reading 2 Corinthians 5.21, **“<sup>21</sup> [God] made [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in [Christ].”** This verse describes what we call the imputation of Christ's righteousness for those who believe in Jesus. That is, we give Jesus our sin and He gives us His righteousness! Now *that* is the best deal you will *ever* get. Why does Righteous God consider genuine Christians righteous? It is not because of something we have done or do or will do, it is only because we have the righteousness of Christ! My righteousness is the righteousness of Christ.

And the righteousness of Christ is applied to us that dark day on the cross, as Jesus suffered the consuming, blazing, and fiery rage of God's wrath upon sin. This was not the sin of Jesus. He was totally innocent. This wrath was for your sin and mine, if we believe in Christ. This was such a dramatic experience that Jesus cried out from the cross, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** (Matthew 27.46 and Psalm 22.21.)

In the words of the hymn, Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain, Christ washed me white as snow. If you do not believe in Christ today, now is the time to do so. Don't you want His forgiveness

for your sin? Don't you want to be healed of your disease? What must you do to be saved by Him? Only one, simple act: believe in Him, and you will be saved. Nothing more. He has done it all.

Let's go back now to Isaiah 53, verse 3 and read this: **"...and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."** "One from whom men hide their face..." The language scholars tell us that in Hebrew this reads literally "as the hiding of face was from Him" and "as one before whom is the covering of face" and "before whom one covers the face in disgust." We can think of it this way. The Jews were blind to Jesus. At the time of His first coming (and I say first because He is coming again), but at the time of His first coming that we read about in the New Testament Gospels, they couldn't even bring themselves to look at Jesus. They were blind to Him and His teaching. They rejected Jesus.

If you are from an Asian culture, especially Chinese, I can say that they would not give Jesus face. When it came to Christ they would not save face.

And then, finally, Isaiah 53, verse 3, they "did not esteem Him." This is best understood in a verse I shared earlier this week. John 1, verse 11, **"[Jesus] came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him."** There was no esteem for Him. There was no respect. There was no admiration from the majority of people towards Jesus Christ. And sadly there still is not.

Christians, we lament this also, don't we? The widespread rejection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ makes us sad, discouraged, and even feeling really blue. Sometimes it also makes us angry and defensive. Some days I look at how the people of this world treat God: Father, Son, and Spirit and I want to borrow from those Old Testament prayers of vengeance, like the ones we read in the Psalms. In particular I read about the Satan fueled way in which our young people are being taught pure evil. Our culture is completely godless. And I hope that God's swift judgment will wipe away such evil so that our kids and grandkids will be saved.

But then I come to the cross of Christ and I am reminded of what Jesus has taught me, in both word and deed. And another of the words He gives from the cross impacts me. In Luke chapter 23 and verse 34 Jesus looked down upon the people who had crucified Him, nailed Him to that rugged piece of splintered wood and He prays, **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."** (Luke 23.34.)

*That is very convicting!* Jesus says the sinner is not even aware of the full impact of their evil. They are totally blind to truth. And our Lord models for us the right response. God will judge sin and sinner. Make no mistake about: God is Judge! The Bible and Jesus Himself repeatedly affirm this. But, at this time, our responsibility, our command is not to condemn anybody. Brothers and sisters, our command is to forgive those who sin against us. As hard as it can sometimes be, Christ calls us to love those who do evil, and to boldly and clearly share with them the Good News that Christ has also died for their sins. And to invite them to Him. *If – if –* they will believe in Jesus, their sins will be completely forgiven. If not, they will face God's wrath alone.

In John 3, verse 16 Jesus says, **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."** On this Good Friday, do you believe in Jesus? Yes? Praise God. No? Please, hear the words of Jesus, and respond positively to Him. And join me on Monday for God Is!

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