

To the Victor The Spoil

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 May 2023

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [0 : 00] We can sing to God's praise from Psalm 110, from the beginning. Psalm 110, from the beginning.
- The Lord did say unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thy foes a stone, whereon thy feet may stand. The Lord shall out of Zion send the rod of thy great power, In midst of all thine enemies be thou the governor.
- We'll sing to verse 5. The Lord did say unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand. The Lord did say unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand.
- Until I make thy foes a stone, whereon thy feet may stand.
- The Lord shall out of Zion send the rod of thy great power, In midst of all thine enemies be thou the governor.
- [1 : 43] How willing people in thy day of power shall come to thee, In holy beauties from our doom, Thy youth like you shall be.
- The Lord himself has made thy love, And will repent in heaven.
- alltest of thy holy sacrifices be thou the scores of whom thou beheld, So while thou let him live, Holy as the mighty Lord, the sins that thy right hand shall in his day of rust like fruit.
- King the devil is dead. I'd like us to turn for a while to Isaiah chapter 53.
- Isaiah chapter 53, and we can read at verse 11. Amen.
- [4 : 13] He was filled with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, that he shall divide the spoil with the strong.
- When we experience suffering in the world, or when we witness it, we sometimes, if not always, question why that suffering should be.
- And I think that's common to all of us. Even those who are not believers question God, even though they don't believe God, or in God.
- They will question why they have suffered. And even when they don't, it is common enough for people to find reasons beyond the experience itself as to why this should be.
- Or make some kind of exploration, if you like, or examination of the circumstances, to find if there is a cause, if there is blame attributed to something or someone.
- [5 : 53] It's common enough, if you like, or someone. It's common enough. And if you find people not willing to accept why events are the way they are, or the experiences such as it is.
- Why do I mention that? Well, the reason is that when we read this passage, we read the whole of the chapter as it is before us, I think the question why has to be asked.
- If you're a Christian, and most of you profess to be Christians, you will be familiar with Isaiah 53, and you will be familiar with the answer to the question.
- I can't personally read this chapter without applying it to the question of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without thinking of him as the one that the question is, that is the question that is spoken of here.

And yet there are plenty who think differently, or maybe don't think at all about these words or its significance.

[7 : 14] When we read the passage, as a passage as we've already done many occasions, and recently at the last prayer meeting, we saw how the Lord brings to our attention the prophetic declaration concerning his son Jesus Christ.

And how that declaration of God came to be fulfilled, at least in part, in the experience of the Saviour.

And the words of our text here are similarly prophetic, and similarly to be understood as having been fulfilled, in part, in the experience of our Lord.

I want us just to think briefly about these words. The more I looked at them, the more I thought that there was much more in these words than time would allow us to consider.

But just a few thoughts arising out of the passage itself. We know that the context demands that the suffering servant, the one we believe to be Jesus Christ, was suffering for the sins of his people.

[8 : 51] And as you can see, the last verse of the chapter begins with therefore. And that therefore is a link word that ties in with what has been said before.

And on the basis of what has been said before, this is now going to happen. Therefore, because Jesus has suffered, because Jesus has, in verse 4, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Because he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and so on. Because this was true of him, therefore, God is saying, will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the wicked.

God will reward the son for completing the work that he himself entrusted to him. God will reward the Lord.

You will be familiar with this saying, to the victor, the spoils. And it seems here that this is a fulfillment of that word in a very particular way.

[10 : 11] In John L. Mackay's commentary on the book of the prophet Isaiah, He's not happy with the actual translation that most English versions have.

Because his concern, his fear, is that when we read these words, I will divide him a portion with the great.

That there is a hint on, even more than a hint. That the spoils are shared equally between the Lord and all others who have a right to these spoils.

And I think the explanation that comes with that is, if you remember when there would be a battle, and the battle would be fought and won, the victors would clean the battlefield.

And each, well on occasion, each person who participated on the battlefield would have a right to a share of the spoil.

[11 : 30] In some places, in some occasions, the more senior figures, the king would probably have the lion's share, but all the other soldiers would have the same right to a share of the spoils.

And I think John L. Mackay's complaint is that that picture will come into our mind. that everybody is Christ's co-equal as far as participating or sharing in the spoils.

But that's not the image that's meant to be conveyed. There is no place given to the preeminence of Christ in the translations that we have in English.

But we can rightly assert that the Lord Jesus himself anticipated the Lord's blessing upon his victory.

There are occasions when he speaks of what awaits him once he has completed the work that God has given to him.

[12 : 46] You have these words in John's Gospel where he speaks almost as if he has already been to the cross and accomplished the sufferings that the cross entails.

I have glorified thee on earth. I have finished the work, he says, that the Father that thou gavest me to do.

Now, Father, glorify me with thine own self. And he goes on. Further than that. So, in these words, it appears that in one sense that Christ has already accomplished or finished the work.

But even though that seems strange to us, there's no question in our mind concerning what he anticipates, that God is going to bless him because of his obedience, even whose obedience to the death of the cross.

And bearing in mind these words were spoken before the cross and how much they seem at odds with the circumstances at the time, we know that God intended that there is a reward awaiting the Son because of the victory.

[14 : 22] And the cause of it is the cause of God's blessing, the cause of God's acknowledgement that this has been done, is brought to our attention through these words.

He has poured out his soul and to death. Because he has done that. Because at the very heart of everything that is said in this passage, there is the sense of Christ's closing in with the sin of his people and the penalty due to these sins.

And doing so willingly. This is a prime example of where we are brought face to face with the substitutionary atonement that Christ is responsible for.

And this is something that again is highlighted in this passage. As we said in verse 4, Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities, the justice meant of our peace was upon him, and with his thrifes we are healed. You can see, even in these words, how a reckoning is made on the part of those who are seeing his suffering.

[15 : 58] We thought, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. They saw his grief, they saw his sorrow, they saw his pain, they saw his death.

And the only conclusion that you could come to concerning that is that he was, he disturbed it. If you go back to Job, and the interpreters of Job, they came to speak into his situation, and they were convinced that he was suffering righteously.

That he was suffering because he deserved to suffer. And they couldn't be further from the truth.

And Jesus is in the same boat, in effect. Looking at his suffering, there must be a reason for it. And the reason for it is that he has wronged God, and that God is judging him because of that.

But the word that God says before us tells us, yes, he is suffering, and he is suffering justly. He is suffering because of the righteousness of our holy God.

[17 : 16] He is suffering because the judge is judging him as the sin-bearer. But it is not his own sin that he is suffering for. Therefore, because he has poured out his soul unto death, because he was numbered with the transgressors, because he bare the sin of many, because of that, I am bestowing upon him the spoils of the victor.

And we need to remind ourselves that that is something that is brought to our attention, not just in this passage, but Paul writing to the Colossians, he reminds us of that very fact, that when God was dealing with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the sin-bearer, this was part and parcel of the experience that he himself had ordained.

He speaks in Colossians chapter 2, you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, as he quickened, together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Paul is identifying there what the prophet is bearing testimony to, that in the death of Christ, the consequences of that death, well, the reason for it and the consequences for it, are brought fully to our attention.

One of the commentators on the prophecy of Isaiah refers to, like it's Homer Haley, he looks at one of the parables, or one of the teachings that the Lord has, concerning the way that he is despised by the scribes and the Pharisees, the accusation of casting out devils by the power of the devil.

[20 : 11] And at that point, as he speaks to them about the inaccuracy of their conclusions, he reminds them that the devil, he cannot be divided, his kingdom cannot be divided against itself.

And Jesus goes on to say, in chapter 11, If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?

Because you say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges.

But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God has come upon you. And this is the point that Homer Haley makes. When a strong man arend, keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

[21 : 25] And that's what he sees happening in the Lord here, being described as dividing a portion with the great and dividing the spoil with the strong.

Christ is taking the power out of the enemy's hand and he is declaring his own his own power.

He's declaring his own final victory as something that is that is soon to be revealed. What Jesus does as a sacrifice for sin is the means by which in the passage here the strong man is tied.

And the emphasis in the passage is on the voluntary nature of his sufferings as you know the voluntary nature of his death. He poured out his soul we are told unto death.

And therefore because this is what he did because what he did was according to God's appointment because I lay down my life and no one takes it from me I lay down remember again when he's speaking in the gospel of John he is laying down his life for the sheep he tells us there it is entirely his doing according to God's command.

[23 : 08] And the concluding words of this chapter bring much to our attention brings much to our attention but it is important for us to recognize that especially Jesus means us to understand that what what what he has fulfilled what he has accomplished is itself more than just the removal of sin although that is part of it the removal of sin is part of what he does for his people but he also establishes that people from which their sins are blotted out as righteous in the sight of a holy God he imputes to them by faith the righteousness that they would not have without his action or his activity concluding with the words that describe his continuation as high priest because he says he was numbered with the transgressors and he bare the sins of many and made intercession for the transgressors you can't you can't separate the vision of the high priest the activity of Christ from these words not just in the offering of the sacrifice or the victim itself being himself and the activity that accompanies it as the great high priest of his people he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors and again going back to the passage that we read when the

Lord Jesus was being crucified we see that even in the throes of his death in the midst of his pain and suffering he still found time and grace that's the right word to use to plead for his enemies the enmity that was against them is very clearly described to us and yet from the cross comes the prayer father forgive them for they know not what they do the words of Jesus intercession should come to mind in these words that we have here he made intercession for the transgressors now I was thinking about these words you can you cannot separate any one of those for whom he died from the impact of his intercession where would we be without his intercession where would we be without his constant pleading in the presence of

God as the mediator between God and man because his people are always bound up within that intercession it may be that we're meant to think of it like that but it also reminds us that well as we said before when we are talking about these words of this passage we can't identify the wickedness of others whether it is the wickedness of Judas when he betrayed or the wickedness of Pilate when he ordered his crucifixion or the soldiers when they pierced his side and hands with the nails and the sword or the spear yes they were wicked yes they were transgressors but we cannot separate ourselves from transgression because we are transgressors we are sinners we are those for whom

Jesus pleads and prays the Puritan Thomas Manton I think if I understand what he was speaking about he describes the picture that we have of him in that chapter that we read where you saw an array of people who were his enemies and they were pouring scorn upon him they were rejecting him they were despising him they were doing all the things that his enemies were identified as doing but it is also something that is attributed to him that he prayed for them even those that did not pray for themselves you can't remember which one of the commentators is something you can think about for yourself there is a lot of difficulty in the eyes of many or the mind of many over the efficacy or the pointed nature of the prayers of Christ for the cross for whom was he praying who was he praying for who was he saying to God father forgive them was it an all exclusive and inclusive prayer or was there somebody excluded from it clearly you would not expect the Lord to be refused a petition especially when he was at that very moment fulfilling all righteousness some that I was reading were saying well we see the answer to prayer there even in the days when the spirit is poured out at

Pentecost when we read of the hundreds who came to faith shortly after Christ ascended and they say there is the answer to prayer we can only limit the answer to prayer that only those who are of the elect will be saved and we don't know who they are but we know that Christ was active actively engaged as the mediator of God's elect praying for their salvation of that number some may well have been embroiled in the most heinous and hideous activities until the Lord opened their eyes the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 8 reminds ourselves of this mediatorial activity and how it impacts upon your life and my life who shall lay anything to the charge of

[30 : 59] God's elect it is God that justifies who is he that condemn us it is Christ that died here rather that is risen again who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us it's a simple statement we don't doubt it and we depend upon it and we're ever thankful that that intercession is ongoing even at the right hand of the majesty on high well there's much in this passage and we've just looked at it very briefly we pray that God would give you some insights to allow you to look again for yourself let us pray Lord help us to understand the mystery of your provision of a saviour who entered into this world to embrace the commands of God even as they are revealed to his mind's eye in the great eternity where he became the covenant head of his people and interaction that came to fruition and fullness in time and the outworking of it is in part mysterious as it is brought home to us we pray good blessing upon these words and the guidance in all truth through the spirit forgive us in his name amen going to conclude singing some verses in the last two verses of sam 40 sam 40 verse 16 burayaitel and above his

Liu I come in Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[35 : 37] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.