

# GOOD FRIDAY - Atonement - A Sneak Peek

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Preacher: Andrew Price

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you that you continue to teach us and remind us about what is true, about what has happened in history, and how all this impacts us today. So, Father, we pray that you give us minds, not a stand for the word.

Well, I should also add my words of welcome to you. My name is also Andrew, and I'm one of the ministers here as well. But I thought I'd start this morning by talking about songs. Now, in any good movie, there is always just the right song that really makes it a great movie. The right song can really bring a scene, for example, to life. And not just the music, but the words as well. Song not only sets the mood, but it also gives a fuller picture and a richer understanding of what's happening in the scene.

So, let me see if I can show you. So, on the next slide is a scene. Anyone know where this scene is from? Which movie? Wizard of Oz. Yep, great.

[ 1 : 02 ] Now, they could have just had Dorothy looking, you know, forlorn in the sky, wondering what was going on, and wondering what was out there, and perhaps with a big, or something like that.

But instead, they added a song which captured her sentiments. Can you remember what song was played at this? Oh, I've got a few. Anyway, let's play it and see if you're right.

So, click on the picture. Ha! It worked this morning. Yeah.

Were you right? I don't know. You were right. Yeah, you were right. Okay. Now, obviously, it's a musical, so songs are kind of important in those. But fast forward in time, and on the next slide, we have Rocky, Training.

Now, if you click on the picture, okay, now this is meant to have no sound at this point. But if there's no sound, no music, then it's pretty boring. It's just this some random guy punching the air.

[ 2 : 04 ] But then you add this to it. Exchange is everything. Not just the music, but the words. You hear the words, rising up, back on the street, and later on, rising up to challenge my rival, and so on.

You see, the song, both its music and its words, creates a fuller picture, a richer scene of what's happening. This is not just some random man training, punching the air. This is a man on the comeback trail.

Or fast forward further in time, the music and words of this next clip immediately take us to another country. So if you click on the middle of this one. We're already in Africa.

Yeah, that'll do. Okay. But you see what the song does?

It brings the scene to life. It's not just the music which creates a mood, but it's also the lyric, the words, the circle of life. That's what's happening when this cub is born and the new generation are taking over.

[ 3 : 34 ] You see, certain songs can give you a fuller picture or a richer understanding of the scene. That you're watching. And that's exactly what the Old Testament does for us when we see what's happening in the new.

It creates a richer context, a fuller picture by giving background information and even creating a mood. And if that very first Good Friday was to have a song, then it would be the first reading on your sheets from the Old Testament book of Isaiah, which is itself actually a poem, a song.

In fact, it's known as one of the servant songs because it is about God's servant. There are four of these songs in the book of Isaiah. And so what I want us to do today is to listen to this song from Isaiah and the voices in it so that we might have a richer understanding of what happened in our second reading from Mark.

What happened on that very first Good Friday as Jesus was crucified on the cross. And so it'd be handy if you had a handout there. And if you have a look at the text side, there's an outline on the other side.

But on the text side, I've broken it up into five paragraphs. And because this song is made up of five verses or stanzas. But what I'm going to do, I'm going to group them by voices.

[ 4 : 53 ] Who's singing? Who's speaking the poem, the song? And the first is actually God. So the first paragraph, God says, See, my servant will act wisely.

He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. See what God says about this servant? That he will act wisely. That is, he will live God's way.

He will be lifted up and exalted, which is a phrase only ever used by God or for God in Isaiah. In other words, the servant will be given God's glory. Why? Well, because he lives God's way, which will mean for him the sprinkling of many nations.

I have a look at verse sentence number 14 and 15. He says, You see, Clean them, in other words. In the Old Testament, to sprinkle something referred to the sprinkling of blood from an animal sacrifice. And the sprinkled blood would cleanse the people from sin, save them from God's judgment that they deserved.

[ 6 : 23 ] And the servant will do this by his suffering. A suffering which will be so severe that it will mar his form, his body, even beyond human likeness.

And now, if you've ever seen what an ancient Roman whip does to human flesh, then you will understand something of what is meant here. And such marring is appalling.

If you've ever seen that movie, The Passion of the Christ, I saw, I couldn't sit through the whole thing, in fact, because it turned my stomach. It's appalling what happened. And yet, it is through this suffering that this servant will cleanse, sprinkle, save many.

Yet, this is so unexpected that once the kings realise this, they will shut their mouths. Because it's so surprising. The kings, the wise ones of the day, thought one thing, but when they see and understand what really happening, what this servant is really doing, they will close their mouths. They will speak no more. It's not what they expected. In fact, it is so unexpected that the message about this servant cleansing many nations by his appalling suffering, it's hard to believe it's so unexpected.

[ 7 : 34 ] And this is what the people say in the next paragraph, or the next stanza of the song. So, 53, who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed, they say?

The arm of the Lord here was a symbol for God's power to save, his right arm. And so the people are singing, who has recognised that this servant is God's power to save?

It's so unexpected, isn't it? That's why they haven't recognised it. Why is it unexpected? Well, verse 2, sentence 2, he grew up before the Lord like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.

That is, this man was, this servant was gentle, tender, and he came from an unexpected background. Just like you don't expect to see a root growing up out of dry ground.

I mean, you don't see to, you don't think anything will grow out of dry ground. So, just as unexpected as a root growing up out of dry ground. So, this servant's background is unexpected.

[ 8 : 36 ] Coming from some backwater place. I was going to say one turn or something just to be cheeky, but I've got friends there and it's a nice place, so I won't. But Nazareth, Nazareth was a backwater place.

In fact, in the Bible, someone asks this question, they say, can anything good come from Nazareth? That's what a root coming out of dry ground means. You wouldn't expect it. This is where this servant comes from.

What's more, he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him. Nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows.

And familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised. And we esteemed him not. In other words, everything about this servant makes you think he would be the last person on earth that God would use to cleanse nations.

Yet, this is precisely what the servant does. How? Well, the next paragraph or stanza tells us, the people are still speaking and they say in sentence number four, surely he, the servant, took up our sufferings and carried our sorrows.

[ 9 : 51 ] Yet we consider him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

And by his wounds, we are healed, it says. The people thought the servant's suffering was because he was stricken by God. That is, that he deserved to suffer.

That God was punishing him for his own sins. But their great realisation here is that he was punished for their own sins. He suffered what they deserved, the people say.

You see, in sentence number three, they call him a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Then in sentence four, their great realisation, that is, he bore our suffering, actually.

He bore our sorrows, the things we deserved. But as it goes on to say, he was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquity or sin. And the punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

[ 10 : 52 ] And by his wounds, we are healed or forgiven. You see, this servant saves by taking people's punishment upon himself, dying in their place. On the next slide is a girl from Melbourne, from Sydenham.

Her name is Kimberly Deer, and she was in a skydiving accident in America in 2006. Does anyone remember that story? Shortly after take-off, her instructor, she was going to go tandem skydiving, but her instructor, Robert Cook, a young man himself, realised that the plane was going to crash. And so, as the plane plummeted to the ground, he said these words to Kimberly. He said, as the plane is about to hit the ground, Kim, make sure you're on top of me so that I'll take the force of the impact.

And he did. He took the impact, and his death saved her life. That's what this servant does, you see. His death saves our lives.

The big difference, of course, is neither Robert nor Kimberly deserve to die in that crash. But we deserve this servant's death. We deserve the punishment he bears for us.

[ 12 : 03 ] Why? Well, sentence number six tells us. It says, we all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way. And yet the Lord has laid on him, the servant, the iniquity of us all.

Now, for some of us, it's hard to read that sentence without having Colin singing, ba-ba-du-ba-ba, in the back of our minds. But for others of us, it's hard to see how turning from God can be such a big deal.

But it is. For it not only leaves all kinds of selfishness when we ignore living his way. You know, selfishness from snapping at family members who don't do things how we want, or watching the TV when we want to watch the TV, using the bathroom, we want to use it and so on.

Selfishness like that to greed, to even war. But it also means we are spitting in the face of the one who made us, the king of the universe. Whether we actively reject him or just passively ignore him. Some time ago, we got very angry, my wife and I, with not at each other, should be clear. My wife and I got very angry at one of our children, because she turned away from us and ran away from us as we were leaving Melbourne Zoo.

[ 13 : 20 ] We called out to her, but she ignored us and kept running and then ran right out in front of a car. And was very nearly run over. Now, we were thankful she was alive at the time and still are.

But we were also very angry, because she ignored us. We had given birth, well, Michelle had done all the work, and given her everything else good in life, and yet she didn't want to listen.

And if you've ever had children or grandchildren refuse to listen to you, then it's really annoying, isn't it? It's offensive, actually. It makes you angry. But we were also angry, you see, because ignoring us meant that she nearly died.

You see, our anger was actually because we loved her. If we didn't love her, then get hit by a car, we don't care. But because we love her, we were angry at her.

For we knew ignoring us would hurt her. And so, boy, did she get in trouble. But it's the same with God, you see. God is angry when we turn from him because he loves us and he knows turning from him will only hurt us.

[ 14 : 33 ] But he's also angry because ignoring him is like spitting in his face. It is. It is highly offensive, more than we realize. Yet his love for us means that he sent his servant to take our punishment in our place.

So that we can have peace with God. So that we can be saved from punishment. So that we can be healed or forgiven. Free to go. It's like that drama we saw before.

I love the English accent, Warwick, wherever you are. Where the judge pays the penalty himself. So that the guilty can be forgiven. And given freedom to go.

That's what God does for his people through his servant. Now, I've spent quite a bit of time on this particular paragraph. But that's because this paragraph or stanza is in the middle of the song. You know, there's five and this is number three. It's in the middle. It's the central one. And that means that the song highlights it. In other words, at the heart of this song is the message about the servant who suffers for us.

[ 15 : 38 ] Who dies in our place. Who takes our punishment. Even though we deserve it. That's the big idea. And the last two stanzas reinforce the same point.

Though they add a bit of their own. So next we hear the voice of Isaiah himself. Who was the prophet writing this. And he wants to make sure that we understand that the servant was innocent. And so he did not suffer for his own sin.

But he suffered for ours. Have a look at number seven. Sentence seven. He, the servant, was oppressed and afflicted. Yet he did not open his mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep before her shearers is silent.

So he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants. Well he has none. Because he was cut off from the land of the living. Why?

Well for the transgression of my people. Isaiah says. He was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked. And with the rich in his death. Though he had done no violence.

[ 16 : 35 ] Nor was any deceit in his mouth. You see the servant is innocent. And so suffered. Not for his sins. But for ours.

For my people. Says Isaiah. Who were the Jews. And in case we're not clear why this servant did all this. Isaiah adds. In sentence number ten. Which actually belongs to the last stanza.

He says. Yet it was the Lord's will. To crush him. And to cause him to suffer. And though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering. He will see his offspring and prolong his days.

And the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. As I said before. God's love for us means. He's not only angry when we turn away from him. But that he sends his servant to be that guilt offering.

That sacrifice. That's what a guilt offering is. It's a sacrifice. And so here in sentence ten. We've returned. To the first paragraph. To the first stanza. Where that servant will sprinkle many nations.

[ 17 : 34 ] Not just the Jews. But many nations. Just as the blood of animals in a guilt offering. Was sprinkled to cleanse people from sin. So the blood of this servant.

Who is a guilt offering. Will sprinkle his own blood. To cleanse many. From sin. And to give us. Forgiveness. And peace. And not just peace.

But the spoils. Of the servant. Have a look at sentence eleven and twelve. Where God speaks again. After the suffering of his soul. He will see the light of life.

And be satisfied. By his knowledge. Or perhaps better. By knowledge of him. My righteous servant. Will cause many to become righteous. And he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore. I will give him a portion among the great. And he will divide the spoils with the strong. Because he poured out his life unto death. And was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many.

[ 18 : 33 ] And made intercession. For the transgressors. Or just as the song starts with God. So it finishes with God. And again we see this central theme.

Of the servant suffering. To save people. Don't we? To make people righteous. Or right. With God. By bearing their sins.

But we also see. As we did in the first stanza. That this servant will be exalted. He will be given prime place. Among the great. Why? Because. He gave his life.

Because he lived wisely. Because he did. The God's will. And bore the sin. Of many. But the servant will also divide the spoils.

God gives him with the strong. Do you notice? So who are these strong? Well I take it. They are those. Who are strong enough to admit. That actually. Yeah. You know what?

[ 19 : 28 ] I have gone astray. I have not always. Followed God. And the strong are those. Who are strong enough to acknowledge. That despite the servant's. Unexpected appearance. And let me

say.

That the message of Christianity. Is still unexpected. And still. Ignored today. But the strong are those. Who acknowledge. That the Lord. Servant. Is.

The powerful arm of the Lord. To save. That we are saved. By the suffering. Of this. Servant. Who was crushed. For our sins. And so who is this servant?

Well although he's not named. In the book of Isaiah. And although Isaiah was written. 800 years. Before. The Lord Jesus. It clearly. Refers. To the Lord Jesus. Does it not?

We've heard some similarities already. Before the prayers. That Barry gave. In fact. This chapter. On your sheets here. Chapter 53. From Isaiah. From the Old Testament.

[ 20 : 23 ] Which is the Jewish Bible. It's the only part of the Bible. They believe. The Old Testament. But when this passage. This chapter. Was printed on a piece of paper. Without any reference. To where it was from.

And it was distributed. To several thousand homes. In the eastern suburbs of Sydney. This was a few years ago now. Do you know who reacted. The most strongly. Against it. The Jews.

Living in the area. They said that they were offended. To have such Christian propaganda. Thrust. Into their own letterbox. Now this tells us two things.

First. And very sadly. That many Jews. At least in Sydney. Do not even know their own scriptures. But second. This prophecy of Isaiah.

Is clearly. About Jesus. Even people who don't believe. In Jesus. Recognize it. And we've seen it. As I said. Barry gave us some. Comparisons.

[ 21 : 21 ] So the servant. A tender shoot. Jesus. A humble birth. The servant. An unexpected root. Out of dry ground. Jesus. An unexpected leader. Out of Nazareth. The servant. Disfigured.

And marred. Jesus. Beaten. And flogged. To the point. Of being almost. Unrecognizable. The servant. Despised. And rejected. Jesus. Hurling. Insults. At him.

And they cried. Crucify him. The servant. Did not open his mouth. Pilate. Asked. Of Jesus. Aren't you going to answer? The servant. Had done no violence. Pilate.

Says of Jesus. What crime. Has he committed? The servant. Was numbered. With the transgressors. Jesus. Was crucified. Between two criminals. The servant. Was cut off. From the land.

Of the living. Jesus. Breathed. His last. And the servant. Will cause many. To be made righteous. And at the death. Of Christ.

[ 22 : 13 ] The curtain. Of the temple. Is torn. In two. Symbolizing. We have now. Got access. To God. We're right. With him. Through the servant. I could go on.

But the point is. The servant. Is clearly. The Lord Jesus. And so the question is. What does all this mean. For us? Well. I said at the start. Of the service. That this song. Like songs in movies.

Gives us. A fuller picture. A richer. Understanding. Of what happened. On that very first. Good Friday. You see. Our reading from Mark. Does not explicitly. State. That Jesus.

Died. For our sins. Did you realize? There are hints. Of it. But you have to go back. Before in Mark's gospel. To get it. And even then. You've got to go back. Further. Into the Old Testament. To fully understand it.

In fact. I know people. Two people. Off the top of my head. Who grew up. Knowing this Easter story. But still. For a long time. Never realized. What was happening. At that cross. That Jesus was paying.

[ 23 : 08 ] For our sin. And so. We have this song. Which. Makes the crucifixion. Of Christ. A richer.

A fuller picture. For now. That we. For now. We know. Without a doubt. That his death. Was to pay for our sin. That he was pierced. For our transgressions. That he was crushed.

For our. Iniquities. And that by his wounds. We can be healed. Forgiven. You see. This song. Of Isaiah. Makes this good Friday. In Mark.

Very good news. For us. And if Jesus is the servant. Then just as the servant. Will be raised. And exalted. So too. Will Jesus. We'll hear about that on Sunday. More than that.

As the servant. Will divide the spoils. Among the strong. So too. Will Jesus. Divide. Divide his inheritance. Among his people. And so the first question. For us. This morning is.

[ 24 : 04 ] Have you admitted. That you are a sinner. I know it's not popular. To talk like that. But have you admitted. That you need. Someone to save you. That you have. Wandered from God.

