

Afflicted

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[0 : 0 0] chapter 53 and specifically how that chapter of the Bible applies to Jesus as our ransom and as our Passover lamb. So I thought Chris did a really good job, thank you, rather, called in kind of late in the piece to preach and so it's a great blessing really to have so many people in the church who are ready and willing to preach for us. I'm going to continue tonight looking at these two verses that we just heard from Daryl. I just want to recap for you quickly where Chris took us last week or where he took you at least. He told us that the big picture of Isaiah is really can be summed up in three themes and those themes are themes of judgment, of hope and of restoration. That the people of God, people of Israel were being judged on account of their sin, that the people of Israel were great sinners and weren't really very good at repenting and asking for God's forgiveness. So God judged them on account of their sin and he exiled them from their land. It's kind of hard for us to grapple with just how intense that judgment was for those people who are so tied to that land that God had given them. So he exiled them by way of punishment. That was the judgment but there was hope in that. That Isaiah tells us that God is not going to abandon them to that judgment but he holds out for them this hope that he will bring them back to himself after a period of judgment in the exile. And so he holds out this hope throughout the book of Isaiah. We're reminded of this hope that he holds out for them. You can see in chapter 54 verse 7 and 8, God says, I deserted you for a brief moment but I will take you back with great compassion. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment but I will have compassion on you with everlasting love, says the Lord your Redeemer. Judgment, hope and also restoration that God the Redeemer was going to redeem his people not just from exile but from their sin.

Not just from the effects of their sin but from the sin itself. And Isaiah in this chapter as you know tells us that very clearly that that restoration, that redemption, that rescue was going to be achieved by a suffering servant. And it's him that we've been hearing about last week, this weekend and the week to come as well. This suffering servant who will by his death as a substitute atone for the people's sin. By his death will they be redeemed.

We saw last week Chris gave us some really good reasons why this suffering servant, why we should read this passage in Isaiah as a prophecy about Jesus. It was written 700 years before Jesus but it was a prophecy about him. You'll read if you bother to, if you've bothered to trawl through the scholarship on this passage, you'll read some scholars who try to tell us that this prophecy is not actually about Jesus. A lot of Jewish scholars will try and convince us that the suffering servant is either Isaiah himself or the people of Israel. Other liberal Christian scholars will say the same thing but it's very, very clear if you read it with an open mind that this is an intensely clear prophecy of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. You see throughout the chapter itself that this suffering servant will save Isaiah and save the people of God as well. So it's clear that the suffering servant isn't Isaiah, it's not the people of God, it is in fact the Messiah Jesus Christ and the similarities between this prophecy and the fulfillment in Jesus' ministry is just mind-blowing. We're going to look a little bit at that tonight and next week as well. Tonight though I really want to focus for us on what I think the passage focuses on in verse 7 and 9 and that is the injustice of the suffering that this servant experiences the injustice of it all. So we're going to do that. I'd like to pray for us first and then we'll might just open up this issue, this issue of injustice and then we'll go to the passage and see what God has to say about it, right? So let's pray together. Father in heaven, thank you so much for your word. Thank you so much for the good news of the gospel. Thank you for Jesus that though he knew no sin, he became sin for us. Thank you so much for Jesus, the suffering servant who willingly subjected himself to oppression and affliction and death for us. I pray that you'd be with us tonight. Open our ears, focus our minds, save us from the evil one who would distract us and distort your truth.

Please bless us as the people of God now, I pray in Jesus' good name. Amen. Alright, we're looking at verse 7 to 9 so have that open. If you want to look at the NRSV version, you've got the Holman translation on the screen. I'll be going from the Holman.

Just want to open up for you this issue of injustice. It's an issue that all of us are very familiar with. All of us at the very same time experience every day both the acknowledgement that there is injustice in the world and the constant attempts by the media and indeed probably by ourselves to barricade injustice out from our consciousness. That through television, movies, entertainment, internet, whatever, we barricade ourselves in from injustice and oppression that's going on and so rife within the world.

[6 : 23] That we prefer to think about happy thoughts. We prefer to think about plastic things than about the reality of the injustice that is happening around us every day.

We heard in the prayers tonight, it's one example. Today is the 10th anniversary of 9-11. Four planes hijacked, two going to the Twin Towers, eventually destroying them and the people inside of them.

342 firefighters, I think, who rushed to their aid. Another one crashes into the Pentagon. Another one, United 93, goes down in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after it was taken down by those on board, averting greater disaster.

At the end of that day, nearly 3,000 people are dead. 3,000 people who went to work and went about their business, not knowing what was going to happen to them. 3,000 people who were killed by tyrannical, oppressive, evil people.

It's unjust. I remember I'd just come back from New York, I think five or so days before then, and I had jet lag and I was having trouble sleeping.

[7 : 52] So I was watching the TV, seeing live images of what was happening on that day. Just being blown away by the devastation of it. The evil of it.

You broaden the scope and look around the world and there is injustice and evil and oppression on almost inconceivable scales going on every single day.

And though we might close our eyes to it, it is very, very real. 27 million men, women and children today are living under the bondage of slavery.

27 million. More than the population of Australia. 27 million people under the bonds of slavery.

While rich, oppressive, tyrannical men and women make money from their enslavement. It's estimated 32 billion US dollars a year are made by a few men who oppress 27 million slaves.

[9 : 13] More slaves exist today than any other time in human history. If you want to go a little deeper, there's 2 million children today who are slaves to the commercial sex industry.

2 million little children who are raped repeatedly throughout every day of their existence by evil men and some women who pay for the demonic, satanic, disgusting pleasure having sex with little kids.

2 million. If you have kids, I dare you to look into your child's eyes and not break down with that kind of thought in your mind. 2 million children.

Injustice, oppression, affliction, rife in the world today. 1 million. Let me tell you one more story. It just brings it home for me. When I was working in America, this is 10 years ago, I was working at a camp for inner city kids from Pittsburgh.

99 out of 100 of them were little black African American kids in the ghettos. They'd come to our camp and have a great time. I remember one camp we did.

[10 : 47] I had a cabin full of little black kids and one little white kid. I call him Josh. This little white kid is actually probably about this tall.

He's 11. He's kind of malnourished, malnourished, really poor and living in a context where he was very much the outsider in his black ghettos.

He came along and he was just exactly as you expect him to be, disobedient and aggressive. But I kind of took him under my wing and after a little time we got to know one another and he was just fascinated that this guy would come from an imaginary land on the other side of the world.

He'd never been outside of his neighbourhood. And we kind of spent time with him and we prayed and we read the Bible and he was starting to soften, starting to be the little kid that he should have been.

And sometime later, after I got back to Australia, I had a message come to me from a junior counsellor who worked with me at the camp and he'd let me know that Josh had been found in his neighbourhood, sexually abused and murdered.

[12 : 13] This little kid. Damn it. He'd been sexually abused and repeatedly stabbed to death.

This little kid. You can close your eyes to the reality of the world around us and we do every day.

With every reality TV show and every magazine and every advertisement, we close our eyes to the reality of suffering in the world today. But it is the overwhelming reality for most of the people on earth.

The question is, what does God have to say about this world that we live in? What does God have to say about injustice, oppression, affliction of the weak and the poor and the lowly at the hands of evil men?

I want to speak to that in this passage and I want to give you something to say. I don't know if we can have answers for people.

[13 : 28] We can tell them that this is the reality of the world that we live in, that because of sin, this kind of thing exists. We don't have any packaged answers to give to people.

But I think there's something in this passage that we can communicate to people who ask us the question, what does God have to say about 3,000 dying in one day on account of terrorism, about 27 million in slavery, 2 million kids as sex slaves and about my buddy Josh.

There's something that we can say and I hope we can see it in this passage. So turn to it or look on the screen. We're just going to go verse by verse. I want to highlight some of the key words in the passage and what they mean and what they tell us about Jesus who is the sacrificial lamb of God who died for us.

So starting at verse 7, it says, He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.

The word oppressed there in the Old Testament normally refers to the treatment of slaves who were oppressed by taskmasters, by evil overseers.

[14 : 56] These were the people of God in Egypt, oppressed by their taskmasters, made to make bricks without straw and made to make more and more and more. constantly asked to do things that were inhumane, harried, stalked, stressed out, oppressed.

This is the plight of those slaves today, the same deal. And this was true of Jesus. That Jesus was oppressed every day of his earthly ministry, whether it was by those who didn't believe that he was the son of God to particularly those, the religious officials of the day, constantly oppressed, just emotionally stalked and harried, stressed out.

He regularly had to have time away from people just to refresh himself with the Father because this was his experience in those three years that he ministered.

And then, of course, to such a greater degree in his execution, oppressed, the suffering servant who was oppressed and afflicted.

This word tends to mean humiliated, mocked, scorned, rejected, afflicted, afflicted.

[16 : 36] Again, true of Jesus in his earthly ministry and ultimately, most painfully true in his death. The soldiers who mocked him, put a crown of thorns on him, king of the Jews above his cross, rolled dice for his garments, mocked, rejected, scorned, afflicted.

The suffering servant, Jesus. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth like a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep silent before her shearers.

He did not open his mouth. He was led to the slaughter like a lamb, like a Passover lamb. Verse 7, he hasn't been killed yet.

He's going to be killed in verse 8. In verse 7, he's led to that place of execution, like a little lamb, a defenseless little lamb dragged to the slaughter.

father. This was true of Jesus' whole ministry, wasn't it? Indeed, it was true of his whole life. That Jesus, before the foundation of the world, the Bible tells us, knew that he was going to die on the cross for our sin.

[17 : 55] Before Adam and Eve even fell in the garden, he knew he was going to die on a cross to atone for our sin. Jesus' life was just one step after the other toward the cross, like a lamb led to the slaughter.

Intensifies as he gets to Jerusalem, the triumphal entry again, like a lamb led to that slaughter. Inevitable death for our sins.

He was oppressed, he was afflicted, he was like a lamb led to the slaughter and he was silent, like a sheep is silent before her shearers.

Remember, this is true of Jesus in the passion narrative on several occasions. The gospel writers tell us that Jesus was silent before his accusers.

Let me just sample a few for you. Before Caiaphas and the Jews, Matthew 26, 62 and 63 says, the high priest then stood up and said to him, remember this is at his mock trial, false witnesses have come in and testified against him, it's a complete sham but he, like a lamb to the slaughter, is subject to them.

[19 : 17] And the high priest says, don't you have an answer to what these men are testifying against you? But Jesus kept silent. like a lamb before its shearers is silent.

Mark, chapter 15, he went from Caiaphas to Pilate. Pilate interrogates him in a similar way. This is Mark 15 and four to five.

Then Pilate questioned him again, are you not answering anything? Look how many things they're accusing you. but Jesus still did not answer anything so Pilate was amazed like a sheep is silent before its shearers.

Finally, Herod goes from Pilate to Herod in Luke 23 verse 9 and says, so Herod kept asking him questions but Jesus did not answer him.

The chief priests and the scribes stood by vehemently accusing him.

[20 : 31] Then Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt, affliction and they mocked him, dressed him in a brilliant robe and sent him back to Pilate.

This is the land that Isaiah is talking about, the suffering servant, Jesus our redeemer and our sacrifice.

You'll see all through the Old Testament that people who are accused, people who are judged are full of excuses. they'll protest their innocence whether they're innocent or not and then you come to Isaiah 53 and the only truly innocent man is silent, submissive, humble.

Let's go to verse 8. It says, he was taken away because of oppression and judgment and who considered his fate for he was cut off from the land of the living.

He was struck because of my people's rebellion. Friends, this is the gospel. This is the gospel. I think this was what Paul was reading when he wrote 1 Corinthians 15, I think it's verse 3 where he sums up the gospel that Jesus died for our sins, that he was buried according to the scriptures.

[22 : 07] That's verse 8 and 9. He was cut off from the land of the living. He died for us. Verse 9, he was buried all according to the scriptures, that is Isaiah 53.

Paul knew it well from his Old Testament studies and he refers to it there in his great summary of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15. This is the gospel that the suffering servant Jesus was cut off from the land of the living.

That is he died. He was buried and it was all on account of our sin. He was struck because of my people's rebellion.

The innocent lamb suffers death because of what? My people's rebellion. Not his. Not his rebellion. It's our rebellion. And not just the people of Israel but us here tonight.

Paul makes it very clear in the New Testament that it's not just the people of Israel who had sinned but it was every one of us who committed a corporate sin of humanity against God in Adam that led to Jesus death.

[23 : 27] It's for our rebellion. It's for our sin that he died. And it was unjust. It's unjust for an innocent person to die on account of sinful people.

We're going to look at this in greater detail next week where we see in this chapter that it says it was the will of the Lord to crush him. God can kill the one innocent man for the sake of our sinners.

Jesus was cut off it says from the land of the living God and who considered his fate.

He was taken away because of oppression and judgment. It was unjust. It was oppressive. And yet who considered his fate?

The question he's asking is when this man dies who actually thinks about it? Who actually meditates on it? It's a rhetorical question.

[24 : 46] No one even gave a thought to it. This innocent man dies and no one even cares about it. It's a challenge to all of us to meditate on Jesus death for us.

Don't just take it for granted. Meditate on his fate. The fate of the one innocent man who died in our place. And I think when we're thinking about oppression and injustice in the world it's right for us to meditate on this injustice that the one innocent man would die at the hands of evil men.

To meditate on that. To hold that out to people who are questioning. People who come to you and say you're a Christian and there's all this suffering in the world.

What do you have to say about that? Meditate on this that the greatest act of injustice in the world was God himself dying in our place. God died for our sin.

God experienced the greatest injustice for our sin, for our redemption, for our salvation, for his glory.

[26 : 09] God said to you say I know I know about injustice.

I've experienced it in its most acute form in dying a death for you sinners. I've experienced it myself.

I believe that's what God says. I know I've been there.

He was oppressed and afflicted. He was rejected and mocked. He was ultimately killed as an innocent man by evil men for our sinners.

God says keep going to verse nine. It says they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man at his death although he had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully.

[27 : 30] That's a perfect prophecy of what happened to Jesus isn't it? like just remarkable prophecy. You read about it in Matthew 27. I'll read it for you. Matthew 27.

57 tells us what happened to Jesus after he died on the cross. It says when it was evening after his death a rich man a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came who he himself had become a disciple of Jesus he approached Pilate and asked for Jesus body then Pilate ordered that it be released so Joseph took the body wrapped it in clean fine linen and placed it in his new tomb which he had cut into the rock you shouldn't have any doubts about the fact that this is a prophecy about Jesus our suffering servant that just as Isaiah prophesied 700 years before he was given a grave with the wicked and with a rich man at his death the question is I was trying to think about this week is why why did

God do this like why did God include that little detail in the prophecy and in the fulfillment why did God have Jesus buried in a rich man's tomb I did a bit of reading and I reckon this is a pretty good crack at it doesn't tell us exactly but in those days if you're a robber or a thief or a murderer and you've been killed executed by the Romans as the two thieves were inside of Jesus then you would simply be thrown into a rubbish dump just outside of the city your body would be thrown there you'd be torn apart by dogs and whatever that's where the filth the rabble the murderers the thieves the rapists that's where they went after they had been killed and I think in giving Jesus a tomb a rich man's tomb this was

God's way of saying this innocent man has been vindicated ultimately this happened in the resurrection but in the time between death and resurrection I think God was saying this man who has been killed he's not a thief he's not a murderer he is the perfect son of God though he had done no violence and had spoken not deceitfully it was God's way of showing the world this was an innocent man not to be thrown on a rubbish dump with the dogs but to be given a place of honour in the tomb of a rich man and if nothing else it should give us some confidence about God's word here that 700 years before Jesus death that kind of detail was prophesied though he'd done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully the greatest injustice that's ever been perpetrated on this earth was the murder the execution the crucifixion of

Jesus the innocent man the only truly innocent man who had done no violence spoken no evil committed no sin was cut off from the land of the living because of our rebellion that is the greatest injustice that's a greater injustice than any other injustice that I've talked about tonight here's two things I want us to remember out of this text first of all don't ever underestimate the kind of humiliation that Jesus underwent for your sake in dying on the cross that he went from the highest glory possible in heaven to his incarnation as a man and then to the lowest point in human history in being mocked rejected oppressed and afflicted and ultimately executed on a cross that meditating on and thinking about his fate his death in your place should lead us to overwhelming praise and gratitude to

[32 : 40] God and then as a sub point of that major theme can we think about when we hear about suffering when we hear about injustice when we hear about 27 million slaves when we hear about 2 million child sex slaves can we think first of all can we think about that to begin with the world will do its best to stop you from thinking about that we need to fight against the current in order to tap into that reality to think about it and as we think about it think about the fact that God himself underwent that same injustice that same oppression that same affliction for us every time you attempted to despair on account of the scale of evil in the world remember that

God himself experienced that affliction that God is not distant that God is not removed that God is not the God of just about every other religion separate from the suffering of the world but indeed God has experienced it in his death on the cross as the suffering servant the lamb that was slain he experienced that level of injustice affliction and evil hold hold out to them this truth that

God the God that you worship knows what it is to be a man of sufferings acquainted with grief not just that he knows about it but that he's done something about it next week we're going to round out the series looking at that very thing what does it mean that God has subjected himself to this level of suffering and justice what does it mean for us and what does it mean to a dying world really appreciate your prayers this week as I put together the sermon for that week it's a massive topic it'd be a good one to bring friends along to who aren't Christians bring friends along to who are experiencing suffering so do pray about that this week till then I'm going to pray for us so let's bow our heads father

I really don't know what to pray apart from just a prayer of gratitude that you had every right to leave us rebellious sinners to our own fate that you had every right as the sovereign judge of the universe perfect in every way to simply judge us for our sin and to condemn us for eternity and that would have been the right thing to do and yet in your mercy you sent your son into the world the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 that you sent him into the world to experience affliction and oppression in his earthly ministry and to experience it most acutely in his death on the cross and you did it all for our sake so father

I pray that those two points really would be true for us not just this week but every day of our lives that we would be overwhelmed with gratitude to you for your death and the salvation that comes by it and that we would be able to hold out hope to people that you yourself have experienced injustice and evil for their sake that you're a man of sorrows acquainted with grief a God who can sympathize with them in their sufferings and Lord I guess we as Christians look forward to that great day and pray that it would come soon when you would end all suffering you would wipe every tear from every eye that you would crush oppression and evil and affliction that you would bring in a new kingdom a recreated earth there's no more suffering no more

[38 : 09] Satan no more death and no more pain so we pray for that day to come soon in Jesus name amen