

How Jesus died for us!

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: 13 October 2024

Preacher: Rev Brian Macleod

- [0 : 0 0] So our passage this morning, it's from one of the servant songs in Isaiah. And I think out of all of the Old Testament prophets, he's probably the most well-known.
- Even if we wouldn't say to hand we remember much of what he said, because 66 chapters, you might remember his call in Isaiah 6, you know, I see the Lord high and lifted up.
- And maybe we remember Isaiah 40, where it says about eagles' wings and about the youth growing tired and weary. But this passage in chapter 53 is maybe the most well-known about how it speaks of God's suffering servant coming to die for the sins of his people.
- But the setting of these words are found actually in Isaiah 40 to 41. And so the nations of the world, including Israel, they're found to be guilty. Guilty of worshipping other gods.
- And Isaiah in chapter 40, he's beginning to show, well, God is speaking through them and God's showing his people that serving idols is no use. And he uses these enduring words.
- [1 : 0 4] Do you not know? Have you not heard that the Lord, the Lord who is one, the one true God, that he is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth?
- But what we find through Isaiah, as you go through it, it's that the people of God, their own sin and the sin of the nations has caused them to lose sight of the big picture of God's plan for them.
- That he would use a specific people for his own glory to be a blessing to not only their own people, but to the nations of the earth. And if we remember our sermon series on Abraham, chapter 12, the call of Abraham from God was, I'll choose you, Abraham.
- I'll make you into a great nation and I'll bless you. And I'll make your name great and you'll be a blessing, not just for your own people, but to the nations. So that's really God's plan for the people throughout the Old Testament, that they would be a people wholly devoted to him and giving their lives to him.
- And it's still God's plan for us today because Jesus came into the world and what was the last thing that he said to the disciples before he left them? He said, go and make disciples of all nations. You go and do that. Be a specific people who would give your lives to God.
- [2 : 1 5] Baptize people from every nation and teach them to do everything that I've commanded you. Go and make disciples of every nation, not just your own people. So just as God is the same God who was with Abraham, just as he's the same God who is with all the prophets, just as God was with his own son Jesus in his earthly ministry, and up until his death and resurrection, just as God is with those in the early church, and so surely he's with us always to the very end of the world so that we could spread his good news to the nations.
- So who is this servant then in Isaiah? This servant that is mentioned where there's different servant songs, and they're written down as songs, but there's no actual recording of whether they were used as songs or hymns in history, but they're certainly recorded as servant songs.

And at one point in different servant songs, there's four of them, it refers to the prophet himself, Isaiah, and on other occasions it refers to the nation of Israel, and on other occasions in this particular song what we're focusing on today, it's on a person, on a servant.

And the main point of this passage in this chapter is that the people of God need this servant to reclaim them from their sins. That's the main point, that the people of God would need this servant to see their need of this servant to reclaim them from their sins.

That's the main point. And so we read at the end of chapter 52, he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. And if we take note of the service from last week, we were reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 2, and in that chapter there's a beautiful hymn that is written about in Son, at that time Paul was writing, where Paul writes, therefore God exalted Jesus to the highest place, that Jesus would be humble, he would be low, he would go really low, so that he would eventually go high, that God would exalt him to the highest place.

[4 : 16] And this is what we find Isaiah prophesying, that this servant will eventually, at the end of the story being, he will be raised, he will be lifted up and highly exalted. But first, he takes on the nature of a servant.

He's found in appearance as a man. And this is what we read in chapter 52 and 53 here of Isaiah, that he'll be a victim, that he'll grow up like a tender shoot.

He will have no beauty or majesty that we would naturally attract us to him. There'll be nothing in his appearance that we'll desire him, that he'll be a man of sorrows, he'll be rejected by us, he'll be tarnished, he'll be disfigured, he'll have to go through extreme suffering.

So this is the servant that Paul, that Isaiah is speaking of, that Paul would refer to. It's of Jesus, that before being raised up by God, he'll be brought low in order that God's people would recognize their need of a savior, but also that the nations would be brought in, would be grafted in to this big plan of God.

And so this servant that Isaiah is speaking of, he comes not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. He comes as the only hope for God's people, Israel.

[5 : 29] He comes to graft in the nations, and he is the hope, the only hope of the individual heart. Because the reality is, we all need a substitute in our life.

And when we look to the one who provides for us a substitute, God providing for us a substitute in Jesus, we see that actually the needs of the human heart are met, because this servant, this substitute, who would die in the place of God's people, who would die for us, is the one in whom God's own soul delights.

And this servant being Jesus Christ himself. And so we imagine the story then, at the time, God's people, they're engulfed by idolatry.

And if we were to then capture that idolatry into today's market, you know, distraction, and all the things that we see in culture, all the wars in the world, all the things that trouble us, all of the illnesses that we go through, all of the heartache that we face.

And in the words of G.K. Chesterton, who wrote in his book, Orthodoxy, that the problem with the modern world isn't that we're bad, it's that we're too good. It's that we don't see and recognize our need for a saviour, because we think we're good enough.

[6 : 50] But the point of this passage is that the people of God would see a need, and that the people of the nations who would be grafted in would see their need of a saviour, and the answer then to this question, the deepest question of life, what must I do to be saved?

That's what this passage is really pointing at, that God's people, there and then, and us today, we can wrestle with this, that humanity's in the grips of sin and idolatry, turn our back on God, and then only for God to come again and say, look, I've provided this once and for all, ultimate and final assurance, this solution to the problems of humanity, it's Jesus Christ, it's the person of Jesus.

And this is what we find Isaiah saying, who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Because if we are honest with ourselves, we will look to the things around us, and we'll just put the blame on something else.

The problems aren't with me, it's with something else, it's with other situations, I know I do that, it's a condition of the human heart. And I think J.K. Chesterton then is right by saying that, it's not that we are so bad, which we are, but it's that we are good, we think that we are good enough.

But what the Bible tells us in this passage is that there's only one person who's good enough, and he would be the one who dies in place of us as a substitute, as a suffering servant. And it's as we consider who he is, and as we come to him, and we put our trust in him, that everything in our life then flows from that place, just simply coming to him.

[8 : 31] And so I wonder, do we know who this servant is? Do we know who Jesus is? And do we know that actually as we come to him, that he's got great plans for our lives? Do we know that need?

Do we have that need of Jesus? Say, actually, Jesus, I really, really need you. I really need you to intervene into my life here. I really need you to speak into that situation. I really need you to very specifically just do something.

And it's as we come to Jesus and see that he is the one who can meet our needs because he died in a place of where we should have been. You know, we all love a good ad slogan as well.

I know there's certain adverts that stick in your heads, ones that capture you and immediately, whether it's Nike, just do it. McDonald's, I'm loving it.

Sorry, that was a bad whistle. L'Oreal, because you're worth it. Coca-Cola, open happiness. Disneyland, the happiest place on earth.

[9 : 35] There's some that just grab us. Then there's the annoying ones. Go compare. Go compare. Go compare. Compare them, market.com, you know, the meerkats.

And then my personal favourite, the dairy milk, Phil Collins, in the air tonight. Grilla drumming. There you go. The one that stuck out to me when I was preparing this message was the advert, Flash, and not the queen one.

Flash. Oh. Although that did get stuck in my head. But maybe the old school Flash one that you remember when it used to say, Flash does the hard work, so you don't have to. You remember that.

And I must confess, I've often thought that throughout my Christian life that Jesus suffered so I didn't have to. In other words, Jesus does the hard work, so you don't have to.

And you know, in one sense, that's very true because Jesus came to save us because we cannot save ourselves. And that's the heart of the Christian message that God comes to reclaim a people for himself that Jesus died for us, that he paid the price of our sins so that we didn't have to suffer God's righteous anger against us because of our sins.

[10 : 46] But in another sense, to truly grasp the love of God for us in Jesus and to truly respond as Christians to what Jesus has done for us in and through the cross and to fully consider the implications of what it means to follow Jesus as a disciple, it's really all about coming back to Jesus time and time again and keeping Jesus and his cross at the very center of our lives.

And this is why I think, going back to Philippians for a minute, that the Apostle Paul wrote that to truly know Christ wholly and fully and the power of his resurrection is to participate in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

So if we're invited to go all the way with Jesus, it's not just glory and it's not just saying Jesus has done the hard work so I don't have to.

It's that as we go through fiery trials of life, whether it's ill health, whether it's the loss of loved ones, whether it's issues in family, whether it's, you know, all the sadness that we see and grief in human life, as we look at the sufferings of Christ himself, it's there in that place that we feel more and more his affections for us and the more we gaze at Christ that we find we're caught up in his beauty.

It's not that, you know, all of a sudden our problems are solved, we're not sick and yes, Jesus can heal, he can heal divinely, you know, I believe that God heals today and he does so and he works miraculously but if that's not the case for us now, it will be one day when we're with Jesus we'll know no more sickness or suffering and if we're living with ongoing pain or struggle, it's not because we are at fault, it's not because we are less than, it's that our response is and can be I look to Jesus and I see his sufferings and I become more caught up in his beauty and I feel his affection for me that this servant of the Lord what we read in verses 4 to 8 of Isaiah 53 that he bore our sicknesses and our pain and our sin and he carried a heavy weight on his shoulders that he was crushed that he was pierced that he was punished and that he was oppressed and that he was afflicted that he accepted the blows for us and as the respected

[13 : 27] Old Testament scholar John Goldengate put it he says Jesus is the man who kept his mouth shut so this is God's servant in ultimate distress and without any contribution from God's people coming to willingly suffer so that those same people who had turned their backs on him time and time again and lived in idolatry and thought themselves too good for God who gave himself up for them would receive healing and wholeness and know peace shalom with God and that they would be the kind of people that God intended them to be beautiful people a people who would say how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news who proclaim peace who bring good tidings who proclaim salvation who say to Zion your God reigns so in other words the picture is that no matter what might be going in our lives no matter what struggles we might be facing and continue to face day by day that Jesus bore our pain carries our sorrows and continues to do so until the day we either are with him or he returns and that the picture and the plan of God is that even if we are living with suffering and sorrow is that Jesus became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and who fully empathised with us but has a plan to use us and our sorrows and our sufferings and our pain for his glory so that in the midst of humanity's mess and the chaos of the world that the answer is found fully and through this servant

Jesus Christ that he comes to reveal himself to the world in lowliness and humility and to a church that would say I want to get low because Jesus went low but first we come to the place where we see ourselves like sheep and sheep that picture where some of the sheep are going astray and they're walking whatever path they like and the solution to that is that the shepherd says I'm going to send someone who will have all of their waywardness laid upon his shoulders and I will strike that lamb with what the sheep deserve and so just as we've wondered the great shepherd of our souls Jesus comes and brings us back he doesn't come to strike us with his stick like we are you know he comes to bring us back in gently so that we would receive wholeness that we would receive forgiveness and just as we read at the beginning of the service from 1 Peter 2 to this you were called because Christ suffered for you leaving you an example that you would follow in his steps so it says

Jesus comes to suffer for us that we would see that in our suffering in our sorrows in our grief in our struggles in life we can see his beauty and feel his affections for us and so the way of the cross is through death dark veil but the way of the cross ultimately is the way of life it's God's life in Jesus shining through us and so maybe you're going through a fiery trial at this moment maybe you're dealing with a challenging situation maybe multiple and I wonder if the picture of Jesus in our hearts is big enough to sustain us to hold us to walk and to endure and to even thrive and if we remember last week how can we do this well in Philippians 2 Paul says that the same mindset that Jesus had is already yours if you trust in Jesus the same mindset Jesus had it's yours you can lay a hold of that and you can claim what Jesus has claimed for you you can cling to the cross because the mystery of the Christian faith comes when we participate in his sufferings because the suffering of Christ is at the heart of the Christian faith and so as we come to our close this morning we come back to the central point of the passage that the people of God and the nations need this servant to save them from their sins and this is what

Jesus has done for you and me but these words that we read of the servant being punished of God allowing his son to be bruised and crushed being made to suffer well what about sharing that with a neighbour what about sharing that with a family member what about sharing that with a friend or a colleague sounds rather challenging if not embarrassing that God would punish his son so that we might be healed now we might find it challenging enough to sit in different chairs on a Sunday morning let alone share that with other people and let's admit it praying for people who are persecuted in a foreign land is easier than sharing our faith with our next door neighbour let's just admit that but do we remember though if we go back to the bible and going back to the bible every time is just the biggest help in the world and if we go through the stories of the disciples individually that Jesus didn't pick them up and choose them because they were the creme de la creme and the cream of the crop and the greatest evangelist he chose them because they were they were naff and we read in the times they got it wrong we read the times where they didn't have God's power to heal them and we read in other occasions they just simply didn't have faith and then we read the other side when Jesus said

I'm going to leave you and he said why are you leaving us Jesus no because it's for your benefit that the Holy Spirit will come upon you and then we read at the beginning of Acts that the Holy Spirit came and oh man did he come with tons of fire and power and anointing and the Spirit fell on the people of God and they were filled with this supernatural boldness where they began to suddenly preach God's word with just amazing just without fear and they began to perform God's miracles and they began to practice hospitality and they began to meet the needs that were around them so many needs and they began to see wow God is real and the people around them began to see wow God is real and people were gradually added to their number and the book of Acts as we go from the beginning of Acts where it's Jerusalem and then the end of Acts it's way over and to the end of the earth as we're seeing throughout the centuries and we know that the disciples and the early Christians they experienced imprisonment chip wrecks beatings there was the first

[20 : 14] Christian martyr Stephen and so they knew suffering but they were still emboldened and empowered by the Holy Spirit dwelling in them to glorify Jesus and then we find there's the story of Philip which we read about on prayer meeting on Thursday and he's led to by the Spirit to share the gospel with TikTok influencer no no he's led to share the gospel with a high ranking government official an Ethiopian official and he's reading aloud in his chariot Isaiah 53 and so what Isaiah is prophesying here and what has come to pass in the person of Jesus and that the Lord would gather in the nations so Philip is now given this opportunity to explain who this servant is and he explains to him this is Jesus this is God's servant this is the man that there's been spoken about and he has come into the world and he has given this message and he's died for the sins of not only me but for you an Ethiopian official and he's come to die for the sins of the nations and he's risen again from the dead and now he's with the Father and now we are the ones who are tasked with sharing this good news and the Ethiopian official he responds and there's an outpouring of joy because that's the natural fruit of the Holy Spirit joy and there's personal salvation he's found faith in Jesus and he's baptized by water as a sign of new life and he rejoices and no doubt he goes on to share the good news with his influencers and so the gospel spreads even further and then it's finished off that passage with Philip passing through other times to continue sharing the good news and so here we have the glory of the gospel of Jesus we've got the suffering and we've got the glory and it's coming together and it's saying that the main message of Christianity the main point of this passage is that God has sent Jesus to die for our sins so that the nations and so that the people around us would hear that there is a saviour worth hearing about and worth following and worth giving our entire lives to and that even after he's suffered even after he's poured out his life not even death could stop him that he was raised to life that he was raised high he's lifted high and the result is that those who come to believe in him can know that same power that raised him from the dead in their lives so it's a glorious and it's a powerful and it's an exalting and it's a supernatural message and it's one that we can that we can all understand and so I'm going to finish now with a little video that speaks about how Jesus came into the world so that we can all understand and we can all share no matter who we are no matter our vocation no matter our calling no matter how good we are at we think about doing it because we all are good at sharing Jesus everyone in this room is good at sharing the good news about Jesus because God has gifted us and God has empowered us each of us by his Holy Spirit so we're going to watch this video now by J. John it's called

Jesus Christ the truth