

The God Who Saves - Isaiah 53

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0 : 00] There's not a whole lot that's much better than resurrection music.

! And what we really have to celebrate, regardless of the difficulties that you're experiencing this morning, and I don't want to downplay the significance of those difficulties, but in light of the hope that you have in Christ, those difficulties really begin to fade into the background.

Easter is one of my favorite times of year. As I was talking with some of you this morning for breakfast, I know there are a lot of traditions that happen during the Easter season.

Some of the most vivid memories that I have as a child occur in this time of year. I can remember specifically one Easter morning, and my mom would typically help with a two's and three Sunday school class, and I had the joy of helping her that morning.

And one of the things that we did, we walked the kids around the block, they were all holding a rope, but one of the things that really caught my attention is just the vivid colors, the deep blue sky, and the life of all the flowers that were beginning to bloom that day.

[1 : 45] It was a reminder to me of the significance of what we celebrate today. Not just the significance of new life, but the significance of life eternal.

True life. Genuine life. Lasting life that can be had in Christ. Have you experienced that life?

Do you know that life, that life is offered to anyone who is listening to me in this room? It's offered to anyone in this world to experience and to enjoy, to participate really in that everlasting life, the life of God.

The life that Jesus came to bring to us 2,000 years ago. A life that we'll look at this morning from Isaiah chapter 53.

It was a life that was unexpected in many ways. And if you would turn with me, please, to Isaiah chapter 52. We'll begin there. We'll kind of set the stage for what the people of Israel were expecting in Jesus and what they actually got, what they had hoped for, and how short those hopes were in terms of the actual reality of what Jesus had to give.

[3 : 09] That their hopes were so small in comparison with the deep wonder of what Christ had to give. As we approach this resurrection morning, as we think about Easter, we need to think about more than just the details of Easter.

We've heard many messages, I'm sure, about the events that took place that occurred on this day. The early morning and the women who went to the tomb to see Jesus and to anoint his body with ointment.

We remember the angels and the message that they gave to the women who were there. We remember how the women ran back to tell the disciples and how confused the disciples seemed to be about all of these events.

How Peter and John had a foot race back to the tomb and then looked in and peered in. And certainly it was just the way that the women had said it was. The tomb was empty.

Still wondering what this all could mean. And then the encounter. The encounter of Mary with who she assumed to be the gardener and later found to be Jesus Christ himself.

[4 : 28] The walk on the way to Emmaus by the two disciples who were there heavy and sorrowful and grieving about the events of the weekend.

And then walking along with this stranger. Who was this stranger? Who opened up the scriptures from Moses and all the prophets to reveal who Jesus the Messiah would be.

And then closed in that upper room on the day of Easter. The disciples still huddled together in fear. And Jesus coming through and coming into the midst of them.

And then he also begins to tell them all of the things related to himself. We know these things to be the events of Easter.

But the events in and of themselves can't change a life. What was Easter intended to do? Why do we celebrate this day?

[5 : 29] And how does it have an impact in your life? Not only today. But on through the rest of your life. On into eternity. Really that's why we're here today.

We're here not just to celebrate an event. We're here to celebrate the work of Christ. And what he hopes to accomplish in your life today.

It is a transforming work. It is a wondrous work. That Jesus hopes to accomplish for you today. We find in Isaiah 52.

And if you're a guest with us this morning. It's on page 613 in the Pew Bible ahead of you. We see a glimmer again of this God that we have come to know in Isaiah.

He has been brought to us or introduced to us in many different ways. We have seen that he is the Holy One of Israel. We have seen that he is the Almighty God.

[6 : 32] We have seen that he is the God of mercy and the God of comfort. The God of judgment. That he is the God who saves and redeems. He is the God who comes and rescues his people and saves a remnant.

All of these things we find about the God here in Isaiah. But running through the book of Isaiah.

There is one theme. One anthem. That sounds itself from chapter to chapter. And it culminates in Isaiah chapter 52 and Isaiah chapter 53.

It is the God who saves. The God who saves. That is what the Almighty One came to do. He came to conquer.

He came to be victorious. That is what the Holy One of Israel came to do. He came to overcome sin in the grave. He came to rescue our desperate condition of sin.

[7 : 35] And to make us right with him. That is what the God of mercy came to do. He came not to give us what we deserve. But he came to give us the life.

The grace. The gift of God's favor. Fellowship with him. That we don't deserve. And running through the book of Isaiah. These anthems of God come loud and clear.

But woven through it all from chapter to chapter is this message. This anthem of the God who saves. On at least 75 occasions.

Isaiah magnifies the saving power of God. He addresses it. He addresses it in terms of the God who saves. He addresses it as the one who brings salvation.

As the one who is identified with the title as Savior. Behold. Behold. He says in verse 12. Or chapter 12 verse 2. God is my salvation.

[8 : 31] I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord God is my strength and my song. And he has become my salvation. In chapter 43 verse 3.

He says. I am the Lord your God. The Holy One of Israel. Your Savior. Time and time again. God addresses himself as the one who saves.

And here we find in chapter 52. In chapter 53. How that saving work is going to be accomplished. Chapter 52.

Verse 7. It says this. How beautiful upon the mountains. Are the feet of him who brings good news.

Who proclaims peace. Who brings glad tidings of good things. Who proclaims salvation. Who says to Zion.

[9 : 27] Your God reigns. And backing up to chapter 51. Verse 5. He says this. My righteousness is near. My salvation has gone forth.

My right. My arm will judge the peoples. The coastlands will wait upon me. And on my right arm. They will trust. This is the God of salvation.

This is the one they expected who would come. The God who bears his holy arm. As we find in chapter 52 verse 10.

The Lord has made bare his holy arm. In the eyes of all the nations. And all the ends of the earth shall see. The salvation.

Of our God. The God of salvation. Comes front and center. And perhaps. Like no other passage in Isaiah. And no other passage in all of the Old Testament.

[10 : 28] We find the totality of the gospel. Encapsulated. Here in this chapter. From eternity past. And reaching and stretching to eternity future.

We find the plan of God. The will of the Father. To save the world. And the means by which he will accomplish that work. There was a savior.

We begin to see him here in chapter 52. Beginning in verse 13. Look with me as I read. Behold my servant shall act wisely.

He shall be high and lifted up. And shall be exalted. If we were to stop there.

We would say. That's exactly what the people of Israel expected. They expected the servant to be high and exalted. They expected him to reign.

[11 : 29] They expected him to conquer. It was a desperate people. A people in the first century. Who had already experienced 400 years of darkness.

In terms of prophetic vision. And prophetic message. Their hearts were aching for messages from God. They felt distant. They felt estranged from him.

They were looking for that Messiah. Who would come. And would reveal the words of God to them. They were also a people who were oppressed. Sorrowing and grieving.

Because of the Roman Empire. That had placed the burden upon them. There was this sense of subjection. And having to yield to another power.

They anticipated the day of the Messiah coming. And reigning from Israel. Reigning from Jerusalem. Conquering the nations. And thriving as a people. That was the hope that they looked for.

[12 : 27] And this verse must have resonated as they heard this word. The servant coming. He shall be high and lifted up. He shall be exalted. And then in the next verse.

All of a sudden. The scene changes dramatically. There is this shocking twist to the story. Notice in verse 14.

As many were astonished at you. His appearance so marred beyond human semblance. His form beyond that of children of mankind.

So that he shall sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him. For that which has not been told them. They shall see.

And that which they have not heard. They understand. An introduction now to chapter 53. Which helps to move us into the real scenario.

[13 : 31] That we're going to find in this servant king. Who came 2,000 years ago. Salvation would come through God's servant.

That is the first point this morning. Salvation would come through the servant. But it did not meet. He did not meet expectation. There was an expectation of glory.

There was an anticipation. That this longed for king would come to conquer. That was the salvation that they needed. They needed liberation from oppressors.

Or so they thought. Jesus in coming. Instead of meeting with the superficial needs. That they had as a people.

Came to meet their deepest need. Came not to just give them peace on the earth. But came to give them peace with God. What would that king have to do.

[14 : 32] In order to accomplish such a work. This glorious work. Of this glorious exalted king. This servant. And yet coming in such an unexpected way.

So surprising in fact. The prophet draws attention to it. By asking a couple of questions here. At the beginning of chapter 53. Notice them with me. In verse 1.

Who has believed what he has heard from us. To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed. Who can believe this message about this king.

How did such a shift take place. I was expecting this king. Who would be exalted and high. And lifted up. And would help to bring peace on the earth. And yet.

He comes in such a different way. The true understanding of the servant. Is dumbfounding. It's communicated by divine revelation.

[15 : 34] It is a report. That is given by God. To the people. But a revelation. Which they could not receive. A revelation. Which they could not internalize.

They could not appreciate. Jesus draws attention to this fact. At the end of his public ministry. In John chapter 12. He actually uses the two mountain peaks. Of Isaiah.

To bring a summary. To his ministry. One of those. Is this passage. In Isaiah chapter 53. And the other is. The passage in Isaiah chapter 6.

Jesus. In speaking to the people. In the moments. Leading up to his death. In the close of his public ministry. He says.

In spite of all I have done for you. The works that I have. Performed before you. You still do not believe. The people whose hearts were darkened. But the arm of the Lord.

[16 : 33] Was here. The arm of the Lord had come. Not just through other means. But through the Lord himself. He was there before them. His personal presence.

In presence. In personal action. The arm of the Lord. Was standing before them. The might and the power of God. But they couldn't see it. All the revelation.

Should have been apparent. But they missed it. How. Could they miss. Such. A clear picture. Of the power of God.

In front of them. This arm of God. That we waited for. How could they miss. Such a picture. Well it's. Detailed for us.

Here in the next few verses. There are at least two reasons. Why they missed. The picture. The first. Is because he was robed. In humanity. He was robed. In humanity.

[17 : 28] We see that in verse two. It says. He grew up before him. Like a young plant. And like a root. Out of. Dry ground. In other words.

He seemed to have. A holy. Earthly. Or natural. Origin. The imagery. Of growth. Out of the soil. Points. To a human. Family tree.

This dumbfounded them. This. Perplexed them. How could. The Lord's strength. Be in. A man. How could God himself. Come. In such a form.

And yet. They missed the message. Throughout Isaiah. A virgin will conceive. And give birth. To a son. A child is born. Unto us a son is given.

And in chapter 11. There shall come forth. A shoot. From the stump of Jesse. A branch. From his roots. Shall bear fruit. But this message.

[18 : 26] Of. Of a human. Branch. Confounded them. How could God. Come in such weakness. How could God.

Be robbed. In such. Humility. How could the. Exalted one. Come. In such weakness. Add to this. His unimpressive nature.

We find. In. The rest of verse 2. He had no form. Or majesty. That we should look at him. No beauty. That we should desire him.

There were no credentials. He was unimpressive. Can anything good. Come from Nazareth. We hear those words. He was unattractive.

And unappealing. He was uninspiring. In a human way. Why would God stoop. To such levels. Of commonness. I believe it was because.

[19 : 23] He wanted to remove. The distraction. Of the externals. So that the. The power. And the work. Of God. Could shine through. The life of Christ. So they could see God. On display. And not see.

The person. God was trying to remove. The distractions. Trying to help them. See God. For who he was. And yet they missed it.

They couldn't see it. And because of that. We find. Next. That they. That he was rejected. By his people. Not only. That he was robbed. In humility.

But he. He was rejected. By his people. Far from following him. They shunned him. The reputation. Of the despised.

And the first. And last lines. Are typical. Of Isaiah. To draw attention. And to highlight. The significance. Of what is taking place. In verse 3.

[20 : 17] He was despised. And rejected. By men. That's the. That's the introducing line. But then. At the end of verse 3. He says. He was despised. And we esteemed him not. Reinforced.

Twice. In this verse. To draw attention. To the significance. Of what was occurring. Their king. The arm of God. Who had come near. Was despised.

Jesus. Despised. Rejected. A man of sorrows. Unesteemed. The arm of the Lord. Revealed. God himself. Walked.

With men. And they. Rejected. Him. How could a rejected one be. God himself. How could so.

So. Someone. Who is so unappealing. So unattractive. Come from. From such a place as Nazareth. Be. The arm of the Lord. How broken.

[21 : 14] Their thinking. God among them. Had not led them to faith. Who. Had believed. The report. In spite of all that God had done.

Notice their posture towards him. In chapter 53 verse 1. They don't believe. In verse 2. They don't look. In verse 2.

They don't desire. In verse 3. They don't love. They don't search. They don't esteem. For all that God had done. For them.

There is only rejection. In its place. Which continues. To underscore. The diagnosis. Of our human condition. In desperate need. For God. But unable.

To come to him. On our own. Salvation. Through. The servant. But then. It's followed by. Salvation. Through. His suffering. Salvation.

[22 : 12] Through. His suffering. We find that in verses. 4 to 9. Let me read those for us. It says. Surely he has borne our griefs. And carried our sorrows.

Yet we esteemed him stricken. Smitten by God. And afflicted. But he was pierced. For our transgressions. He was crushed. For our iniquities. Upon him.

Was the chastisement. That brought us peace. And with his wounds. We are healed. All we like sheep. Have gone astray. We have turned. Every one. To his own way. And the Lord.

Has laid on him. The iniquity. Of us all. Do you see. The situation. Of the people. There. That's the.

The first point here. The situation. Of the people. I want us. Through this section. As we're. As we're looking. At the suffering. Of our. Of our God. To recognize.

[23 : 06] This great. Exchange. Exchange. That is taking place here. I would even. Encourage you. To begin. To underline. The words. That you see. Set apart. By. By two pronouns.

The pronoun. He. And the pronoun. We. Or our. Notice. The condition. Of the people. It says. Our griefs. Our sorrows.

It says. In verse. Five. Our transgressions. Our iniquities. It says. In verse. Six. We have gone astray.

And it says. The iniquity. Of us all. That is. The spiritual. Condition. It is a. Hopeless. Condition. It was dire.

Situation. In Israel. Not because. Of the Roman. Impression. But because. Of the spiritual. Condition. Of the people. A situation. That demanded.

[24 : 04] Consequence. A holy God. Judging. An unholy people. Results. In. Complete. Isolation. And. And. And. And. And. And. Rejection.

From God. On the people. God. Would have. To discipline. God. Would have. To judge. Unless. He changed. The situation.

And he did that. By bringing. His sacrifice. The sacrifice. Of the servant. That is the next point. In this section. The sacrifice. Of the servant.

Notice in verse 4. It says. It begins. With. This word. Surely. Surely. He has born. That's an emphatic word.

Of surprise. Of shock. It. It emphasizes. The unexpected. That is taking place. How could this. Suffering. Servant. Begin.

[25 : 00] To. Accept. All. That. That we. That we. Should have. Inherited. All that we. Deserved. How would. This suffering. Servant. Receive that.

On himself. All. In. In light of. Understanding. What was coming. Notice. In verse 4.

He says. He bore. In verse 4. He carried. In verse 5. He was pierced. In verse 5.

He. Was crushed. Verse 5. He. Was chastised. It was. With. Wounds. That he experienced. In verse 6.

Our iniquities. Laid on him. In verse 7. He. Was oppressed. Verse 7. He. Was afflicted. Verse 8. He. Was taken away. Verse 8. He. Was cut off.

[25 : 52] Verse 8. He. Was stricken. Verse 9. He. He. Was buried. Verse 10. It was the will. Of the Lord. To crush. Him. Now we begin.

To experience. The power. Of the arm. Of the Lord. To carry. The load. For all of men. For all of time. This. Humble.

Servant. Looking forward. To the future. Embracing. The task. Of what was set. Before him. Enduring. The price. The cost. Of sin. For all of mankind.

And to do it. Willingly. To do it. Courageously. To do it. Knowing. Full well. All that would be. Taking. Place. We often use.

The phrase. Hindsight. Is 20. 20. And. And. And. And. Many times. When we're looking forward. To the future. We say. If I only knew.

[26 : 53] What the future held. Then maybe I could make. A good decision. Jesus knew. What was coming. He knew every detail.

Of what awaited him. When he. Would walk. This earth. He knew every. Every load. That he would carry. Every sorrow. That he would embrace. Every sin.

That he would pay for. And yet he. He still. Allowed himself. To embrace. And to carry. That load. This great exchange. That took place.

On the cross. Where Jesus. Took our place. And carried that sin. On his shoulders. So that we wouldn't have to. Every sorrow. And grief. Every iniquity. Paid for.

All of your sins. Met. With the wrath of God. On the cross. For us. That. Was the great. Exchange. We saw.

[27 : 47] The coming of Christ. We see. The death of Christ. But I want you to see. In Isaiah 53. There is also. The resurrection. Of Christ. We find that. In verses 10.

In 12. The salvation. That results. In triumph. There is triumph. In this passage. Notice it with me. In verses 10. 11. And 12.

It says this. Yet it was. The will. Of the Lord. To crush him. He put him to grief. When his soul. Makes an offering.

For guilt. He shall see. His offspring. He shall prolong his days. The will of the Lord. Shall prosper. In his hand. Out of the anguish.

Of his soul. He shall see. And be satisfied. By his knowledge. Shall the righteous one. My servant. Make many. To be accounted righteous. And he shall bear. Their iniquities.

[28 : 43] Therefore. I will divide. Him. A portion. With the many. And he shall divide. The spoil. With the strong. Because he poured out.

His soul. To death. And was numbered. With transgressors. Yet he bore. The sins of many. And makes intercession. For. The transgressors.

There are at least. Three ways. We see. The triumph. The triumph. The triumph. Of the servant. In overcoming death. And the results. That will follow. In verse 10.

Look with me. There is. When his soul. Makes an offering. For guilt. He shall see. His offspring. He shall prolong.

His days. The will. Of the Lord. Shall prosper. In his hand. The one. Who has. Had been dead. Is now alive. The one. Who had been put.

[29 : 38] In the. In the grave. And who had been. Who had been. Snuffed out. His life. Had been cut off. Now. He. His days are prolonged. And he is seeing. His offspring. The will of God.

Has prospered. In his hand. There is a way. To know the heart of God. One way. To know the heart of God. Is to understand.

His will. We see his will. Here. In verse 10. The will of the Lord. To crush. His son. And not only do we see.

The will of. The father. To crush his son. But. But the will of the servant. Son. As well. To. To conform himself. To the will of the father.

And to accomplish. The things. That God had set forth. To do. It was a will. That God had. Had. Had called out. From.

[30 : 33] From before eternity. Passed. Before the. The earth. Had been. Created. It was a will. That we see. In. In Genesis chapter 3. At the fall.

It's a will. That. That moves its way. Through. The book. Of Isaiah. A will. That we see. As Jesus Christ. Talks about.

Or talks about. His coming death. In resurrection. To his disciples. Jesus. Jesus. Stepped. Into God's will. Courageously. Obediently. And faithfully.

And he accomplished. That will. The will. Of the God. To crush him. Brought about. A new offspring. The servant. Bears.

Offspring. New life. New shoots. Not only. Offspring of Abraham. But now. Offspring of God. God. So that. The apostle John.

[31 : 29] Can say. Behold. Behold. What manner of love. The father. Has given to us. That we might be called. Children. Of God. What was broken.

In the garden. Because of sin. Is now restored. Because of. The peace. That we can have with God. Through. Our Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation. Through him.

Because of. His work on the cross. Of paying for sin. Once for all. Offering. Now. Gives us. Peace. With him.

The opportunity. For fellowship. The opportunity. To be brought near. The opportunity. To be called. Offspring. Of God. God's will.

Is accomplished. And secondly. We find. God's soul. Is satisfied. Not only. Is God's will. Accomplished. But his soul. Is satisfied. We find that.

[32 : 24] In verse. Eleven. Out of the anguish. Of his soul. He shall see. And be. Satisfied. This is the servant.

Again. No longer dead. But alive. Looking at the work. That God has accomplished. Through his life. The redemption. The forgiveness.

Of sin. And his soul. Delights. In the work. Of sacrifice. Redemption. Is secured. Salvation.

Is offered. Righteousness. Through Christ. To all. Who come in faith. A nation. Of Israel. Restored. And the nations. Of the earth. Brought near.

Victory. Accomplished. Once. For all. In the life. Death. And resurrection. Of Jesus. Christ. Had. Accomplished. All.

[33 : 19] That God. Had set forth. Death. The arm. Of the Lord. Had come. Near. The power. Of God. Showed up. In the midst. Of weakness. And finally.

God's victory. Is secured. In verse 12. Therefore. I will divide. With him. A portion. With the many. And he. Shall divide. The spoil. With the strong.

In the faithfulness. Of the servant. He's descended. To the lowest depths. And he has fulfilled. The father's will. Because of that.

Obedience. God will exalt him. To the highest place. That's what we find. In Philippians chapter 2. He humbled himself. And now every knee. Will bow.

And every tongue. Will confess. That Jesus Christ. Is Lord. That is the picture. And now things come. Full circle. As we have started. In chapter 52. Verse 13.

[34 : 14] This high. And lifted up. One who was humbled. Is now. Restored. To glory. And majesty. All that belongs. To him.

All that he. All that he. Has claimed. Is given. To him. As a measure. Of the victory. And triumph. That he has secured. God.

Had in mind. The bigger objective. More than just. The temporary comfort. Of his people. He had in mind. Their eternal souls. He had eternity. In view. And this morning.

This picture. Of this victory parade. Is a. Is a picture. Of what we can participate in. If you are a. A believer. In Jesus Christ.

If you have. Have. Have. Have put your trust. In him. If you have recognized. That. That the work. Of God. In bearing. Your griefs.

[35 : 10] In carrying. Your sorrows. And. And being pierced. For your transgressions. Is a work. That God. Did for you. Then you also. Can participate. In this victory. March.

So. How will you respond. This morning. Will you be a person. Who believes. A person. Who is. Shaped.

By faith. Will it be said. Of you. Who has believed. A report. Or will it be said. Of you. I believe. The report.

I know. What God. Has accomplished. For me. I will live. In the. The faith. Of that reality. I will worship. My God. Because.

Of what he has done. Let's pray. God. We praise you. This morning. For the work. Of Christ. This humble servant. The one. Who faced.

[36 : 06] This. Insurmountable. Cost. This suffering. And oppression. We praise you. For your willingness. To step in. To this world. To embrace.

Humility. And suffering. For our sake. To accomplish. For us. What we could not accomplish. For ourselves. Thank you. For Jesus. And for resurrection. And Lord.

Lead us. Into deeper faith. And deeper wonder. And deeper worship. Of you. We pray. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.