

The Crushing of the Seed

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[0 : 00] Let's turn together now to our Old Testament reading to the prophecy of Isaiah to chapter 53, and we want to read at verse 10.

Isaiah 53 and at verse 10. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him.

He has 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.

And so on. When we read the prophecy of Isaiah, we know that it is familiar and known as the Gospel of the New Testament.

It brings us face to face with what Jesus had to suffer in order to be our saviour. And when we do read the prophecy itself and think about the context in which it was written, it was a world perhaps far removed from ourselves in time.

[1 : 06] But it is a world that is very close to us in the characteristics of the society in which I say I lived. There were a people who had lost sight of God.

There were a people who were living as it pleased themselves. And there were a people, therefore, who had lost sight of what it was to live, to be like the people of God.

There was a crisis which arose particularly from their relationship with God. And the prophecy is written in order to address that and to bring them, of course, face to face with the fact that the solution was in God's provision of a saviour who was going to suffer in their place.

And here we are coming to the heart of Isaiah's message where we see God's provision in answer to their needs. And that is where we are at ourselves today.

We are looking to remember the death of the Lord because Jesus is God's provision for ourselves personally and for the world in which we live.

[2 : 14] And it is no accident that Jesus, in John chapter 12, reminds his own hearers that Isaiah saw the glory of the Messiah in the temple in Isaiah 6.

And there is Jesus drawing attention to himself. Today I want to focus in on verse 10 in particular and to highlight particular things from these words that draw attention to putting the spotlight on who it is that died for our sins.

The spotlight is on Jesus at the Lord's Supper. But we want to say three things about the spotlight. I want to notice first of all that the spotlight is on a person.

And the person is brought before us in the pronouns that we have in verse 10. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him.

He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring. Who is the Lord speaking about?

[3 : 28] Who is the person here? Who is the spotlight on? I want us to think that the spotlight is on this person in two particular ways.

He is, first of all, and closely connected with the words themselves, he is the servant of God. And we have that at the verse 13 of the previous chapter.

Behold, my servant shall act wisely. He is the servant of the Lord. And we know that a servant's role is to carry out a particular task or particular tasks.

And he does that in subordination, in serving a master. And we also know that when we think of a servant, a servant can be forced to carry out some tasks, as the children of Israel were in the land of Egypt.

But we also know from the Bible that there is a joy in serving God as our master. There is a freedom. It liberates us from any sense of being slaves in bondage.

[4 : 38] To serve God is the high point of the fulfillment of human experience because there is joy in it.

And here we have this person and he is the servant. And in verse 13 it is quite clear whose servant he is.

He is my servant. The Lord who is going to do all of this with regard to this individual, he is going to do it to his own servant.

And when we think of Jesus coming in that way to be the servant of the Lord, we remind ourselves that his servanthood is based on the fact that he is, in the first place, God's son.

Who is going to come into the world? He is going to be Emmanuel, God with us. What's going to be his name? He is going to be Wonderful Counselor.

[5 : 41] He is going to be the Eternal God. He is the Eternal Father. He is going to be the Mighty God. And he is going to be the Prince of Peace. He is God with us.

And when we come into the New Testament, we see that that is exactly what God does. God sent his son into the world. And Jesus, in his own self-consciousness, is fully aware that that's who he is when he's here.

He has come to do the will of the Father. He delights in serving God. And every step that he takes in his journey through the world, in serving the Father, are steps of complete, perfect obedience.

And we hear at his baptism, the words of God with regard to the servant, You are my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

And in chapter 42 here, we read, Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom my soul delights. Here is God at the baptism of his son, declaring from heaven that Jesus is here, commencing his ministry, that he is doing so now as the servant of Jehovah.

[7 : 19] The spotlight is on this person who is the servant. And as one of the writers, writing on the servant, says with regard to the delight of the Father in him, he was well pleased with him, and well he might.

Not a thought, not a feeling, that was not in perfect accordance with the divine will. What a servant! What an immaculate person that comes to do the will of God, to carry out all of his tasks, and he will do everything perfectly, lovingly, in all of its detail.

And in every step that he will take, the Father, who is his master, will look down and will take delight in him.

The person is the son-servant, whose life of service rests upon and is based upon and is secured by the fact that he is, in the first place, the son of God.

[8 : 40] And with the spotlight on the person as the servant, I want us also to notice that the spotlight is also on the person as the seed.

And in the center of this verse, we have the reference in the middle of it, when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring or he shall see his seed.

Now, I want us to think closely about that today. Because at the end of chapter 6, in the midst of the judgment that God is going to bring, there's going to be a remnant who are going to be kept.

And in that remnant, there's going to be the holy seed. And that holy seed that comes out of the remnant that's preserved by God is the seed which is the Messiah, which is the servant of Jehovah, which is the Son of God, which is Jesus coming into the world.

And I go back to the gospel preached in the first place, to Genesis chapter 12, and there, God promising Abraham that in your offspring, in your seed, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

[9 : 56] And to your offspring, to your seed, I will give this land. And as I make the necessary connections between that first announcement of the gospel to the fulfillment of it, I hear Paul saying, with all his capacity to tie the Bible together, and he tells me in Galatians 3 that this promise was made not to seeds as of many, but to seeds as of one, which is Jesus Christ.

Who is this person? He is the servant of Jehovah, but he is also the seed of God that comes into the world and that comes in accordance with that great promise in Genesis chapter 3.

The seed of the woman will come. And here he is. Here is the promise about him. And I go forward once more into the self-consciousness of Jesus.

And I hear him speaking these words that were read in John chapter 12. And he is deeply conscious that if he is the servant, he is also the seed.

He comes to that moment that is just before his death where he is telling the people, now is the Son of Man to be glorified. Now is the judgment of this world.

[11 : 30] Now is the rule of this world to be cast out. And then he uses these marvelous words. Accept a grain, a seed of wheat fall into the ground and die.

It remains alone. who is this person? Who does he think he is? He thinks and he knows that he is the servant of God.

And he thinks and he knows that he is the seed of the woman who has come as the servant of God to carry out the tasks for God.

to do everything that God has purposed to do. And so we go forward to remember the Lord's death and the spotlight is firmly on his role in God's work of salvation.

Secondly, I want us to see that the spotlight also falls on a plan. We have a servant because we have a plan.

[12 : 42] And that's where the verse begins. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. The AV says it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

And perhaps we have shied away from using that word because it suggests to us perhaps in some way that the father had particular pleasure in punishing his son.

And we have to acknowledge that in a particular way that was exactly the case. It was the will of the Lord to crush him.

And will has to do deeply with what we find favorable in our hearts. And what is favorable in our hearts, it draws us out in actions towards that person, or towards that thing, and we are determined in a particular way and in a willing way to do a certain thing or to embrace a certain person.

And in that sense, it is not too far removed from the whole idea of love. It was the will of the Lord to crush him.

[14 : 03] It was the loving will of the Lord to crush him. It was the will of the Lord to lovingly crush him. But the love, you see, is a love that's in its context.

And it's not that the father ever stopped loving the son or the servant. But that, in a way, that needs to be qualified.

But at this particular time, that his love for his people was overriding in all that God was doing.

And as I said, he never stopped loving his son. But here we have God's plan that his servant seed is going to a particular place and that in that particular place, the God who loves his son is the God who's not going to spare his son.

And he's not going to spare him because of his plan and because of his plan of showing his love to his people.

[15 : 17] And we marvel at the plan of God and the unity of the way in which the plan of God focuses is in upon the cost of everything that belongs to this plan being born by the person who is the servant seed because that has been the choice of the eternal God in his love for a lost world in securing the redemption of his people.

God's love to God. And so when I think of a plan and when I think of a servant who is going to carry out the tasks, I think of a heavenly conference.

That's what it takes, is it not? How are we going to resolve this issue of humankind and sin and society and its departure from God?

how are we going to resolve this ungodliness and this rebellion? This is the conference that we have before the world was. And in the unity of the purpose of that conference, the son willingly becomes the servant.

And in a real way, the father sets himself up to be the judge as well as the master. And the scene is set for the magnificent display of the love of God for a lost world in loving his son whilst he gave himself but in loving his people so much that he gave his son.

[17 : 15] There is a plan. And there is a plan for the person. It was the will of the Lord to crush him.

Imagine going to stamp something under your feet to crush it into the concrete. Imagine bruising the seed as used to be done in the past with stones and grinding them together to powder.

it was the will of the Lord to crush him. The father is coming to his son and he's going to crush him to dust.

And he's going to do that and he still loves him and he's going to do that because he loves you. And for that as we think of the seed in the natural process, what do we do with the seed?

We create an environment for it. We plant the seed in the ground. We're looking for the right kind of climate. We're looking for the right kind of fertilization.

[18 : 32] We're looking for the right kind of environment so that when I plant this seed in the ground it's going to germinate and it's going to bear fruit.

New life is going to grow out of the seed. And here is the son of God and he is the seed of the woman and he's going to suffer.

And when I think of the environment I think first of all of the local environment. And I go outside Jerusalem and the Jehoeulands called Golgotha and I find a tree and I find iron spikes and I find the son of God the servant of Jehovah the seed of the woman and I find that these metal spikes are the means of nailing his hands and his feet to the tree.

the local environment. I find a place for my seed. It's a choice place. And God chooses this most awful of places between two thieves outside of Jerusalem.

And the Bible is quite clear about the gruesomeness of the crown of thorns mutilated body of Jesus on the cross at Calvary.

[20 : 06] But there is more importantly there is the judicial environment. There's an environment here that is invisible.

I look at the gruesomeness of the body of Jesus on the cross at Calvary. But I don't see what's really happening. But God has created this environment in a particular way and he's done that. In verse 6, the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Who is on this tree outside of Jerusalem? He is bearing the sins of the world.

He is bearing your sin and he is bearing my sin. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Everything that surrounds him, everything that troubles him is because of his God appointed relationship with my sin.

And he's so identified with my sin in this environment created by God, that Paul in the New Testament makes two astonishing statements.

[21 : 30] And first of all, he says in Galatians 3 that Jesus Christ was made a curse. How dare he say that? About the immaculate holy son of God.

But he says it because God created this environment kind. And all that God has done up until this point is towards this point. And when I see the gruesome body of Jesus on the cross at Calvary, I see somebody and he's been made a curse for us.

And is that because Paul also astonishingly says that he who knew no sin was made sin for us. I'm here to remember the death of the Lord. I'm here to remember that he bore my sin. And here the word of God is directing me to think that the spotlight is in particular in God's plan and this environment that he has created on Calvary's cross.

And if I'm going to look for my sin today, I find it there. And as much as it troubles me in here, God wants me to know and to understand that that's where my sin is.

[22 : 54] And he has appointed it so to be that he's sparing sins of the world. And Peter says that in that moment on the cross that he was crucified, given over according to the definite plan and purpose and foreknowledge of God in Acts 2.

It was the will of God. And when I follow the journey of the servant seed, who is the son of God from the manger in Bethlehem up until the cross, it is a portrait of complete and perfect obedience.

He was obedient to death, even death on a cross. And was he forced to go there? He was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearer she's done, so he opened not his mouth.

There is a person and there is an astonishing plan and there is an astonishing environment where now the sins of the world are born by the person of the son of God as he goes this final step to finish the tasks that God has given to him.

A plan par excellence, a master plan from the master planner and we find ourselves at Golgotha.

[24 : 45] Is that not what we are remembering today? the environment that God has created in his master plan. And thirdly, I want us to place the spotlight on the process.

There is a judicial environment. There is a judicial process. Here is the Lord, it is the will of the Lord to crush him.

The Lord now becomes the judge in this environment, the cross at Calvary. And in an invisible way I have the throne of God's judgment from which the God the Father is reigning and in his judgment in this moment he is passing judgment on the sins of the world and to the earth.

He has put him to grief. he has crushed him and he has put him to grief. Who does he think he is? He is the seed, he is the servant. How does he feel in this moment in the process that God has appointed?

[26 : 10] it? It is one of deep internal mental and physical anguish. It is close to anxiety.

It is close to his whole being falling apart because in this moment his soul is making an offering for guilt and the sin bearer becomes the guilty one and the guilty one is now condemned and the penalty of God's wrath is executed upon his own son.

The penalty of all of our trespasses and of all of our sins. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was pierced through, fatally wounded. He died at Calvary and they were surprised the soldiers when they came along and they saw that he was already dead.

He died and we think of the words of Zechariah chapter 13 where the words are exclaimed by God himself awake oh sword against my shepherd against the one who is my close companion my son my beloved son who has made sin and who has made a curse and who is now pierced through by the justice the sword of God's justice and in that moment he is feeling crushed he is crushed for our iniquities also in verse 6 that sense of bruising and of crushing that leaves God himself speaking to his son in this prophetic way in verse 14 of the previous chapter as many were astonished at you as if

[28 : 31] God was giving his son a forewarning and a picture of what was going to happen as many as were astonished at you his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and is far beyond that of the children of mankind I go to Calvary's cross in the environment that God has created and I look for the son who in his magnificent beauty was declared to be the pleasure of God at his baptism and I think of him as the person who came into the world into the manger at Bethlehem because he came to take my nature he came to be one of ourselves and I go to Golgotha and I want to look at the person of Jesus there and the Bible tells me that he no longer looks like one of ourselves he is so crushed he is so deformed that in

Psalms 22 his joints are falling apart his heart is melting like wax and there he is being crushed as the seed of God except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die and Jesus cried out it is finished and he gave up the ghost he died but when I think of that process in this plan I think of a place where the temperature is high and I hear Jesus crying out from the cross I thirst it is a place of high temperature I think of it also as a lonely place

I hear Jesus cry out of that environment of crushing my God my God why have you forsaken me there is high temperature there is isolation and loneliness and there is pain the pain of his whole physical experience that his body was changed and it was a dying process he made his grave with the wicked and in that process God is drawing attention to what is at the very centre of his plan to save the world out of his loneliness and the pain of his loneliness on Calvary's cross comes the most successful harvest of all time because he was crushed and because he fell into the ground and because he died he did not remain alone but because he died he bears much fruit and as we come to the close of this verse that's what we see we see the great plan of God bearing the fruits that God had in his mind from before the world was when he said to

Abraham your offspring your seed will be like the sand of the sea here we see the harvest the product he shall see his offspring he shall see the seed of God he shall see children it's remarkable that perhaps this is the only place apart from Isaiah 8 and Hebrews 2 that children are referred to the son and not to the father he will see his offspring and why is that because of his success the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand what is the will of God it is that you and I would be the children of God and the will of

God is prospering in the hand of the servant of God and carried this task of giving himself for the sins of the world and the plan of God had before it two particular vistas as we close and the first of these is the one that we have looked at in the passing that vista of the cross for their sakes says Jesus for your sakes I sanctify myself I give myself as a guilt offering and there is the great vista of glory he shall see his seed he is seeing it now in the world in children being born to the Lord and in his church being formed and bound together in his love as they come because of the power of his grace and of his spirit but there is that great day that

[34 : 31] Isaiah refers to in chapter 8 and that Jesus quotes in Hebrews chapter 2 when he stands in glory with his own church before God's throne and when he will exclaim behold me and the children that God has given to me what a prospect that in this plan that was worked out through such a marvelous person the spotlight now comes to be on the people of God who are the fruit and the harvest harvest of God's remarkable plan and of that remarkable process in the cross of Jesus and in the dying of Jesus and as we close we do give thanks to God that he is the master planner who had this master plan and which was so masterfully executed by himself and by his son and that we see the great benefits of that and his church in the world and that we look for the final full

benefits of them as we have his church gathered together in glory
Amen may God bless his word let us bow our heads in