

Isaiah 53:3-6 - The Prince and the Paupers

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Preacher: Will Spink

[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

We have sung tonight about our need for Jesus, about coming to Jesus in our darkest hours, about finding Him to be our refuge, our rock of ages, the one who perfectly meets our need.

The contention that the Bible makes from cover to cover is that the deepest cries of our hearts are heard and answered in Jesus.

Answered today and made right eternally in Jesus. How is that even possible?

I mean, you know the cries of your hearts, the aches, the pains, the needs that you feel. How could it be that someone is the answer to the deepest cries of your heart?

[1 : 06] The refuge that you've been longing for? How does that happen in Jesus? Jesus. God's Word is going to tell us tonight that Jesus becomes our refuge by entering our pain and enduring our punishment.

That's the punchline up front. We've got nothing else. Jesus becomes our refuge by entering our pain and enduring our punishment.

Let's see how God tells us this through the prophet Isaiah, who in this beautiful passage you have in your bulletins in Isaiah 53, is telling us about our promised Savior.

What He will be like. What He will do. And He explains how Jesus becomes our refuge. Isaiah 53 at verse 3.

He was despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, He was despised and we esteemed Him not.

[2 : 15] 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 everyone to His own way. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Amen. Many of you will know Mark Twain's famous story of the prince and the pauper.

It's a story of two young boys who look very much the same, but in most ways are very, very different. Tom Canty is born to an impoverished family who doesn't love him or want him and mistreats him terribly every day.

[3 : 25] He has to his name one set of tattered rags for clothes and sleeps on the floor of a one-room apartment. On the other hand, Edward Tudor is the prince of Wales, heir to the throne of England.

He lives in the palace with the finest of clothes and is adored not only by his family, but also by the entire nation as the heir to their throne.

They're two very different boys, but one day they meet each other and they discover that they look very much the same. And each envies parts of the other's life, so they trade clothes and places with each other.

Tom Canty begins enjoying life in the palace and Prince Edward immediately begins to suffer. As soon as he walks out of the palace in the humble rags he's now wearing, he meets with mocking and jeering because he claims to be the prince of Wales.

And of course it gets worse when he gets home. Later in the story, it's finally time for Tom to be crowned the king of England and Twain paints perhaps his most vivid depiction of the contrast in the two boys.

[4 : 48] He writes, At midnight on the 19th of February, Tom Canty was sinking to sleep in his rich bed in the palace, guarded by his loyal vassals and surrounded by the poms of royalty, a happy boy.

For tomorrow was the day appointed for his solemn crowning as king of England. At that same hour, Edward, the true king, hungry and thirsty, soiled and draggled, worn with travel and clothed in rags and shreds, his share of the results of the riot, was wedged in among a crowd of people who were watching with deep interest certain hurrying gangs of workmen who streamed in and out of Westminster Abbey, busy as ants.

They were making the last preparation for the royal coronation. It's a vivid picture of substitution, isn't it? Prince Edward endures the sufferings that rightly belong to Tom Canty, while Tom enjoys privileges that rightly belong to Edward.

It's that kind of picture that this passage paints for us of Jesus, the suffering servant, who first enters our pain.

Look at verse 3. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

[6 : 19] And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.

He was, wasn't he? He endured the physical suffering of the mocking, the beating, spitting, wearing a crown of thorns.

But we also see relational pain of being despised, abandoned by even his closest friends, experiencing profound loneliness, being considered nothing and worthless.

Jesus was familiar with the trials of unjust rulers, ungodly leaders. He knew the grief of the loss of loved ones.

He has suffered as we have. And why? Why? Because he deserved all these sorrows? He got the pains and griefs coming to him?

[7 : 32] Look at verse 4. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

The Hebrew here puts the emphasis on our griefs and our sorrows. You could understand it. Surely it was our griefs he has borne and our sorrows he carried.

The man of sorrows acquainted with grief was so called because he entered our pain. Even though we thought God was against him.

That's the conclusion that was drawn as he went to the cross. We esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted that God was out to get this guy.

Jesus became like us, didn't he? He entered our pain and took upon himself sorrows and griefs that were rightly ours. We deserved the mocking, didn't we?

[8 : 39] Certainly, if we claimed to be the king of the Jews, people would rightly laugh and jeer at us, wouldn't they? But he really was the king. And yet he suffered the mocking, the beating, the painful torment that we deserved.

We're not alone in our grief, in our sorrow, in our suffering. We have a refuge who has entered our pain with us.

And while he hasn't yet wiped away every tear, his presence in our pain reminds us that one day he will. But even more hopeful than that, Jesus doesn't stop at merely entering our pain and experiencing the symptoms of our sin in this broken world.

No, Jesus attacks the very root cause of all that pain when he endures our punishment. What really gives us hope in Jesus as a refuge for us?

That he would defeat the pain and suffering at its root. Not just that he would trim back the dead branches a little bit, but that he would go to the root that he would conquer sin itself.

[10 : 03] And that's what Isaiah is about to show us. Look at verse 5. 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. This is the pinnacle of substitution language in the Old Testament.

We are the ones who sin. He is the one who bears it. Jesus endures the just punishment.

Pierced by human spears. Crushed by a just and holy God. God. That's what our iniquities and transgressions deserved.

He received our chastisement. The punishment we had coming while we received his peace with God and perfect relationship. He endured our wounds and we enjoy his healing.

[11:12] He trades places. He serves as the substitute not just for one of us but for all of us who trust him. Verse 6 All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. We sin he bears it.

It reminds us of several other Old Testament pictures of the cross of Christ doesn't it? The last few weeks here at Southwood we've been looking at some of these Old Testament images that serve as foreshadows of the cross of Christ and all of them picture substitution don't they?

Leviticus 16 and the scapegoat on the day of atonement who as a substitute is sent away from the presence of God to die so that God's people can come into his presence and live.

Exodus 12 at the Passover the spotless lamb dies sheds his blood as a substitute so that the blood of the firstborn sons is spared.

[12:24] Numbers 21 like the serpent lifted up on the pole Jesus actually becomes sin as a substitute for us so that we can become righteous in him.

But Jesus finally comes himself as the perfect substitute doesn't he? Not a shadow anymore but the thing itself Jesus is greater than all the animals led to the slaughter unaware of what's happening to them Jesus willfully consents to obey to be the substitute he knows what's coming and he goes willingly the only sufficient appropriate substitute for willfully rebellious people like you and me is one who knows and understands and yet agrees to lay down his life anyway.

To put it in terms of the prince and the pauper that we read earlier on the night of the crucifixion of Jesus the rightful king the soldiers are mocking him pain is wracking his bloody body on the cross and the heavenly father is turning his face away from his son while those of us who are rightly paupers who deserve that treatment he's receiving are resting safely in his father's hand clothed in his righteousness treasured sons of the king because of our substitute let that contrast settle in on you tonight could it possibly be that we've lost our sense of wonder and amazement at this great exchange that takes place for us this gracious substitution from which we benefit listen to the way the puritans described it in this prayer from the valley of vision it's in the back of your bulletins if you want to read along for now you may just want to close your eyes and contemplate what Jesus did for you in the middle of this prayer we read this

Christ was all anguish that I might be all joy cast off that I might be brought in trodden down as an enemy that I might be welcomed as a friend surrendered to hell's worst that I might attain heaven's best stripped that I might be clothed wounded that I might be healed a thirst that I might drink tormented that I might be comforted made a shame that I might inherit glory entered darkness that I might have eternal light my savior wept that all tears might be wiped from my eyes groaned that I might have endless song endured all pain that I might have unfading health bore a thorny crown that I might have a glory diadem bowed his head that I might uplift mine experienced reproach that I might receive welcome closed his eyes in death that I might gaze on unclouded brightness expired that I might forever live man of sorrows what a name for the son of

God who came bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood hallelujah what a savior savior do you know that great savior who came as your substitute do you know him have you experienced him taking your place he has conquered sin itself because we all like sheep have gone astray but the lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all so he is your great refuge he has not only entered your pain he has endured your punishment so that eternally the pain won't come back he's endured your he's entered your pain with you but he's also endured your punishment for you so that you never will but instead that you would experience his glory forever two quick questions for us tonight in light of this first do you treasure him like the pauper you were born as that is as you remember your frailty as you experience your suffering as you feel your sorrow does

[18:05] Jesus become more beautiful and wonderful to you do you thank him regularly for taking your place and giving you his and secondly do you live like the prince you have become that is now that Jesus your substitute has earned you access do you run often into the presence of the king like only a prince could knowing he's a safe refuge in the midst of your sorrows and your sins do you recognize the unending riches of the king and the kingdom that are yours so that you don't have to look to the crowds for your value do you share the king's heart as the first prince did who loved paupers enough to enter their pain and endure their punishment in their place pray with me

Jesus you indeed suffered for us what you endured we deserved impress on our hearts tonight holy spirit the weight of what was born in our place and impress upon us not just the heaviness of that but the joy of the status we've been given as sons of the king father would that joy be something that we can't get away from this weekend and this year and the rest of our lives might we live as those who truly received a substitute who traded places with us might you do that work in each of our hearts because

Jesus did the work for us on the cross let's continue to contemplate the work of Jesus as James sings for us by his wounds for more information visit us online at southwood.org town house ■■
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