Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Scorned Servant of Jehovah, Part 2
Scripture: Isaiah 53:1-3
Code: 90-438

We're studying the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Isaiah is a prophecy in the Old Testament. If you have a Bible, turn to Isaiah chapter 53, and that's the chapter we're looking at. Some would consider this the greatest chapter in the Old Testament. There's no question about the fact that it is the most detailed prophecy of the Messiah that the Old Testament contains. It is a powerful, powerful chapter that has to be considered phrase by phrase if not word by word because of its high impact and profound truth.

When we study together this fifty-third chapter, I want you to become so familiar with it that it is accessible to you by memory. And so, as we work our way through, this is message number four today, and we're going to get to verses 2 and 3, so it will be a while before we get through this entire chapter, but in the process I want you to be so familiar with this chapter that it becomes part of the fabric of your life which then will cause you to worship the Lord in ways that will be fresh and new and rich and a blessing to you. But also, you'll have access to communicating the glories of our Savior from this chapter to anyone who asks. So let's hear the reading of this chapter, Isaiah 53.

"Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquity. The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb that is led to slaughter and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away. And as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of My people, to whom the stroke was due? His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief. If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant,

will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore I allot Him a portion with the great and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors."

I want to begin with a series of questions and give you an overview of this chapter, we'll approach it by way of introduction differently. For this morning, a series of questions that will help us get the big picture here.

What is the theme of this prophecy? What is the theme of this chapter? The theme of this chapter is suffering, horrible suffering, terrible suffering, traumatic suffering, agonizing suffering, agonizing suffering, painful suffering and deadly suffering. Suffering is the theme clearly. Verse 3, "A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." Verse 4, "Griefs He Himself bore. Sorrows He carried. He was stricken, smitten by God, afflicted." Verse 5, "He was pierced through, He was crushed, He was chastened, He was scourged." Verse 6, "The Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." Verse 7, "He was oppressed, afflicted. He was like a lamb let to slaughter." Verse 8, "He experienced oppression and judgment. He was cut off out of the land of the living." All of that indicates that this is a terrible, terrible experience of suffering.

Verse 10 repeats that He was crushed, that He was grieved. Verse 11 talks about the anguish of His suffering. Who can bear such suffering, such massive suffering?

Well, you might say, I suppose there would be somewhere…someone who deserved to suffer like that. But that leads to a second question. Was the suffering deserved? Was this sufferer who is being described here deserving of this kind of relentless suffering?

The answer to the question is no…no, the suffering was not deserved by the one who suffered. Go back to verse 9 for a moment, end of the verse, "He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth." And what is in the mouth is what is in the heart 'cause out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. So there was nothing in the mouth of evil or deceit because there was nothing in the heart.

In fact, going further than that, He is identified in verse 11, this sufferer, as the Righteous One. This is a prophecy of a sufferer, horrendous, horrific, terrible suffering. Was the suffering deserved? No.

That leads to a third question. Did God attempt then to protect the righteous sufferer? The answer is no. Verse 10 says, "The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief."

It's an amazing story, unparalleled suffering, undeserved suffering by a righteous sufferer who is unprotected by a righteous God. Which leads us to the fourth question then. Is that failure on God's part? Is that inconsistent with God's righteous nature, not to protect a righteous man from such

suffering? Is it consistent with God's righteous nature to let this man suffer?

The answer is yes…yes. Because of what we read starting in verse 5, "He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening was for our well-being. He was scourged so we could be healed." Verse 6, "The Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." The end of verse 8, "For the transgression of My people He was cut off out of the land of the living." It was due to them.

Verse 11, "He will bear their iniquities." Verse 12, "He bore the sin of many." He is a vicarious sufferer. He is a substitutionary sufferer. He is suffering, not for His own sins, but for the sins of others.

Which leads to another question. Why should a man do that? Why should any man who is righteous suffer so horribly, be unprotected by God, and then suffer vicariously for the sins that He didn't commit, but the sins of others? The answer is, because He was willing, because He desired to do that. Yes, verse 10, He would render Himself as a guilt offering. He gave Himself as a guilt offering, an offering for the guilty. Yes, verse 12, He poured out Himself to death.

What an amazing person to suffer so greatly, to suffer undeservedly, to suffer without the protection of a righteous God though He was righteous, to suffer vicariously, to suffer willingly. Why? That's the next question, why would He do this? What is the outcome?

First, in verse 11, He will by doing this justify the many. That is He will by His suffering make many righteous and He will be exalted. As a result of His anguish, verse 11, He will see light. That's…that's what that verse means, He will see light, He will see life, He will be satisfied. And verse 11, He will have a portion with the great, He will divide the booty with the strong.

In other words, He will be rewarded. He will be exalted. How exalted? Well we remember, don't we? Back to chapter 52 verse 13, "He will prosper, He will succeed, He will be high, He will be lifted up, He will be greatly exalted." Verse 15, "He will startle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him for they will never be able to comprehend the glory that will in the end come to Him."

Who is this? Who is this? Well it can be no one other than whom? The Lord Jesus Christ. Can't the world see that? Can't the world see that? This is written 700 years before Jesus was born, or approximately. Which is evidence enough that God is the author of Scripture because only God knows the future in detail. The world, how can they miss this? This has to be Jesus Christ. All these details are fulfilled in Him. But then again, the world doesn't have the Bible, read the Bible, know the Bible. So when we look at, let's say the Gentiles, the nations of the world, we…we wouldn't necessarily expect that they would believe in Jesus Christ. They're unfamiliar with Isaiah 53, the Old Testament, the truth of the New Testament, the writing of the account of Jesus.

But then what about the Jews? What about the Jews, they know the story of Christ, if for no other reason than to make sure everybody knows they reject Him. That's part of being Jewish in the world, is to make sure that you're clear that Jesus is not the Messiah, Jesus was not the Savior. Why don't the Jews believe this? How can the Jews not take Isaiah 53, put it up against the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and say, "This can only be Jesus." Why is it they don't do that?

One of them, a lover of the Lord Jesus, by the name of Mitch Glaser has a ministry called Chosen People Ministry and he has written an article in a recent book called The Gospel According To Isaiah 53, that is very interesting. Granted that only about ten percent of Jews in the world, and there are about 14 million, only about ten percent of them are orthodox, that means they would search the Scripture, they would know something about the Scripture. The other 90 percent are to one degree or another rather indifferent to the Scripture and to careful interpretation of the Scripture. So most of the Jews, this is what…this is what Mitch Glaser says, most of them don't know anything about the Old Testament, Isaiah, or Isaiah 53. They're unfamiliar with it.

Further, he says, "Most of them don't believe in biblical prophecy. They don't believe in sin. They don't believe in depravity which means an irreversible sinfulness that's inherent in being human. They don't believe in atonement. They don't believe in sacrifice. They don't believe in bloodshed for forgiveness, they don't believe in incarnation, they don't believe in rejection, they don't believe the New Testament, so they don't believe in Jesus." So you can't assume that when you talk to Jewish people about the Lord Jesus Christ, that they will have any familiarity at all with Isaiah 53. The amazing components of this chapter have no place in their thinking. So, the chapter begins by saying who has believed the message given to us? They will admit that they didn't believe it.

It's a staggering thing. The world is full of people who don't believe it. The nations largely don't believe it. They don't believe the message concerning Jesus Christ. The religions of the world apart from true Christians don't believe the message concerning Christ. And what a message it is. The Jews who know it, Paul said in Romans 10, "It's…it's in your mouth, it's near you. You know the account. You know the claims of Christ but you don't believe it."

Imagine, they don't believe this message, the good news from heaven where the love of God has moved Him to rescue sinners from hell by the death of His Son…they don't believe that. They don't believe the message, the good news that an unseen God has sent an unseen Savior to this generation unseen to provide unseen blessings in an unseen heaven to be received by an unseen faith. They don't believe the good news of salvation and forgiveness for sinners from sin and wrath and judgment. They don't believe the good news of a crucified Savior as a means of that salvation. They don't believe the good news that there is divine righteousness available whereby guilty sinners may stand fearless and holy before God wrapped in His own righteousness. They don't believe the good news of a pardon granted by heaven to the sentenced and imprisoned sinner who can receive

that pardon by faith in Christ. They don't believe the good news that there's one physician who cures all who come to Him infallibly and eternally of all the soul's diseases, does it freely and rejects no patients. They don't believe the good news that a limitless feast for hungry souls is prepared to which all are bid welcome, Christ Himself being both the host and the meal. They don't believe the good news of a priceless treasure that can't be bought, already purchased and then offered as a gift, composed of an exhaustible blessings and never depleted joys both now and forever for the one who receives the gift. They don't believe the good news of a victory won by Jesus Christ over Satan, death and the world, a triumph into which all who believe in Him can enter and participate. They don't believe the good news of eternal peace with God purchased by the blood of Christ for unworthy and offending sinners.

What a message not to believe. But they don't believe it. And here you have in Isaiah 53, as you know, a confession from the Jews. The words of Isaiah 53, all the way down till the last verse, are the words of a future generation of Jewish people, the nation Israel, who will make this confession and say, "We didn't believe it." Who has believed it? Very few, very few.

Whoever believes it, Jew or Gentile, at any point will be saved. But we didn't believe it. They will confess that. Remember now, we're talking about the fact that this chapter is in the past tense. All the verbs are in the past tense. Most people think it's predicting what's going to happen to Jesus. Well it does do that because it describes it in detail, His suffering and His death and His resurrection, and exaltation. But it's all in the past tense verbs which means it jumps across what happens to Jesus and looks back at it from the end of human history when Israel finally looks on the one they've pierced, mourns for Him as an only Son, realizes they have rejected their Messiah, and a fountain of cleansing is open to them and salvation comes to the nation Israel. In the meantime, until that national repentance, anyone can come to Christ and be saved, but the nation will repent in the future and be saved. And when they come to that awareness at a time, Zechariah says, when the nations of the world are gathered to destroy Israel, when they are surrounded and ready to be obliterated, at that point the Lord will come to be their defender and they will be saved.

In the fifty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, you get a picture of that. I'll just refer to it. You get a picture of that as the Jews are saying, "We're in trouble, our transgressions are mounting, there's no justice in the land. Where do we go? What do we do? This is a picture of future Israel. Present Israel, how do we defend ourselves? The world is after us. God is not coming to our aid. And then it says this in Isaiah 59, "And there was no man to help them. There's no human leader who can rescue Israel from its punishment for rejecting Christ." Which is going on even now. The world is threatening its existence with nuclear power. It says that God looked around in Isaiah 59 and there was no man. And then the most beautiful language, God responds to the fact that there was not someone to save Israel.

Listen to 59:16, "He saw that there was no man. There was no one to intercede. Then His own arm brought salvation to Him." Who is His own arm? The Messiah, the arm of the Lord who is revealed.

Then His own arm. And this is dramatic. You see the Messiah, the Lord Jesus strapping on righteousness like a breastplate, putting on a helmet of salvation on His head, putting on garments of vengeance, wrapping Himself with zeal like a mantle. And He comes, and He comes to repay wrath to the adversaries of His people, recompense to His enemies so they will fear the name of the Lord from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun, He will come like a rushing stream which the wind of the Lord drives. So you have Christ coming to save Israel from obliteration in the time that He comes to defend them against the enemies gathered against them. What will happen is He will punish the ungodly and verse 20, "A Redeemer will come to Zion and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob." That's the hour of their salvation. He will be that Redeemer. This will happen because God promised it in verse 21, "This is My covenant with them, My Spirit which is upon you, My words which I put in your mouth won't depart from your mouth or the mouth of your offspring or the mouth of your offspring's offspring, says the Lord, from now and forever." That's the salvation of the nation Israel, New Covenant salvation. They will look on the one they've pierced. They will mourn. They will be saved. And the Lord Himself will be the warrior who defends them in that hour when He sends Messiah to their defense, as well as to bring their salvation.

When that time comes, in the future, that's when they will look back and say, "We didn't believe. The arm of the Lord, even the Messiah Himself, the power of God came revealed in Him and we didn't believe it. We didn't believe it." They will make that open confession of the horrors of generations of unbelief.

The question then that arises, and let's take this question as our entry point into the text of Isaiah 53, "Why did they reject Jesus Christ? Why?" They will make that confession. They will…they will tell us why. They will tell God why. And the confession that they will make in the future and that anyone who comes to Christ now must make is in verses 2 and 3. "For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, like a root out of parched ground. He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised and we did not esteem Him."

That's the explanation. That's the explanation of why the Jews for generations have rejected Jesus Christ. That is the confession that that future generation that turns to Him will make. And remember, God will purge out the rebels from the nation, Zechariah says, and a third of the Jews in the world at this point, that would be maybe four or five million of them will confess Jesus as Lord, and they will say, "This is why for generations we rejected Him."

Three reasons are given here…three reasons. They are confessed reasons. Number one, and they all have to do with the contempt they had for Him. Number one, He had a contemptible origin…He had a contemptible origin. He grew up before Him like a tender shoot and like a root out of parched ground. He grew up before Him, meaning before God, He was in full view of God, who was fully

pleased with Him, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” God saw every moment of His life, God watched Him as He grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man, Luke 2:52 puts it. God was in full attention, watching the growth of His incarnate Son. So He’s growing up before God. But when we looked at Him, and before God means in the pleasure of God, the way God wanted it, according to God’s plan, but from our viewpoint He was like a tender shoot, He was like a root out of parched ground. Let me just tell you, this is an agrarian society, these people work in the ground, they grow things, they have trees and orchards and they plant in the ground, and so illustrations will come from that realm. To say that He is like a tender shoot is to simply say He’s a sucker branch, it’s the Hebrew word *yoneq* and it means a sucker branch. Sucker branches pop up and without cultivation, without expectation, and the thing that you do with a sucker branch so that it doesn’t drain away life and fruitfulness from the other branches is to cut it off, superfluous, small, unnecessary, irrelevant, insignificant, random. Sucker branches pop up, they’re not designed, they’re not cared for, they’re not expected, they’re not needed and they’re cut off. Some commentators like to think that this tree the sucker branch comes out of is a metaphoric reference, or an allegorical reference to something like the house of David, or whatever. That’s really stretching it unnecessarily. This is very simple language. This is simply a way to say His beginning was irrelevant, it was unimportant, it was insignificant, it didn’t matter, He was a nobody from nobodies, from nowhere.

We looked at Jesus, what did we see? An insignificant family, Joseph, Mary, an insignificant town, Nazareth, way off the beaten track. Born in an insignificant place in an inn, in a stable placed in a feed trough and attending His birth were shepherds who were the lowest people on the social ladder. No royal birth, no social status, no family nobility, no formal education. Thirty years a carpenter in Nazareth. No connections with anybody who mattered with the elite, with the important. He’s…He’s a sucker branch, He’s irrelevant. Or He’s like a root out of parched ground, as the sun comes down in that part of the world, in the Middle East, the ground becomes parched and dry and as the ground shrinks because water evaporates out , some of the roots begin to come to the surface, dirty, brown roots in parched ground, not cared for. That would be roots of a tree that nobody cares about because if they cared about it, they’d be watering it. Again, it’s another way to say He’s unnecessary, unwarranted, unwanted, unimpressive, no value, no more significant than a sucker branch or a dry root in a parched place that nobody cultivates, that nobody cares for that nobody waters. Miserable beginnings. They even said things like, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

He gained nothing from His family origin. He gained nothing from His social status. He gained nothing from the economics of His family. He gained nothing from His followers. They weren’t brilliant, they weren’t educated, they weren’t powerful, they weren’t influential, they weren’t important. There wasn’t one rabbi, Pharisee, Sadducee, priest, scribe. Nobody mattered. They were a rag-tag bunch of fishermen nobodies, primarily, with a few other odd balls scattered in like a tax collector and a terrorist. They had no position. They had no money. And they kind of joined up early with the thing in the back of their minds that they might sort of win the kingdom lottery, if they hung around. There might be a big payoff.

None of them had any achievement of any note. And the Jews looked at that and they said, “Wait a minute, this can’t be the Messiah because Messiah is not going to enter like this. This doesn’t fit the profile that so highly developed over centuries among the Jews of a glorious arrival of Messiah. In Mark chapter 6, He was in Nazareth, His own town where they all knew Him. The Sabbath came, began to teach in the synagogue and people were astonished at what He said. “Where did this man get these things?” Maybe I can make the emphasis different. “Where did THIS man get these things? This nobody, this sucker branch, this dry root? Where did He get these things?” And what is this wisdom given to Him and such miracles as these perform?

They acknowledge His wisdom, they acknowledge the things He taught. They acknowledged the miracles He did. And then they say this, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas and Simon and are not His sisters here with us? And they took offense at Him.” They were offended at any claim He ever made to be their Messiah, in spite of the power, miracle power that He displayed.

So they had contempt for His beginnings, contempt for His origin. Secondly, they had contempt for His life, for what He became. He had a contemptible adulthood. He had a contemptible life. Go back to verse 2 again, "He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.” They were big into appearance, that’s why they picked Saul to be their first king, right? He was more handsome than everybody else and taller. Still seems to be a formula for success. But it was with Him…with Jesus, wait a minute, maybe He’s not tall enough, handsome enough, stately enough, majestic. Again, not much progress from 1 Samuel chapter 9 when they were picking Saul. Nothing royal about Jesus, nothing regal about Jesus, nothing elevated about Jesus. In fact, the idea that He was a king was so bizarre and so distasteful they resented that so profoundly that when Pilate at the end of his proverbial rope having been blackmailed by the Jews in this issue with Jesus, blackmailed and threatened that if he didn’t crucify Jesus, they were going to tell Caesar and he wouldn’t survive another report to Caesar. He knew that. They blackmailed him, and his pound of flesh, his vengeance, his get back of those Jews was to slap on the top of the cross of Jesus, “This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” That was Pilate’s vengeance because he knew that was the most objectionable claim that Jesus made, though He displayed divine power and divine wisdom and divine truth and divine grace, and holiness, they saw nothing of royal beauty in Him. Nothing attractive about Him.

They had scorned from the beginning, His origin. They had scorned for the middle, His life. And thirdly, He had a contemptible end. He had a contemptible end. For that you go to verse 3, “He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised and we didn’t esteem Him.”

His end is in view here in the opening two lines. They had not only contempt for His beginnings and His life, but especially His death. Now remember, they didn't think they needed somebody to die for their sins. They were in to self-righteousness. They were going to please God by being good and religious and doing works. And here comes this Messiah, this one who claims to be the Messiah and the King, and instead of being triumphant, instead of His career ending in glory and majesty and triumph and victory and elevation and exaltation, He's despised, forsaken of men. It all ends in sorrow and grief.

They could have looked at the death of Jesus with all its horrors and they could have said, "You know, this is the sacrifice we've been waiting for. This is the sacrifice that is pictured when Abraham finds a ram in the thicket to substitute for his son, pulls the knife back from killing Isaac and kills the ram instead. This is the fulfillment of killing the Passover Lamb and putting the blood on the doorpost and the lintel and escaping the wrath of God because a lamb has been sacrificed. This…this is the final sacrifice, the only true saving sacrifice pictured in the millions of sacrifices that they made day after day after day as animals were slaughtered through all their history. They could have done that, but they didn't see themselves as sinful and they didn't need a sacrifice and they didn't need an atonement and they didn't need a Savior. So when they saw their self-proclaimed Messiah being a man of sorrows and grief, His life ending the way it ended, it was despicable.

They rejected Him so they reject Him now because they rejected Him then, they rejected Jesus because they rejected Jesus. He was despised, strong term, it means to treat with disdain. They treated Him with disdain, and they still do. They still do. The Hebrew word for Jesus is *Yeshua…Yeshua*. The rabbis through the years have changed that name by dropping the final "a" and they call Him *Yeshu…Yeshu* is an acrostic meaning, "Let His Name Be Blotted Out." So you will see in rabbinic writings Yeshu, let Him be blotted out, which is the contemporary way of saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us," which is what they said when they screamed for His crucifixion.

He is called by the rabbis The Transgressor. He is called by the rabbis The Taloui(??), the hanged one. Cursed is whoever is hanged on a tree. Maybe one of the most distressing things is the identification of Jesus with ben Stada and ben Pandera, blasphemies. What that is is this. The real story of Jesus, the rabbis say, is the story of Yeshu, they say, is the story of a man named ben Pandera and a woman named Miriam ben Stada; ben Pandera is supposed to be His father, and ben Stada, His mother.

His mother, some woman named Miriam ben Stada was a hairdresser who had an adulterous affair with Joseph ben Pandera, a Roman mercenary and produced Yeshu. So He's the illegitimate son of a hairdresser and a Roman mercenary who then, the rabbis say, went to Egypt to learn magical arts and lead men astray. That's in the Talmud, all of that. Rabbis called His gospel evangelian(?) instead of the evangel, like the evangelist writing the true story, which means the sinful writing. They have

generations of scorn for Jesus, to one degree or another, of course, so He was despised. Says it at the beginning of verse 3, says it at the end of verse 3…twice…He was despised. That continues.

And then it says He was forsaken of men. I want you to look at that. That's maybe not as simple as it looks. Forsaken of men not in a general sense, that would be ben Adam, *ben adam*, that means men in general. This is *ben ish*, what that means is lords, rulers, leaders, prominent people.

So what does the populace say? Look, contemptible beginning, contemptible life, contemptible end in which no important people affirmed Him. We look to our leaders and they were the ones crying for His blood.

In John 7 there is an important testimony to this effect. In John 7, you could pick it up say at verse 45, "The officers come to the chief priests and they say, 'Why don't you have Jesus? We sent you to get Him, take Him capture, bring Him to us.'" So these officers, temple police say, "Well never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." We don't know what to do with Him, we were just shocked by His teaching. "And the Pharisees answered and they said this, "You've not also been led astray, have you?" Get this. "No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him," John 7:48, "Nobody important believed in Him"

So when the Jews look back from a future time, they're going to say, "Look, looked at the beginning of His life, the middle of His life, the end of His life, and there was nothing about it that made Him attractive and it didn't fit our picture and then His death is so horrendous, He is rejected, He is despised, nobody important takes His side. What are we supposed to do? We follow our leaders." None of the power elite were close to Him, none of them supported Him, none of them believed in Him. A few who should have believed in Him backed off because the price was too high. And there were a few secret disciples who showed up later. But the people of rank were not impressed. Chief men of His nation, the ones who towered above the multitude, and it was a hierarchy, it was a stiff and resolute hierarchy, the people were way down here and the rulers had the power and the authority and the great men drew back from Him. He had none of the people of distinction on His side.

Still true today in the world. Still true. The works, the power of Jesus was attributed to Satan, it was the leaders who said He does what He does by the powers of hell, Beelzebub, Satan. And so they persecuted and martyred His followers. They called the Apostles apostates and said they were worse than the heathen. And in those early years, a prayer developed and it went like this, "May the followers of Jesus be suddenly destroyed without hope and blotted out of the book of life." Such was the depth of the rejection and the scorn. And He ended up a man of sorrows, verse 3, and acquainted with grief.

You just look at His life and it's just sad. That can't be the Messiah. Rather than inflict suffering, rather than inflicting grief on the enemies of Israel, and the nations, as the prophets say He was going to do, He is Himself a man of sorrows, literally pains, but not external pains, sorrow of heart in all its forms would be the Hebrew of that word. And then He was acquainted with grief, grief of soul. He was a sad person. He was sad on the inside. You might look at it this way, they saw Him as pathetic…pathetic, deep sadness. He cries, He weeps, there's no account anywhere in the New Testament that He ever laughed. Where is their great leader, triumphant, victorious, full of joy, excitement, enthusiasm? Who is this man who is brokenhearted, weeping, sad, suffering pain? And, of course, on top of that, there was the actual pain. And that was so bad, verse 3 says, that He was like one from whom men hide their face. By the time He got to the cross, He was marred more than any man, verse 14 says of chapter 52. A crown of thorns crushed on His head, blood running down His body, flies cloaking Him in His nakedness hanging in the open sun on the cross, nails through His hands, marks from the lashing and the whipping, spit dried on His face and His body, bruises from punches in the face and beatings with sticks.

The reality of His suffering just doesn't fit the picture of Messiah. Now remember, they didn't need, they didn't think, a Savior. And Jesus said, "I can't do anything with you because I didn't come to call the righteous to repentance." He is totally objectionable. So, He is like one from whom men hide their face, someone so grotesque, so deformed, so ugly, so objectionable that you don't even turn to look, it's too embarrassing, it's too shameful, it's too ugly, it's too horrible, it's too unforgettable. You don't want that image in your face. That's…that's the ongoing attitude of Israel toward Jesus. He's hideous to them as a Messiah, despicable.

So, end of verse 3, He was despised and we did not esteem Him. That's a very benign phrase that last one, we did not esteem Him, in English, what it means is we considered Him nothing, we considered Him non-existent. That's the ultimate scorn, He is a nobody to us.

That's the historic view of Jesus from Jewish people. I thank the Lord that many Jewish people one by one are coming to Christ through all this church age and seeing Him for who He really is. And isn't it good news that someday the nation will turn and see Him and make this confession? I know some people may say, "Well this sounds like it's kind of anti-Jewish."

No, this isn't a Gentile confession, this is a confession of the Jews in the future day when they look back and realize what they had done. This is not a Gentile assessment of Jewish unbelief, this is a Jewish assessment, this is a repentance. These are words which the nation will speak in their brokenhearted confession of the worst sin imaginable of rejecting Christ. And these are words that you need to speak if you have been rejecting Jesus Christ. You need to say these same words now, Jew or Gentile, whoever you are, so that a fountain of cleansing can be opened to you.

Until the time that they believe in the future, and maybe the near future, we want to say this, Romans 1:16, “I’m not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe; to the Jew first and to the Gentile.”

I want to close in the last minute or two by having you turn to Acts 3. Acts chapter 3 verse 17, this is Peter’s sermon after the sermon at Pentecost in the days of the early church. Such a great sermon. Verse 13, Peter says, “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, your God, the God of our fathers has glorified His Servant Jesus, the One whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release Him, You disowned the Holy and Righteous One, You asked for a murderer to be granted to you, Barabbas. You put to death the Prince of Life, the One whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man they had just healed, whom you see and know, and the faith which comes through Him has given him the perfect health in the presence of you all.” He says, “You’ve rejected, you take the responsibility for rejecting and putting to death the Prince of Life.”

And then verse 17, so important. “Now, brethren,” he speaks to these Jews as his brothers, “I know that you acted in ignorance just as your rulers did. I know. But the things which God announced before by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.” Where do you think he’s going with that? Isaiah 53, very likely. “Therefore, repent and return.” Is that not good news? You just killed the Prince of Life and God is telling you Repent and Return. And when you do, your sin will be wiped away. That is literally what Jesus said when He was dying on the cross, “Father…what?...forgive them, they don’t know what they’re doing. You’re ignorant, you did it in unbelief. Repent, return, that your sins may be wiped away.” And then what will happen? When you turn and you repent and your sins are wiped away, the times of refreshing will come. That’s the Kingdom, that’s the Kingdom. Because He will send Jesus the Christ appointed to you. That’s His Second Coming, to establish His Kingdom. Heaven must receive Him now, until the period of the restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. The Kingdom again, the promised Abrahamic Covenant, Davidic Covenant, the prophets reiterated, salvation and all the Kingdom promises, they will come when Christ returns, Christ will return in the times of restitution, the times of restoration, the times of refreshing, when you repent…when you repent.

Verse 24 he says, “All the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and his successors onward announce these days, the Kingdom days, and you are still the sons of the prophets and the Covenant which God made with your fathers saying to Abraham, “In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed, for you first, God raised up His servant…that’s Isaiah’s 53’s title for Him…and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.” You killed the Messiah, but God is not finished with you. The day will come when He turns you from your sins and sends His Son to set up His Kingdom and fulfill His promise.

God’s not through with Israel, folks. Keep your eye on Israel. Their salvation is assured by the promise of God. In the meantime, salvation is open to all who call upon Him.

Father, we come to You now at the end of this wonderful time of worship with grateful hearts. So much truth in this chapter, it’s…it’s inexhaustible. But even in just two verses we understand history in a new way, sweeping comprehension of centuries, generations of rejection of Christ. Now we see why. But we also know that there’s coming a future day when all the promises You gave to Israel will be fulfilled in the hour of their salvation, when You become their Redeemer. We look forward to that day but in the meantime, in the meantime the gospel, the message when believed becomes the power of God to salvation to Jew or Gentile. Would You be gracious, O Lord, and reach down and draw some to Your heart even now today?

While you’re still prayerful, this is the decision of all decisions, the commitment of all commitments, this is your eternity at stake. This is heaven instead of hell. To embrace what Christ has done for you, you need a Savior, you’re not good enough. You can’t get there by your goodness or your religion. You will fall short. You need a Savior. You need somebody to pay for your sins and you need to accept the payment He’s made so that God applies it to you and your sins are completely forgiven at that point and you are assured of eternal heaven. What a message. Do you believe it? Do you believe it enough to embrace Christ as Lord? That’s the question.

Father, we thank You now again for the work You will do in our hearts because Your Word never returns void, but always accomplishes the purpose to which You send it. May that be today to Your glory we pray in Christ’s name. Amen.

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