

The Servant of Isaiah: The Servant Shares the Victorious Life  
Isaiah 53:10-12  
March 27 2016  
Easter Sunday

Jesus Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

This morning we bring to a close our Lenten series on the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. Rather than use the Gospel as our text today, we will go back to Isaiah once more. *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. 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. 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 the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.*

Today is all about the glorious truth of Easter. Jesus Christ has risen from the grave. Our theme this morning is, “The Servant Shares the Victorious Life”.

Easter begins at the tomb. Isaiah begins: *Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief* (Is 53:10 ESV). Without Good Friday, there is no Easter. The will of God was, from before the Creation of the earth, that His Servant would die for our sins. It wasn't God's will to simply crush Him and put Him to grief. God's will was that Jesus would be the guilt offering, the sin offering, the one who died because of human guilt.

That's why God came in human form. Easter is the reasoning behind Christmas. Jesus had to be human. He had to be bound to the same law all of us are bound to: if you sin, you die. The other side of that law – the side none of us has accomplished – is that if you live completely without sin, you will live forever.

But Jesus changed that. He lived a sinless life of perfect obedience to the Father. He did it from a heart of love, not merely from a sense of duty. He earned eternal life. Then he died. Death had no power over him, but Jesus died anyway.

He said that no one would take his life from him, but that he would willingly lay it down. He died deliberately, by his choice at exactly the right time. Isaiah says: *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* (Is 53:11 ESV).

He knew anguish. He was so sorrowful on that night in Gethsemane that it nearly killed him. His sweat came as great drops of blood – which doctors say can actually happen when you are under enough emotional stress. Then came the arrest, the trial before the kangaroo court of the Sanhedrin, the trials before Pilate and Herod, and the scourging. All of that is summed up here in our text by the words *the anguish of his soul*.

Then Isaiah says: *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* (Is 53:11 ESV). That's how Isaiah comes to Easter. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave is the evidence that God saw all that his Servant, his Son, accomplished and he was satisfied. The debt of sin is paid. The wrath of God is not just appeased, but used up, worn out, met completely by the "guilt offering" of Christ for us.

It's now as though we had never sinned. We are covered by Jesus' righteousness. God is satisfied. Just as God looked on his newly created world and saw that it was very good, he looks on us, in the light of Jesus and his death on our behalf, and we look very good once again – without sin, spot, or stain. Jesus took our sin to the cross and nailed it there forever.

*By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous* (Is 53:11 ESV). That was Isaiah's way of saying what it says in Mark 16:16: *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. His knowledge* means "the knowledge of him". By it we are justified, declared holy and righteous by God Himself.

That's the glory of God, that he rescued and redeemed us from our own sins at such a tremendous price. Isaiah says that in verse 12: *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 the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors* (Is 53:12 ESV).

Easter is not just about resurrection. Resurrection in and of itself isn't necessarily a good thing. In fact, when the dead rise on the last day, many will rise to discover that their resurrection is definitely not good. They will rise to eternal condemnation, regret, pain, and sorrow. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that does not believe shall be condemned.

It's by knowing the truth, accepting it as true, and living in the light of it that one finds salvation. Isaiah says: *by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous* (Is 53:11 ESV). We call that faith. Jesus said: *If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free* (Jn 8:31-32 ESV). Jesus said you must know the truth. The knowledge of him is the truth that sets you free.

Jesus poured himself out to death. No one killed Jesus. He gave up his life. He was numbered with the transgressors. He died between two criminals, as one of them. But his crimes were our sins. According to Isaiah, he took on the sins of the many, which means all people.

That's what we celebrate today. I say, He is risen! And you reply, He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! But we do it because the resurrection is the divine declaration of forgiveness. God said, "It worked" He was satisfied. Sin, the cause of divine displeasure toward all men, is dealt with. Because of Jesus, God isn't angry with us over our sins.

No one goes to hell due to their sins. When they get there, there will be an accounting, and they will suffer for their sins, but they don't go to hell because they sinned. You and I have sinned. Yet we will go to heaven. The reason anyone goes to hell is unbelief. They choose hell by rejecting heaven, salvation, and glory in Jesus Christ.

Many will go to hell because they refuse to believe in the Jesus that lived and suffered for them. They have another "Jesus" in their minds. Or they reject the concept of God altogether. Or they believe in some way that they have to make it on their own, earn their way, be fit and deserving. They actually believe that they can be deserving of eternal glory.

Some believe in other deities, fictional though they are. Good examples are the Mormons and the Moslems. We can point to when these deities were invented, when their holy books were written, and even trace many of the sources from which the authors borrowed – or stole – their writings and ideas. Joseph Smith wrote his book just a century and half ago. The origin of the Bible dates back to "And God said ..."

Some would say that such things don't matter. That all religions are alike, or that all the gods are just the same god by different names. But he is risen! He died to atone for our sins, and God raised Jesus from the dead to declare us forgiven, and said: *There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved* (Ac 4:12 ESV).

No one else has died for us or risen again. Period. Of course, some may say that I'm wrong, and way too focused on this doctrine, this form of the faith. But that points out that this what it is – faith. He is risen. That's the proclamation of Scripture. Many disagree, even some within the church. But that is our Easter joy.

Because Jesus has risen, we will also rise. We will rise to eternal life in glory with Him. We call that 'heaven', but we don't really understand it. However, we know it's good, and it's beyond all sorrow, sickness, pain, or death. There will be no end to our joy, or the enjoyment of the many blessings of God. We won't have to deal with the consequences of sin, like bad eyes, deaf ears, aching joints and muscles, failing memory, confusion, or fear of the future. And, for sure, we won't have to deal with the larger consequence of sin: eternity in hell.

We will live in God's presence and glory. We will see him then like we are unable to see him now. In the meantime, we take heart in the fact that he is with us because he said he would never leave us or forsake us and he would be with us to the end of the age.

So, for now, we confess with Isaiah that "The Servant Shares the Victorious Life". In our fellowship, as among all of God's people, we say it like this: Jesus Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!