

The Agony of Our Lord

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[0 : 00] Isaiah chapter 53, verse 1. Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

! He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. Yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

[1 : 05] And by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

And as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away.

And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living. For the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with a wicked and with a rich in his death.

Though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer.

[2 : 07] And though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days. And the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied.

By his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many. And he will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great. And he will divide the spoils with the strong.

Because he poured out his life unto death. And was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many. And made intercession for the transgressors.

Take your hymnals and turn to hymn 223. We're going to be considering Luke 22, verses 39 to 46. The last encounter. Or the last time that Jesus is together with his disciples.

[3 : 15] Before he's arrested. And led to the cross. That which we know as taking place in the Garden of Gethsemane. Here it's described as taking place on the Mount of Olives.

Where the Garden of Gethsemane was. And we're going to be considering the agony of our Lord Jesus before the cross. Before he gets to the cross.

Before we do that. I want you to consider for a moment. What is the most terrible experience you've ever had?

What is the most horrible experience you've ever had? If you haven't had many terrible or horrible experiences.

In God's grace. What is the most terrible or horrible experience you can imagine? What is it that you fear the most?

[4 : 19] And not in a cowardly fear. But seeing something horrible that could happen. And it strikes you with dread. What is an experience that you would dread the most?

And I'm sure some of you. You know we differ on this. And some of you have already experienced horrible things. And you might ask. Well why would I want to start our time together.

In this negative way. But there's a good reason for that. Because we're going to see that Jesus Christ. Before he went to the cross.

The cross itself was upon him a horror. And an agony. But even before he was actually nailed to the cross. His considering the cross.

His considering the cross. Brought him to great agony of soul. And to consider what our Lord experienced for us. Just thinking about that a little bit.

[5 : 21] Can be a helpful thing. And then later on. You'll see that we'll tie it together even more. So I'm going to read the text. This is after the last supper.

This is at the end of the last week in Jerusalem. This is the end of his ministry. And after they had eaten together. They went out.

And I read from verse 9. And he came out and proceeded. As was his custom to the Mount of Olives. And the disciples also followed him.

When he arrived at the place. He said to them. Pray that you may not enter into temptation. And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw.

And he knelt down and began to pray. Saying, Father. If you are willing. Remove this cup from me. Yet not my will.

[6 : 22] But yours be done. Now an angel from heaven appeared to him. Strengthening him. And being in agony.

He was praying very fervently. And his sweat became like drops of blood. Falling down upon the ground. When he rose from prayer.

He came to the disciples. And found them sleeping from sorrow. And he said to them. Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray. That you may not fall into temptation.

And we read. We finish the text there. After that. The enemies come. And he is arrested. You can see that very clearly.

In verse 44. It says. And being in agony. And you may have another word. In your translations there. The word agony is a good word there. As we will see.

[7 : 22] We see that Christ is clearly in agony. And he is in agony. Because he is contemplating the cross. And what is going to happen. We are going to be considering then.

The agony of our Lord. Before the cross. And we will see his prayer. In the midst of this agony. And then we will consider. The nature of this agony.

We will draw some important theological observations. And then we will finish in seeing the gospel. In the agony of our Lord.

Well first. We will consider. The prayer. Of our Lord. In his agony. And this passage has much. About prayer.

Prayer. And it is important to observe. What this passage shows us. About prayer. But as we shall see. This passage isn't here. Primarily to teach us how to pray.

[8 : 20] But we do see prayer here. And so we are going to note this. In this most critical of times. Jesus is praying.

We see that this was his custom. Or it was his usual practice. In verse 39. As was his custom. And so we see that.

Jesus had a life. Of regular prayer. A life of regular prayer. With his disciples. This was his general practice.

Everywhere. And then consider for a moment. That he is now in Jerusalem. He hasn't been in Jerusalem. A long time. He has only been there a week. But the text says.

As was his custom. He went to the Mount of Olives. And so. Even in this unusual situation. In this place. That he wasn't all the time. He followed through.

[9 : 16] With his usual practice. It is easy. To rationalize. When we are traveling. When we are only somewhere. For a short period of time.

When different things are happening. When we are out of our ordinary situation. It is easy to rationalize. And say. Well I really don't have time. Now. To pray. But we see that the Lord did.

We see that he was praying. With his disciples. And there was a community aspect. Of that. We see that he had a particular place. Chosen.

That was suitable. For prayer. Prayer. And then we see. Even though. He was with his disciples. And they were together. And they're.

In a sense. Praying together. Yet we also see. That he tells them to pray. That they not fall into temptation. And that's a good. Topic for prayer. And we're taught that. In the Lord's Prayer as well. [10:11] But then he withdraws. By himself. And so. Sometimes it's good to pray. By ourselves. For specific.

Issues. He kneels down. And we see a committed. Bodily posture. In prayer. He prays to the Father.

Even as he taught. His disciples to pray. Our Father. However. When Jesus is praying. To the Father. He's praying. To his Father. In a unique.

Way. In an intimate. Way. And he's very honest. And open. In his prayer. I'm having.

Difficulty. I'm having a hard. Time. I'm dreading. What is before me. Father. Help.

[11:09] Openness. And honesty. And then we see. That. In his prayer. Though he expresses. On one hand.

A human desire. He defers. Ultimately. To the will. Of God. Yet. Not my will. Be done. But yours.

And so. We can have. Great freedom. As we pray. Praying the way. We see things. Always.

Desiring. Our understandings. To be illuminated. By God.

In scripture. And that our desires. Would be sanctified. But in the midst. Of praying. What we would.

Leave to be. Our sanctified desires. Yet we say. But in this. Oh Lord. I don't see everything.

And I pray for your. Will. To be done. And that's the way. We should pray. And that is in contrast. To the prosperity. Heresy.

[12:04] Which says. You don't need to ask. What God's will is. You already know. That God wants you. To be prosperous. And fully healthy. All the time. And having lots of money.

So you don't have to say. If it be or will. And that's what they really teach. That you should not use those words. Well. Jesus used those words. Not my will. But yours. And so.

That is. Something to note. And learn. In the midst of the prayer. God answers. God hears. God hears. But how does he answer.

And how does he hear. Does he take the cup away. No. But he sends an angel. And an angel comforts. An angel from heaven. In verse 43.

Appeared to him. And strengthened him. The angel could have rescued him. And taken him out of that situation. The angel could have destroyed. Those who would be arresting him.

[12:59] But. That is not what takes place. But the angel strengthens him. And in that strength. Then Jesus.

Goes forth. In further. Agony. The agony doesn't stop. We see. Continuing. Prayer.

And earnestness. And fervency. In prayer. Not. Giving up. And being. In anguish. He prayed. More. More. More.

In. Quantity. But also. More. In quality. More. Earnestly. And a sweat. Was like. Drops of blood.

Falling. To the ground. We see Jesus. Praying. And we can learn. Much. From that. Meanwhile. The apostles.

[13:54] Have fallen asleep. And he finds them. Sleeping. And he says. Why are you sleeping?

Wake up. Get up. And pray. And he tells them. Again to pray. And he tells them. Again to pray. For the same thing. That they will not. Fall. Into temptation. Sleepiness.

Is a problem. In prayer. Prayer. And. We need to. Be roused. Like Jonah. When the captain comes. And says. How is it you're sleeping? Get up. And so we have similar words. Here. Much. On.

Prayer. And I commend you. To consider. These wonderful insights.

On prayer. But. We're going to go further now. As we said earlier. Here. This text. Isn't. Given. To teach us about. Prayer. We. We do. Learn about.

[14:48] Prayer. Here. And we. Can learn. Much. But there's something more. And we would be. Remiss. If we said. Well. Here's a passage on prayer. Jesus prayed. You pray too. Amen.

You know. And we finished it. With a few more things. That would be what we would call. Moralistic. Preaching. Just. Trying to give you. A lesson. About something. From the text.

Which is there. But there's more. Here. And what. The more. Here. Is. The Lord. Jesus. And.

What is he. Going. Through. And so. Let's consider. The nature. Of our Lord's. Agony. He's praying. But what. Is the object. Of his prayer. What is the subject. Of his prayer. Why is he praying. What is he praying. About. Let's consider that. And.

[15:43] We will see. That this. Agony. Is the most. Difficult. Experience. Our Lord. Has gone through. Thus far.

That is. Explained to us. It is. A horrible. Experience. It is a. Terrible. Experience. It is the most. Difficult.

Experience. He's had. It is suffering. To the highest. Degree. That one. Can suffer. And not die. And we see this. Because of the word.

That is used. And in. Verse 44. As we read. And being. In. Agony. And you may have another word. There. There are other ways. To translate this. But in the Greek. It's clearly. Agonia. Agony. And it's the only time. That this word. Agony. Is used as a noun.

[16:38] It's used as a verb. Agonizing. Or something similar. In other places. And when it's used as a verb. It has an additional. Connotation. Of fighting. And battle. And travelling.

But the word. Agony. From the Greek. And in the English. Means. Severe. Mental. Struggles. Anguish.

Grief. Anxiety. Deathly. Battle. Violent. Struggle. Deathly. Struggle. A state of groaning. A state that precedes. Death. Horror. And the word. Can be translated. And in some other languages. Instead of translating.

Agony. Agony. Agony. It's translated. Suffering. Unto death. So in the very word. That's used. We see that Jesus. Was going through. Something horrible.

[17:37] And terrible. Right up. To the brink. Of death. And then as we consider. This text. We see that this is a horrible. Experience.

From. The other details. That are given. The detail. That. An angel. Came. And it's. The only other time. That it's noted. That an angel.

Came to strengthen Jesus. When he was. When he was. In the temptation. In the desert. For 40 days. Fasting. And he needed. Strengthening then. But here.

He again. Needs strengthening. And the fact. That our Lord Jesus. Needed to be strengthened. Is an indication. That this was truly. Something horrible. That was taking place.

The angel came. And then we have. This description. That his sweat. Was like. Drops of blood. We're given that. Detail. So. By the word.

[18:30] By the details. We see that this was. Truly. An agonizing. A horrible. A terrible. A dreadful. Experience.

Well. Why? Why? What's going on? What is it? That's horrible. What is it? That's dreadful. Why is this happening? Well.

Here is. A heart. Of this passage. And on one hand. It's certainly true. That in his. Perfect. Human nature.

Jesus. Was having that. I'm going to quote. Matthew Henry. The innocent. Dread of suffering. Which being. Really. And truly. Man. He could not. But have. In his nature.

So on. On one hand. We see him. As a. Perfect man. Objectively. Facing. Something. And having a dread of it. But there's more.

[19:28] The cross. Has always been. Before Christ. But here. We see. Our Lord. Truly. Facing. And dealing. Dealing.

With the imminence. And the imminency. Of the cross. And experiencing. And encountering. What's going to happen. We started. By asking you.

To think of. Something terrible. Something. Horrible. Something. That you dread. Well. Now. Our Lord.

Is experiencing. Horror. And dread. And he's doing it. To a degree. Infinitely.

More than anything. We can imagine. So anything. That you thought. Was horrible. And dreadful. Well. Jesus is experiencing. Something even more. Horrible. And even more.

[20:25] Dreadful. And. Part of that. Horror. And dread. Is that he's taking.

Your horror. And dread. Upon himself. As you. Look to him. What is.

Something. That we. As Christians. Ought to fear. As non-Christians. We should fear it as well. Sin. And. The grossness. Of sin. And ruining.

My life. In sin. And most. Any horrible. Thing you can imagine. Is a result. Of sin. Ultimately.

Sickness. Is ultimately. A result. Of sin. Someone doing something.

Terrible to you. Is a result. Of sin. A catastrophic. Natural. Disaster. Ultimately. Is a result. Of sin. Because of the brokenness. Of the world. If some of you.

[21:22] Imagine something. Gross. As a horrible. And terrible. Thing. Gross. And terrible. Things. Are. The result. Of sin. And so. The dread.

That I would have. Of falling. Into sin. Or something horrible. The Lord Jesus. Took. That sin. Of mine. Upon himself.

On the cross. And in that. Contemplation. He wasn't just. Contemplating. The horror. Of. Of something. That would happen. To him. But the horror.

That you experience. And that you. And that you. And that you. And all. Of his people. And every single believer. And every single. Member. Of God's kingdom.

He took. That horror. Upon himself. And this is something. That we can't. Even fathom. But it's good. To start. Considering. For what the law.

[22 : 23] Was powerless. To do. Because it was. Weakened by the flesh. God did. By sending. His own son. In the likeness. Of sinful flesh. To be. A sin.

Offering. And so. He condemns. Sin. In the flesh. Galatians 3. Christ. Redeemed us. From the curse. Of the law. Having become.

A curse. For us. The sin. The horror. That we would be. Experiencing. Because of sin.

That we would dread. Well Jesus took. That sin. Upon himself. That's horrible. He experienced. The horror. Of every single believer. Upon himself. And then. He was contemplating. The agony.

[23 : 19] Of being convicted. As an innocent person. He becomes. As a sinner. Though never sitting. He becomes.

Sin. The holy. Innocent. One. And then. He contemplates. Feeling. The wrath. Of. The one.

Who is. The closest. To him. The one. With whom. He has the most. Intimate relationship. The father. He's contemplating. That the father. With whom.

He's only had. Eternal. Unstopping. Unimaginable. Love. Is now going to pour out his wrath. Upon him. He is going to experience.

The actual. Punishment. The actual. Scourging. Not merely. The wrath. In relationship. But the wrath.

[24 : 15] Poured out. In our place. Jesus. Prayed. That the cup. Be removed. From him. If at all.

Possible. And the language. Of this cup. Refers to that. Wrath of God. Being poured out. Psalm 11. Upon the wicked. He will.

Rain snares. Fire. And brimstone. And burning wind. Will be the portion. Of their cup. Psalm 75. A cup. Is in the hand.

Of the Lord. And the wine. Foams. It is well mixed. And he pours. Out of this. Surely. All the wicked. Of the earth. Must drain.

And drink. Down. Its dregs. But that's the cup. That Jesus. Is going to drink. Instead of us. Jeremiah 25.

[25 : 09] For the Lord. The God of Israel. Says to me. Take this cup. Of the wine. Of wrath. From my hand. And cause. All the nations. To whom I send you.

To drink it. But that cup. Of the wrath of God. Is the cup. That the Lord Jesus. Is going to drink. And so. He's facing. The agony. Of knowing. That he's going.

To be receiving. The wrath. The cup of God's wrath. Being poured out. Upon him. And then he considers. That he is alone.

In this. He's alone. In the garden. He's separate. From the believers. As he's experiencing this.

They're not even. Standing with him. In solidarity. They're sleeping. And that's a discouragement.

But. He's contemplating. That he's going to be. Even more. Alone. A moment. Is coming. When he will be. Totally. Alone. Alone. When.

[26 : 05] He will be. Abandoned. By the father. As a part. Of his taking. The wrath of God. Upon himself. In prison. The.

Extreme measure. That can be taken. Is solitary confinement. Well. Jesus. Is despised. And forsaken. For us. And on the cross.

He cries out. My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? And on the cross. Is the ultimate horror. But here. He's experiencing. That as close.

As he can experience it. Before he actually. Experiences it. And in the other gospels. We have. The vocabulary.

That this really is. At the point of death. Which is what that word. Agony can mean. And so. Matthew 26. 38. My soul. Is deeply. Grieved. To the point.

[27 : 00] Of. Death. And Mark. Repeats that. My soul. Is deeply. Grieved. To the point. Of death. That's the agony.

That Christ. Is experiencing. He's experiencing. All of our sin. That which we would experience. Because of our sin. He's experiencing. Upon himself. In a very real way. He's experiencing. Contemplating. The wrath. Of God. The wrath. Of the one. Most intimate. He's experiencing. The suffering. Of suffering. For something. You didn't do. He's considering. That he's alone. And that he's going to be. Yet more alone. A terrible agony. Now. When we see this. We can. Draw some. Very important. Theological. Observations. And conclusions. And they're important. One of them is. [28 : 00] That Jesus. Is truly a man. He's not a fake man. He's truly a man. And. That he truly has. A will. A human will.

And. In the theological. Controversies. This has been known. As the controversy. Of. Mono. Theism. And some would hold. That Jesus only had one will. A perfect. Holy will. And that he had no human will. No. Jesus. We understand. Had. A divine will. But he had a human will.

And. How to fully understand that. Is certainly beyond our time. And certainly beyond our comprehension. But it's important to note. That he does have a will. Where it says. I'm praying. This is my desire. But nevertheless. Your will be done. And that can be an encouragement. To us. As well. As we pray. That we know.

[28 : 56] That we. Not having. A perfect. Divine will. Can still pray. As we should. And ought. And have encouragement. That God hears us. Coupled with that.

Is that we truly see. That Jesus has two natures. A human nature. And a divine nature. And. That has been of a great controversy.

Amongst. Some groups. But we can see. The truth of it here. More. If I can put it. Accessible. As well.

Is we truly see. The absolute. Necessity. Of the cross. And the nature. Of the cross. Jesus says. If there. It was.

Any other way. In his. Perfect. Human. Desire. He is asking that. And the answer is. There is no other way. There is no other way.

[29 : 54] But the cross. And so the cross. Is absolutely. Essential. For salvation. There is no salvation. Without the cross. The cross.

Being. What we use. As a word. To describe. Jesus dying. On a cross. As a substitute. For our sin. There is no way. That we can be saved. Without looking to Christ.

As our substitute. Taking the wrath of God. Upon himself. Liberals. Don't believe that. And. In the part of the world.

That I minister in. The orthodox. Have a hard time. Understanding. That substitution. Nature. They believe. That Jesus Christ. Died on the cross. For salvation. But they have a hard time.

Understanding. That he really took our place. And that he really received. The wrath of God. The father. Upon himself. But that's what happened. And Jesus.

[30 : 47] Tells us. I am the way. And the truth. And the life. And no one comes to the father. But through me. There is salvation. In no one else. For there's no other name.

Under heaven. That has been given among men. By which we must. Be saved. There is. One. Mediator. Between God and man. And so we see the absolute.

Necessity. Of the cross. A little bit of a heavy atmosphere. Right now. And that's appropriate. It's good. To consider that. But now let's consider the gospel. In this agony. So. Why is Jesus in agony? All right.

We answered that. It's because he's contemplating. What's going to happen on the cross. All right. But. But why is he doing it at all? Well. He's doing it for us.

[31 : 43] And for our salvation. He's going to go on the cross for us. And in this agony. He has us in mind. And so we read from Isaiah 53.

And I will read portions of Isaiah 53 again now. And I will emphasize. That this agony. That he's going to go through. Both in its actual experience.

But then its contemplation. That is what is in mind. In part of Isaiah 53. And we're going to see that the substitution nature. That Jesus is experiencing this agony for us.

Surely. Verse 4 of Isaiah 53. And I'll read from verse 4. Surely our. Grievs. He himself.

Bore. And the text isn't merely. He bore our sins. But he bore all that that's connected to the sin. The horror. The travesty. The dread.

[32 : 45] So surely our griefs. He himself bore. And our. Sorrow. He carried. Yet we ourselves. Esteemed him stricken. Smitten of God. And afflicted. But he. Was pierced for. Our. Transgressions. He. Was crushed for.

Our. Iniquities. The chastening for. Our. Well-being. Fell upon. Him. And by. By. His. His. Scourging. We. Are healed. All of us. Like sheep. Have gone astray. Each one of us. Has turned to his own way. But the Lord.

Has caused. Was the iniquity. Of us. All. To fall. On. Him. He was. Oppressed. And he was afflicted.

[33 : 41] Yet he did not. Open his mouth. Like a lamb. That is led to the 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. Was cut. 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. Horror. If he would.

[34 : 36] Render himself. As a guilt. Offering. The end of verse 11. He will bear. Their. Iniquities. And then. We finish.

With verse 12. Therefore. I will 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. He. Himself. Bore the sin. Of many. And interceded. For the transgressors.

So all the agony. That Christ. Experienced. And that he. Contemplated. Experiencing. Was for us. That we. Would be saved. That we.

Wouldn't. Have to. Experience. The horror. That comes. From our sin. And. And Jesus. Did more than. Contemplate. That he. Experienced.

[35 : 30] The absolute. Horror. On the cross. Unto death. And through that. We are saved. We who have. Looked to Christ. And we will never.

Experience. That kind of horror. Because Jesus. Experienced. It. For us. We will never. We don't have to. Be in dread. And. We will never. Experience. What Christ. Experienced. He did it. For us. Now.

If you haven't. Looked to Christ. Then. The opposite. Is true. That horror. That you've. Thought of. Well.

You're going to. Experience it. But you're going to. Experience it. In the sense that. You're going to. Experience it. Much more. You may not. Experience that. Exact horror. But you're going to. Experience horror. In life.

[36 : 28] Apart from Christ. And then. In the final. Judgment. Whatever you. Dread the most. And whatever. You may have. Thought of. Well. The actual. Experience.

Of. Judgment. Before God. Without. The salvation. Of Christ. Is more. Horrible. Than anything. You've. Thought of. Or anything. That you can. Think of. Christ. And so.

Christ. Is calling you. To look to him. And to see. That he. Experienced. The horror. Of his people. So that. Those who look to him. Won't.

Experience it. And if you have. Any dread. In your life. And you're not. In Christ. Look to Christ. And then. You can truly say. There's nothing. In this earth. That I need.

Fear. And so. This is the gospel. That Jesus. On the cross. Experienced. The horror. From our sin. And in this.

[37 : 22] Contemplation. We see. The agony. That it caused him here. And then on the cross. It was even more. And so. God calls us this morning. To look to Christ.

To see. What a savior. We have. What a wonderful savior. To see. How. He. Lowered himself. To come. To save us.

And to take. All. Of our horror. Upon himself. How can we. But not say. What. Hallelujah. What a savior. How glorious. And if you haven't. Look to Christ.

Oh. Look to him. That we may. Together. Be thankful. And say. Thank you God. That I. Have no fear. But. Thank you God. That I have a wonderful life. Of glory.

Now. And forever. Let's pray. Lord. We look to you in prayer. Father. Son.

[38 : 18] And Holy Spirit. Thank you. For sending. The Lord Jesus. We thank you. For his suffering. For his experiencing.

All that he experienced. Through his whole life. On our behalf. Lord. We cannot even. Fathom these things. But help us. To have a better understanding. Of them. And then help us. To be trusting in Christ.

And looking to Christ. And enjoying. Life in Christ. And living. Without. That kind of fear. But living with a holy. Satisfaction. A holy enjoyment.

Of the life that you have given us. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.