

At Calvary

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[0:00] Isaiah 52 and verse 13. I'm going to read through chapter 53.

So 52 verse 12. See, my servant will act wisely.

He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.

So will he sprinkle many nations and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see.

And what they have not heard, they will understand. Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

[1:21] 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. And by his wounds, we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way.

[2:22] 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 on 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.

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.

[3:30] 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.

Before we hear the preaching of God's word, let's seek his face once again. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we do feel like we are on the shore of a deep river.

And we are about to enter into it. Into the very heart of the gospel. Into the suffering of your servant.

[4:36] I pray that you would come. And that you would teach us in this hour. That you would uphold us as we walk through these deep waters.

That you would be with your servant as he brings the word to us. I pray that your truth would prevail. That it would prevail in our hearts.

That all of its implications. We would see them all. And work them out. And believe them. And live upon them.

That we would see the truth of the word as it is preached to us. And that we would go away from here sanctified. That we would go away from here saved.

Lord, there is no doubt that some here desperately need their sins to be taken far away. Please. Please.

[5:38] Look upon them. They are here and they have no concern. They are blind to their situation. I pray that you would wake them up. And shine your light into their hearts and into their eyes.

And save them. Show them Jesus Christ. No longer dead. But very alive. And sitting at the right hand of God.

Ready to save all who call upon him. I pray that you would do that in this hour. And I pray for us. Who have believed. I pray that you would revive us as we see our Savior's dying love for us. And the extent of his passion and agony on our behalf. Pray that we would not sit like rocks unmoved under the sound of your word.

But that you would change us and sanctify us. Lord, I pray for those who cannot be here.

[6:48] Who are too tired, too worn down. For those who are ill. Pray, Lord, that you would comfort them.

For those who are tired, I pray. That you would give them rest today. That today would be a Sabbath for them. For their hearts.

That they would find rest in Jesus Christ and his righteousness. I pray for those who this morning are here. And they are laboring under a load of guilt and shame.

Pray that you would bring them to the fountain. Where there is cleansing from all guilt and uncleanness. And may they wash. And be revived.

For those who are sad. Pray that you would comfort them. I think especially of Cindy Heaney as she suffers the loss of her mother.

[7:55] Lord, comfort our sister, please. Reach into her heart. And bring your many precious promises to bear.

And make them real to her. Help her to see Jesus, the compassionate high priest. Who is standing at your right hand.

Who is sitting even at your right hand. And I pray that you would encourage her heart. Lord, we want to pray that you would be with the Stearns as they are traveling in the Middle East.

We pray that you would give them wisdom as they look into language schools. We pray that you would help them to have your mind in these matters. And understanding and clarity of thought. And that you would give them the right questions. And that they would be able to get answers. As they prepare to go over there. Pray that you would provide for them all the financing they need.

[9:00] Lord, these are the things that are too much for us. We are too weak. But you are the God of all wisdom. You own a cattle on a thousand hills.

You are sufficient. So I pray that you would be their sufficient God. We thank you that we will soon be able to see them. The ARBCA GA. I pray that you would bring them to us.

And bind our hearts closer to the Stearns at that time. We thank you that they are going into this very lost and dark part of the world.

Thank you that you have put that in their heart. And I pray that you would then give them strength and grace to carry out their purpose. And I pray that you would extend your kingdom and your family into that part of the world.

Show forth your mighty right arm as you convert sinners to Jesus Christ there. Please meet us.

[10:02] Please help us as we hear your word. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Let's hear the preaching of God's word. Well, we finally made it to chapter 53.

It's been a long time coming. The climax of the whole book of Isaiah. In fact, we've come to the fourth and final song, servant song.

It actually begins at chapter 52 and verse 13 as we had read for us. And so much of what comes before in the book of Isaiah has been building up to this very point.

This servant song will answer many of the questions that have gone unanswered to this point. The book reads almost like a symphony, playing a piece of music that moves through different movements.

And all the earlier themes and variations on those themes have led up to this, all waiting for resolution. So it begins, you know, just with the single oboe piercing the silence.

[11 : 31] And then the strings and the flutes and trumpets, the other brass, the percussion. It's a building symphony. And when we come to chapter 53, we are at the big crescendo of the book.

It started way back in chapter 1 and verse 18. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.

And Isaiah didn't tell us how that would happen. And then we hear the Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion.

He will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem. But no description of how. Hezekiah says to God, you have put all my sins behind your back.

Oh, if it could just be true. How could that be? God says to us, to certain sinners, I, even I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake and remembers them no more.

[12 : 42] How will that happen, Isaiah? Three times in chapter 9, judgment falls upon Judah. And yet for all this, his anger has not turned away.

His hand is still upraised. And then in chapter 12, I will praise you, O Lord Almighty. You were angry with me. But your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.

How can his anger be turned away? See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger. And from that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again.

Let them make peace with me. Yes, let them make peace with me. Peace with God? You mean that's possible for a sinner to be at peace with God?

How will that happen, Isaiah? Captives will be set free from prison. Those who sit in darkness will be released from the dungeon. And in the Lord, all the descendants of Israel will be found righteous and exult.

[13 : 53] Amazing things are being said of sinful people without ever explaining how this will be. But by the time we come to chapter 52, the suspense and tension in the music is demanding resolution.

In chapter 52, we saw it last week, without money, you will be redeemed. Well, if without money, what will it be by? Verse 10, the Lord will lay bare His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of God.

What is this holy and powerful act of God Himself that will bring salvation, everlasting salvation to the ends of the earth? And now we're at full crescendo.

And every instrument is blaring, and a crash of the cymbals, and a roll of the kettle drums. And verse 12, God says, Behold my servant.

Look at Him. See Him. Fix your eyes on Him. This whole song is about Him. What He will do. How what He does will fulfill all of those promises.

[15 : 10] will answer all those things that have been left unexplained. Isaiah finally comes to explaining to us how the Holy One, instead of damning sinful people, can actually bless them with forgiveness and salvation and peace with God forever.

Well, the first question we need to ask is, Who is this servant of the Lord? See my servant. Who is this servant of the Lord? You know, there was once a man who asked that question.

It's a good question. He was a black man from Ethiopia. A high official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, the queen of Ethiopia.

And he had been to Jerusalem to worship and he's going home. And as he's riding his chariot on a desert road, he's reading the book of Isaiah.

In fact, he's reading the very passage that Pastor Jason read for us. It's quite amazing that he even had this parchment.

[16 : 27] Perhaps he had read from the beginning when he left Jerusalem. And he has now got to the climax of the book. But this much is true. He is now at the climax of the book.

He's at chapter 53, just as the Holy Spirit says to Philip, the evangelist, Go join yourself to that chariot. Run alongside of that chariot and stay near it.

So Philip runs up to the chariot. And he hears this Ethiopian man reading our text. How's that for jogging to Scripture without an iPod?

He's jogging alongside the chariot and he's hearing Isaiah 53 read. And he asks him, Sir, do you understand what you're reading? And he says, How can I unless someone explains it to me?

And he invites Philip up onto the chariot. And he's got one burning question for him. Tell me, please.

[17 : 29] Who is the prophet talking about? Himself? Or someone else? It's that question.

Who is this servant of the Lord? Is a stumbling block to many learned Jews today. Who is this servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53?

And the Scriptures say, Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. Jesus is the servant of the Lord that we meet in chapter 53.

Do you know that nearly every verse of this chapter is applied to our Lord Jesus in the New Testament by writers there? Jesus himself quotes this passage saying it's fulfilled in him.

Matthew, Peter, Paul, John. They all quote it and say, It's Jesus who is the Lord's servant. Isn't it wonderful how the Bible answers our questions about the Bible?

[18:44] What's unclear in one place? Isaiah 53. Who is this servant? Is answered in another place. Acts chapter 8. He is Jesus. I wonder if you're learning to bring your questions about the Bible to the Bible.

What I mean is, Keep reading. Keep reading. Keep reading. Don't you understand everything? Just keep reading. Keep praying. Teach me, Lord. But keep reading.

What is in the Old concealed is often in the New revealed. So see how the Old Testament prophets are interpreted and used by the New Testament inspired apostles.

They'll help you understand the Old Testament. There are many good commentaries on the Bible, but the very best one is the Bible itself. Let's make use of it.

Notice as well that we're dealing this morning with a salvation text. And what I mean by that is simply this. That there's a man in heaven today because he heard our text and he believed it.

[19:52] And he's in heaven because of it. He believed what he heard and was baptized. And you're hearing the very same words that he heard.

Can you see that salvation is not far away? It is near you. The word is near you. Believe it. Will you become a believer in Jesus and be baptized as his disciple as that Ethiopian did?

Well, here we have the servant song. Five stanzas to this song. Each have three verses. It starts with Christ's exaltation. It ends with Christ's exaltation.

But between those two, there is unparalleled suffering. And so he's often referred to as the suffering servant of Jehovah.

Well, stanza one, the mystery of the servant. The mystery, the enigma, the riddle, the puzzle, the thing that confounds people. The mystery of the servant.

[21:01] And it is his sufferings and his glory. Those two things just don't seem to belong together in the same story.

Now, Jesus' glory has the first and last words. We see that in the first word in verse 13. See my servant, Jehovah says. See my servant will act wisely.

He will be raised, lifted up, and highly exalted. You see, the spirit of the Lord that rested on him was the spirit of wisdom and understanding. Therefore, this servant acts with divine wisdom.

That means that he always knows exactly what to do to bring about the desired result. Therefore, everything he does will prosper. He acts with wisdom.

Therefore, success is the end. And when Isaiah speaks of success, when the Lord is speaking of the success of his servant, he emphasizes it with a triple repetition.

[22:04] He will be raised. He will be lifted up. He will be highly exalted. That's the glory of this servant. But then the mystery hits us full force in verse 14.

Because this exalted servant is to experience horrific sufferings. Behold my servant. Yes, we are beholding. And when they see him, many will be appalled at him.

Many will be sickened, shocked, horrified, disgusted. with what they see. And we're told why they find the servant repulsive.

Because his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man. And his form marred beyond human likeness. That's the way this servant's life ends.

And we're to see glory in him? How can such gore fit in to a glorious to a glorious servant? I heard a man preaching once on this text and he told how one night a man in his congregation was killed in a terrible automobile accident.

[23:23] And he being the pastor was called to come to the morgue and make a positive identification of the body. And when they pulled back the cover, it was repulsive to him and he instinctively turned away.

What he saw was a mangled man disfigured beyond human likeness. those are the words used of our Savior.

Oh, what they did to our Lord even before they hung him up on the cross. He's in the high court of the Jews. And during the trial, somebody didn't like one of his answers and they smacked him in the face.

They find him guilty of blasphemy so they spit in his face, blindfolded him, and struck him with their fists saying, prophesy! Who hit you?

Who is that? What's my name? And they're pummeling his face. Turning his face into a punching bag. And then the guards took him and beat him.

[24 : 37] Very possibly with rods as the word suggests. You've seen some pictures, police pictures of battered wives.

Have you seen pictures of boxers who've been in the ring for 15 rounds with a guy with padded gloves? Well, this is nothing of padded gloves.

And this was the religious court. These were the good guys. These are the chief priests and the teachers of the law. It's on their watch that such battering takes place.

Then it's off to Pilate. Pilate will turn Jesus over to his Roman soldiers to be flogged and then crucified. So his back is laid open with these whips that are studded with glass and metal.

And then the whole company of soldiers gathers together to have a little fun at Jesus' expense.

We're bored. We need some entertainment in our boring job.

[25 : 43] Ah, here's a poor guy to have some fun with. So they're mocking Jesus' claim to be king. Well, a king needs a robe.

So they strip him and put a scarlet robe on him. A king needs a crown. So they get a thorn bush and they pull branches off, probably bloodied up their own hands to have this fun and put it on Jesus.

No, a king needs a staff. So they put a staff in his right hand. And then they all come and kneel down. Hail, king of the Jews! Mocking his claim. Then the scriptures say they spit on him and took the staff and they struck him on the head again and again pounding that crown of thorns into his head pulverizing his face.

They ripped out his beard and that's what they hung up on the cross. No wonder many beholding him were appalled at him.

He didn't even look human. A shocking, disfigured mass of wounded flesh. And yet, the servant's sufferings so far from diminishing his glory actually contribute to his glory.

[27 : 21] How does that work? This is mysterious. This is puzzling. Well, the writer Isaiah goes on to say that just as there were many who were appalled at him, verse 14, so there will be many who are cleansed by him.

So, verse 15, so will he sprinkle many nations. Thus, in this way will he sprinkle many nations. It is to be precisely by these intense sufferings that this servant will purify many.

Throughout the Old Testament, it was the sprinkled blood, that's our word here, the sprinkled blood of a slain sacrificial victim that cleansed from sin and that purified the sinner, making him fit for the presence of a holy God, the sprinkled blood.

So, the sacrificial animals killed, the blood is taken and sprinkled and those on whom and the instruments on whom it lands are pronounced clean, now ready to come into God's worship.

Well, this is what the servant would do. And he would do it by his sufferings and not just for a few, but for many, many nations, the text says, represented by these awestruck kings who when they understand this suffering and what it accomplished, would shut their mouths because of him, awestruck at his glory and reverent in his presence.

[28 : 54] For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. The message of what this servant has done will reach those who have never heard, and when they understand, they will believe, and they will be made clean, sprinkled, cleansed before God.

In Romans chapter 15 and verse 21, Paul quotes this very passage for the reason why he chose to preach the gospel to where Christ had not been heard, that those who had not heard might hear, might understand, and might be cleansed from their sins.

This is the servant's glory. It's his worldwide success, his honor of having disciples among the nations, and all because of his sufferings.

So do you see this? Do you see the servant's mystery? Glory comes to him in a strange way. The way up for the servant is down, down from his glory.

Jesus came down, down to suffering, and those sufferings do not derail and spoil his glory, but those sufferings are the very way to glory.

[30:17] Now that was something that the people of Israel stumbled over. It's something that even the apostles stumbled over. You remember, Peter will later write in his epistle that the Old Testament prophets, that the Spirit of Christ in them predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

There in that passage, 1 Peter 1:11, you have both his sufferings and his glories, and you see the order, the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that follow. That's what the prophets, Isaiah is one. That's what they wrote about. That's what Peter's saying. But he didn't always appreciate that, did he? He didn't always understand that. The apostles had stumbled over this mystery of the servant's sufferings and glory.

Their prejudices, their preconceived notions of the Messiah forbid them from ever thinking that he could suffer in this way. And it caused them to overlook all those prophecies about his sufferings and to just focus on all the prophecies about his glories.

And even in this passage, just to see the glorious side and somehow say, well, we really don't understand what this is about. Maybe it's Isaiah, maybe it's Israel, someone else here. And that's why Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked him when Jesus said that I must go up to Jerusalem and there suffer many things and be killed.

[31:56] He rebuked him. And that's why when Jesus came to two of his disciples on Emmaus road after his death and resurrection, he rebuked them for their folly and their slowness of heart to believe all that the scriptures, all that the prophets had written about him.

did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, Isaiah included, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself, not just his glories, his sufferings too.

It was all there. That's why later that same night he gathered the twelve together. This is what I told you when I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms.

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures. His own disciples had closed minds to some of the scriptures. If that hasn't scared you, it needs to.

And I can come to the word of God with closed mind on some things. You see, what the scripture says is one thing, and what I want it to say is another thing. And so I must bow my thoughts and my desires every time I come to this book and say, you teach me.

[33:17] Your thoughts are higher than mine. Teach me your thoughts. They were blind. They were hard. They could not believe some of the scriptures. Jesus opened their minds and says, this is what is written.

The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. So, that's the mystery of this servant. that there are both sufferings and glories in his history that are puzzling to say the least.

Stanza two, the servant's rejection. His sufferings misunderstood.

And here we have Isaiah starting out with a lament. He and the believing remnant of Judah are lamenting to God how few have believed. Who has believed our message?

Verse 1. And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? You see, we've been your messengers. Those messengers running with beautiful feet with the good news. We've been running with that message proclaiming peace and salvation.

[34:27] But Lord, who has believed our message? Hardly any. It was the same when the servant himself came. John says he came to his own, but his own did not receive him.

John says in John 12, even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe on him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet, Lord, who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For this reason, they could not believe. They would not. And in order to fulfill the scriptures of Isaiah 53, 1, they could not.

And so we find he's despised and rejected by men. It was the same in Paul's day.

He says, not all the Israelites accepted the good news for Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? This is the cry of the righteous saying, Lord, we've run with the message and hardly anyone's believe in it.

[35 : 34] Is it not the same in our day? And the answer is that there is such a blindness in the heart of man that we would never believe unless there was a supernatural revelation of Christ's glory to our hearts.

Who has believed? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? You see, before there can be any belief in the heart of any sinner, there must be an inner revelation, a revealing of Christ to the heart.

Paul says that the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers. What are they blinded to? To the glory of Christ. And so until there is this revelation, there will not be belief.

There will be no faith. Mere outward observation of the facts. will not lead to faith. You can read the Bible through a thousand times and still be an unbeliever.

Just looking on the outward side of things will not make you a believer. You need to have Christ revealed to your heart. Well, verse 2 starts to explain why he was rejected.

[36 : 46] Well, he grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of a dry ground.

There's nothing particularly promising is there about a tender shoot that's coming up from a root.

There's that little shoot. Nothing particularly promising about an exposed root that's sticking out of the ground, especially when the ground is dry ground. And what's the likelihood of that thing ever becoming something impressive and great and thriving?

And that's the way they looked at Christ. Perhaps in your yearbook there was a questionnaire that was sent out to you to vote on the most likely to succeed. Well, you think, well, who's got the most stuff going for them?

Well, it wasn't Jesus. It wasn't this servant. He had humble origins. Is he not the carpenter's son? You hear the dismissiveness in that? Is he not the carpenter's son?

He's nobody special. He's from where? Nazareth. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? He's outwardly unimpressive. He's not a mover and shaker. He's got no power with Rome.

[37 : 56] He's altogether too ordinary to be anyone great. Besides, he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to, and nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

Image is everything. That's not something that became true in 1960 or 70 or 80. It's been that way forever, since the fall.

Image is everything. Man looks on the outward appearance. And with such eyes they looked upon Jesus. Nothing there to attract us.

No glory, nothing special here. They rejected him. His majesty and glory was veiled in flesh, suffering human flesh.

Now, notice the way Isaiah plugs himself into this passage. He speaks of us and we. He's referring to himself and the rest of the believing remnant in Judah.

[38 : 57] He's talking about the servants' disciples, the believers in the servant. He was despised and rejected by men in general, but Isaiah says that we too saw nothing in him to attract us to him.

And there was nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. It was that way for us as well before we came to believe, before Christ's glory was revealed to our hearts.

What a verdict upon our sinful condition. The Lord of glory stood before them and they saw nothing that they should be attracted to him, that they should want him.

we looked him over and found nothing desirable. It wasn't what men were looking for, was he? It wasn't what they wanted, what they desired in a Messiah, someone strong, someone powerful as the world knows strength and power.

Somebody who could come and smash those Romans that held them in captivity even while he was on the earth. Someone like Cyrus of Persia who set them free from Babylonian captivity.

[40 : 09] You know Isaiah wrote about it. We need another strong deliverer like that. And it soon became clear to Israel as they listened to Jesus that that wasn't even on his agenda.

He had come to set men free from a greater captivity, a greater bondage, a bondage to sin that would take them to hell forever. That's the kind of deliverer he was.

One to save them from their sins, sins that were damning them to hell. But they didn't want to be saved from sin any more than a dog wants to be saved from a T-bone steak.

There was no desire to be saved from those lovable sins. And so Jesus is despised. We don't want him. We will not have this man to rule over us.

They looked him over and they despised and rejected him. He's the stone the builders rejected.

Like a mason that's got a building and he's got the most important stone to lay and well he's got to

find the right stone on the pile.

[41 : 19] Will it fit? Is he right for this building? And the leaders of Judah took Jesus in their hands and they looked him over. Will he be the one to build this structure upon?

God's kingdom? No. And they threw him on the reject pile with all the other false messiahs. He's the stone the builders rejected.

Because he's not what they were looking for. He was the man of sorrows after all. Familiar with suffering. Hardly the image they wanted. We want someone to save us from sorrow and suffering. Not someone so weak that he can't even save himself from sorrow and suffering. He's the deliverer for us. Away with him. Crucify him. Crucify him. And as he hangs upon the cross, what are they looking at?

They're looking at an appalling scene. A man that does not look human. His sufferings were that great.

[42 : 22] A pulverized, disfigured man. Beaten by who? By Roman. Our enemy soldiers. He can't save us.

So he's like one from whom men hide their faces. Can't look at that scene. He was despised, Isaiah says.

And we did not esteem him. We who now believe and love him, we did not esteem him. The word is an accounting word.

It's to put a high value on something. If you esteem something that's high in your view. We didn't put a high value on Jesus. Thirty pieces of silver is the price that was put on his head.

A lot of men sell him for a lot less. For this lust, this sin, this pleasure. We did not esteem him.

[43 : 24] You see, we were in on this too, Isaiah says. He's the high exalted one and we esteemed him not. What worthless things we esteemed more than Jesus.

And it exposes the rottenness of our own condition. If there's a masterpiece that's being sold in a garage sale for five dollars, what does that tell you about the masterpiece?

Does it judge the masterpiece? Does it say, oh, that's terrible? I mean, look at the price tag. No, the price put on the masterpiece judges the one that rejected it, the one who discounted it and did not esteem it, and put five dollars.

What kind of a person is that? And that's the way it was with Jesus. We did not esteem him. Oh, but the Father esteemed him. The Father said, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. and we come along and put five dollars on him. We esteemed him not. And it reveals our own perverted, upside down value system.

[44 : 39] But nothing other than God revealing the glory of his son will ever change our estimate about him. Who has believed? Those to whom the arm of the Lord has been revealed.

Well, that's his rejection. We come to stanza three, the servant substitution. And here we have his sufferings explained. We've seen them misunderstood. Now they're explained.

And here we're at the very center of the heart of the song. Indeed, we're at the center of the book, the climax of the book, of the gospel. And Isaiah takes us by the hand and leads us outside Jerusalem to the middle cross.

And we are at Calvary, folks. The crucifixion of Jesus. One of the most misunderstood events of all history. Well, what is man's view of what's going on here?

Surely, verse 4, he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. Yet, and here we have unbelieving man's assessment of Calvary.

[45 : 41] Yet, we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. Isaiah is saying, we, the servants, disciples, this is what we did.

We looked and we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. In other words, we thought he was getting what he deserved. When we looked at Jesus, we thought he is being cursed by God and he deserves it.

God's law said, cursed is everyone who's hanged on a tree. He's hanging there, damned by the curse of God for his sin. He's stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God, and rightly so.

He claimed to be God. He's blaspheming. He deserves to have his life taken. And this assessment of Jesus could be heard in the taunts and mockery at the cross.

He trusts in God. Well, then let God deliver him now if he wants him. You see, God doesn't want him. God doesn't come to save him. He's cursed by God.

[46:53] Here he is hanging between heaven and earth and he's despised and rejected by man. And look, heaven doesn't want him either. He's rejected by God, cursed, smitten by him and afflicted.

That's what we thought. But, verse 5 says, here's what's really happening at Calvary. But, he was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities and our punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed. He is indeed stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God.

He is pierced, crushed, and punished, but not for his own sins, but for ours. This was the truth missed by us and how it changes everything.

How it changes what we're looking at. This appalling form of suffering that was despicable and we didn't want to have anything to do with it and we had no attraction for this servant of the Lord.

[47:56] But then we come to see that he's cursed in our place. This is substitution. This is the servant standing in for his people and getting not what he deserves, but what we deserve.

Jehovah lifted up his rod, O Christ, it fell on thee. Thou was sword stricken of thy God, there's not one stroke for me. So he takes the punishment that brought us peace.

That's how peace can be made between God and the sinner. Oh, we see it now. The punishment that brought us peace was on him.

He gets what sin deserves and that's how sins can be blotted out and remembered no more and put behind God's back, never to be brought up against us. He drinks the cup of wrath.

That's what he's doing and that's why the cup is taken out of our hands and why we will never drink again. Amen. Yes, Christ is being cursed by God on the tree, but it's substitutionary curse bearing for Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

[49:19] Oh, this is how redemption comes, but not with money. It is by the blood of Jesus, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus as a lamb without spot or blemish.

Isaiah is still speaking for himself and the servants' people in verse 6. We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Brothers, sisters, we all are in on this together.

We all have gone astray. That's the inclusive word. Then the particular word. Each of us, each of us, each of us what?

Each of us has turned to his own way. Did you know that you turned to your own way and I turned to my own way? And I had my own variations of sin that I went after and you had your variations of sin that pleased you.

But you know what we had in common? That they were not God's way. We all have gone astray from God's way and we've all turned to whatever our way is.

[50:31] So what do you expect a holy God to do for people who have thumbed him and turned their back toward him? Well, you expect the curse.

You expect the cup of wrath. You expect judgment. And verse six, finished, finishes. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Rather than damning us for our sins, Isaiah says to his fellow servant disciples, rather than damning us, the Lord God laid on him the iniquity of us all.

And so when he laid our sins on Jesus, Jesus was then damned in our place. And in this way, he frees us from sin forever.

What a blessed thing to have Jesus as our sin bearer, as the curse bearer. And again, Isaiah is writing himself right into the events of Calvary along with all the other believing remnant.

[51:44] We all, each of us, our transgressions, those are our iniquities. That is our punishment. The great Dutch painter Rembrandt painted a piece called The Raising of the Cross.

It's a dark painting, a dark background, and there's just a stream of light upon the main character, Christ, as he's nailed to a slanting cross that's going to be raised up and dropped into position. And there's all sorts of men around helping, giving a helping hand to raise up the cross, to crucify this appalling figure.

He's not nearly appalling enough in Rembrandt's painting, but that's the scene here. But there is, and so all you're seeing is shadows, just silhouettes of men, but there's a little glint of light that hits upon the face of one of those men helping raise the cross.

and it's Rembrandt's face. He painted himself into the event of the raising of the cross at Calvary.

[52:59] Have you done that? Have you by faith seen your transgressions at that cross, your iniquities, your perverseness, your rebellion?

Have you seen your punishment that you would have been bearing for all eternity there at this scene on that man, on that God-man? Isaiah writes himself into Calvary. Rembrandt painted himself into Calvary. And we by faith must see ourselves and our sins there upon our Savior.

Behold the man upon the cross, my sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed I hear my mocking voice called out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished. So Isaiah brings us to Calvary. He brings us to Calvary for a sight of the Lord's servant.

[54:06] Behold my servant, God says. Because it's at Calvary that we get a true estimate of the guilt of our sin. It's here at Calvary that we see that our guilt is so great that only the damning of the Son of God will take it away.

That's the estimate of our sin. And he brings us to Calvary that we might get a true estimate of the worth of Christ. That his blood has enough value in it to take away the sins of everyone who trusts what is happening here and will be safe forever from their sins.

Oh, what worth, what value. You see, it's here at the cross that we see the true glory of this servant of the Lord. And what we find is that the mystery is resolved.

We see his true glory not in isolation. If we could just hide those passages on his suffering, then we could appreciate Christ's glory. Then we see something that would attract us to him.

It's not that way. We come to the cross and we look at the appalling figure upon it and we come to see that those are my sins. That's my punishment.

[55:25] Do you mean he would do that for me? And oh, how we love him at Calvary. Oh, there's a glorious attraction in the cross itself, in the worst of sufferings.

We see the greatest glory because it was our transgressions, our iniquities, our punishment, our healing that we see there.

My unconverted friends, what are you going to do with this servant of the Lord? You know, your sins are going to be punished. They have to be.

God would have to un-God himself to not punish even one sin in the universe. He's too holy to turn away from even one sin. He must punish sin wherever it is found.

So your sins are going to be punished either by yourself or by the one substitute curse bearer that God has appointed, his servant.

[56:30] And if you reject him, you are shutting yourself up with no substitute and you will receive the full cup of God's wrath all alone forever and ever.

There was an Ethiopian one day that heard these very words and he believed and was baptized and was saved. Is there any reason why you shouldn't go out of here a believing follower of the servant of the Lord and be baptized to identify yourself with him.

Let's pray and have dealings with the Lord, each of us personally. I'll close our time of silent prayer. Let's all pray silently. What thou my Lord has suffered was all for sinners gain.

Mine, mine was the transgression but thine the deadly pain. Lord, we confess that we've read these words many times before and we've just barely stepped into the ocean of your love and holiness and power that we see demonstrated here.

Please open our eyes. Forgive us where we have blindly wanted to see things in scriptures our way and so have been blinded from the truth. We know there's much in Calvary that we have not yet understood that would sanctify us more, that would make us hate sin more, that would make us love the Savior more.

[58:01] Come and show it to us. Forgive us that we once looked upon you and saw nothing attractive about you. Forgive us that we once saw no reason to give you our lives and we counted our own lives as more valuable than this suffering servant.

Wash and cleanse us from our sins afresh. and please open up eyes to the glory of Jesus even in his sufferings. Make us worshipers of him and those who believe and speak of him with great joy. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.