

Miracle - Peace Through Pain
Isaiah 53:2-12

Of all times, the Christmas season causes us to reflect upon the nature of giving, but in God's gift of the Christ-Child it is more fitting that we reflect upon the sacrifice of the Giver. For Jesus did not simply come to be a model of love for us, but to be a substitute for us. God the Father delighted to give His Son in our stead. God the Son delighted to give His life in our stead. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." "By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us..." (John 3:16, 1 John 3:16)

Isaiah 53 unwraps the present of Jesus Christ who came to suffer and die in our place. It is a gift of unfathomable cost to the Giver. The list of all He endured because of our sin is inexhaustible: despised, rejected, forsaken, sorrowed, grieved, distressed, oppressed, afflicted, humiliated, shamed, belittled, scorned, mocked, ridiculed, derided, unjustly judged, stricken, smitten, crushed, chastised, scourged, pierced, wounded, cut off from the land of the living...

Throughout Isaiah 53 there echoes these humbling words: *our, we, us*. Jesus bore *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows. Jesus was wounded for *our* transgressions. Jesus was crushed for *our* iniquities. Upon Jesus was the chastisement that belonged to *us*. By Jesus' stripes *we* are healed. *We* turned astray. But the Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of *us all*. What kind of Giver is this? What kind of gift is this? When the weight of all of our sin and guilt was transferred to Jesus on the cross, it almost seems that when the Father turned His face away, He focused squarely upon us. His suffering Son satisfied the wrath of God on our behalf and bought for us peace with God (Romans 5:6-9, Galatians 3:13, Isaiah 53:10). Our sin was atoned for. Our forgiveness was purchased (Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24). His perfect righteousness becomes ours in Jesus (Philippians 2:7-8, Romans 5:19, Is. 53:11). Death is defeated and our eternal life secured (Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:55). The enemy (Satan) is disarmed (Colossians 2:14-15, Hebrews 2:14-15).

Our perfect and final healing is purchased in full (Is 53:4, Rev. 7:17), the ultimate gift of the cross of Jesus: eternal fellowship with God (1 Peter 3:18, Romans 5 and 8). "Long lay the world in sin and error pining 'til He appeared and the soul felt its worth..."

NOTES

Growth Questions for 12/27 – 1/3

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find most helpful, eye-opening, troubling?
2. Do you see yourself included in the phrase of 53:6, "All of us like sheep have gone astray?" Explain.
3. List the verbs in 53:4-6 that describe Jesus' suffering.
4. What is the hope given in verse 12?
5. How well does this passage predict what happened in Jesus' life? Is Jesus the Messiah (Christ)? What is your response to Him? Do you tell others of this One?

Proclaim...Reach...Connect...Go
Living on Mission

1. Take time this week to pray for the following...
 - Thank God for the celebration of life that you can have through the work of Christ.
 - Thank Jesus for willingly absorbing God's wrath for sin and making intercession on your behalf.
 - Ask God to prepare you for the new decade that starts on Friday and for opportunities to share the greatest gift of Christmas; the person of Jesus.
2. Bible Reading Plans – 1/1/10 – Jump in and Commit!
 - B90X – Church at Martinsburg's 90-day challenge to read the entire Bible in 3 months!
 - B365X – Church at Martinsburg's 365-day challenge to read the entire Bible in a year!
 - Both plans are available on the welcome table or online for download at www.martinsburgchurch.org
3. Important Dates
 - 1/3/10 – THANKS! – Celebrating 2009
 - 1/10/10 – New Preaching Series – *The Essential James*
 - 1/10/10 – Start Sundays @ Regal – 10am
 - 1/18/10 - Community Groups Begin

...to proclaim the Gospel and reach those far from God.