

WEEK 11

ISAIAH 53

Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 | God's promise of salvation would come true through the Suffering Servant who removes the guilt of the people by his sacrifice.

Preface

In the previous weeks, we studied the life of Hezekiah—his moments of faithfulness and obedience, as well as his pride. Yet, God remained gracious and merciful to him at all times. Last week, we discussed God's sovereignty which should embolden our trust in Him.

This week, we will read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 which talks about the suffering and sacrificial role of the Messiah, foreshadowing Jesus Christ, through whom many will be redeemed.

Context: Isaiah 52:13-53:12 consists of the fourth and final Servant Song, which prophesies the Messiah who would bring salvation, justice, and restoration to God's people through His suffering. In Isaiah 42, the Servant of the LORD is introduced, stating that He was chosen by God and God delights in Him. The second Servant Song can be found in Isaiah 49 and speaks of the Messiah's work in the world to display God's splendor and restore His people. Isaiah 50 consists of the third Servant Song, which contrasts Israel's sin with the Servant's obedience.

History: Isaiah's prophecies of the Suffering Servant are understood to be fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus' suffering and sacrificial death are vividly depicted in Isaiah 53, and it was prophesied that he would bear the sins and transgressions of humanity. Jesus' resurrection was also alluded to in Isaiah 53:11.

Observation

1. How was the Servant's appearance described? (Isa. 52:14, 53:2-3, 5)
2. How would humans view and treat the Suffering Servant? (Isa. 52:14, 53:1-3, 7-9)
3. What did the Servant do? (Isa. 53:4-6)
4. Why was the Servant pierced, crushed, punished, and suffered (Isa. 53:7-9, 10-12)?
5. What was prophesied to come after the Servant's suffering? (Isa. 53:11-12)

Interpretation

1. Based on this passage, what does it say about the natural tendencies of humans?

*Leaders' note: In Isa. 53:3 and Isa. 53:8, we observed that humans despised, rejected, and oppressed Jesus. People were appalled at Him (Isa. 52:14) and opposed Him (Isa. 53). This passage highlights humanity's natural tendency to **reject** God and emphasizes that **humans do not have a passive role**; rather, humanity is identified as the culprit.*

2. How has the prophecy of the Suffering Servant been fulfilled in Jesus Christ?
Make cross-references to Luke 22-23 for deeper discussions.
3. Why is it vital to see Jesus' willingness to die in our place and his innocence? (Isa. 53:7-9)
4. Do you think that God's will in Isa. 53:10 is too extreme? Why or why not?

*Leaders' note: Some translations of Isa. 53:10 say "But the LORD **desired** to crush Him" or "The LORD **was pleased** to crush Him". It is important to note that The Father did not find the sufferings and death of His Son something pleasurable, unlike the worldly definition of pleasure in the modern day, but they pleased Him because they **fulfilled His great purpose of providing redemption for humankind**.*

Application

1. How do the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ draw us to worship?
2. Do you remember and honor Jesus' sacrifice every day? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. How should we live differently, knowing that we have been redeemed by Jesus' suffering?

Optional Follow-Up Exercise: Observing The Lord's Supper

During the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the act of communion for the church to observe in remembrance of him (Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:18-20). Its significance, however, goes beyond simply remembering Jesus' life and death. Partaking in the Lord's Supper involves the acts of examination and self-reflection, fellowship within the body of believers, proclamation of the gospel as a witness to non-believers, spiritual nourishment, and anticipation of the future consummation of God's kingdom. Moreover, it provides a multi-sensory experience, enabling participants to identify with God's deliverance of sinners through Jesus' death on the cross.

Instructions:

1. Prepare the communion elements (bread and juice/wine) and pass them around.
2. Be sure to give a word of caution before observing Communion, to ensure that everyone who partakes is a follower of Christ.
3. Begin by preparing our hearts, praying in silence, and confessing to God ways that we have fallen short.
4. Have someone read 1 Corinthians 11:23-24. Pause and take the bread together as a group.
5. Have someone read 1 Corinthians 11:25. Pause and take the juice/wine together as a group.
6. Close the time in prayers, declaring praise and thanksgiving for Jesus' sacrifice that allows us into this communion with God.