

# The Suffering Servant

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[ 0 : 00 ] This evening we're going to be talking about the suffering of Christ.

! I've discovered as you make preparations for a lesson like that it's very humbling. So, to do justice to this topic that Peter covers in 1 Peter, which is really kind of toward the ends of the New Testament, we must start way back in the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament, specifically chapter 53.

And when I say way back, it has a double meaning. First we should note that 1 Peter and Isaiah are separated by some 38 books of the Bible.

That encompasses 17 books of the Old Testament and 21 books of the New Testament. In Isaiah chapter 53, we read the poignant and often distressing passages concerning Jesus as the suffering servant.

This is where we begin tonight in our study entitled, Christ Jesus, the Suffering Servant.

[ 1 : 37 ] And may I say to you that when we come to these passages, and there are many in the Bible, I'm reminded of the warning that Joshua received in Joshua chapter 5 verse 14.

And actually, I backed up to 13. When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand.

And Joshua went to him and said to him, are you for us, or are you for our adversaries?

And this person gave an interesting reply. He said, neither, but I am the commander of the army of the Lord.

Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, what does my Lord say to this servant?

[ 3 : 05 ] And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.

And the scripture says, and Joshua did so. That always moves me when I read that or see it depicted. I certainly can't speak for anyone else, but that passage has always sent chills down my spine.

I think most people would agree that that commander of the Lord's army is Christ Jesus, pre-incarnate, what we call a theophany or a Christophany, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ in the Old Testament.

This will be rather lengthy, but well worth it. Listen to the words about the suffering servant, and pay heed to these men because we are on holy ground.

This is the entire chapter of the Bible, Isaiah 53. Who has believed what he has heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

[ 4 : 36 ] For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hid their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our gifts and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

[ 6 : 03 ] He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, like a sheep that before it shears is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away, and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people, and they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

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, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoiled with the strong.

because he has 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.

[ 7 : 52 ] That's Isaiah 53 verses 1 to 12. I found several sites on the internet. There's young men in their 20s.

They're Hebrews. They travel around Israel, spot somebody alone or maybe a little group, and say, can we read something to you? And they'll read that.

And then they'll say to the people, Jewish people, have you ever read that in the Bible? Well, that's not in the Bible. Yeah, it's in there. No.

I've read the Bible. Said, what's in there I can assure you. Well, where is it? Isaiah 53. And they'll look in their Hebrew Bible and say, it's not in there.

And that's because the Hebrew leaders took it out. And they say to many of these people, who do you think that's talking about?

[ 9 : 03 ] And several of them say, that's got to be Jesus. I've studied him, and that's Jesus they're talking about.

And I said, why did the leadership take him out? They're afraid of him. Others say, I don't know who it's talking about, and I'm not interested in Jesus.

When one interviews church members in Western culture and asks them to reveal some truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, some of the answers are fairly standard, and some are surprising.

Many people remember Jesus as the child that lay in a manger. A manger is a food trough. And He was in Bethlehem, a suburb, by the way, of Jerusalem, five miles away.

As a youngster, He is remembered working in His father's carpentry shop. Some would mention when they took a trip to Jerusalem on a tour of the temple when He was 12 years old.

[ 10 : 16 ] On that occasion, He entered into a discussion with the elders in the temple, and His knowledge both astonished and astounded them.

Many times He's referred to as a humble person, and as He grew over, He became known as a powerful healer. On occasion, He raised people from being dead to being alive again.

He was wonderful at explaining the will of God, whom He called Father. That just about caused a war.

Still does in the Middle East, including the Arab world. That was unthinkable, but He did it. He was the model of manhood.

Each of these images, and many more, are true concerning Christ. But people could embrace these and still miss the purpose of His sojourn on earth.

[ 11 : 26 ] What did the Father have in mind when He sent Jesus to walk among us? They would have missed the primary reason for the incarnation.

He came to die. specifically, He came to die for the lost, whom He had come to deliver from the bondage of sin.

He came to seek and to save the lost. Few, if any, believed that Jesus was the suffering servant and would become the crucified Savior.

and neither did they understand that Jesus would offer Himself as the Messiah, meaning the Anointed One of God, not only to Jews, but also to Gentiles.

When Jesus went to the cross, He put on display His redemptive work. He became, for all who would ever believe, the atoning sacrifice for their sins.

[ 12 : 41 ] It was the very reason He came into this world. If you had to summarize the life and death of Jesus, you would be wise to select the words of Paul.

These are given to us by the great apostle in 1 Corinthians using an economy of words, which Paul was sometimes good at, other times not so good.

1 Corinthians 2, 2, for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. So tonight, we come to the concluding words of 1 Peter 2.

The Holy Spirit uses this occasion to identify three aspects of the Lord's suffering. He was the believers perfect standard for suffering.

He was their perfect substitute in suffering. And He was their perfect shepherd through suffering.

[13:58] And the first of these that we'll take a look at this evening is the fact that Jesus was the believers perfect standard for suffering.

1 Peter 2, verse 21b, the second part of verse 21 to 23. Because, and that, by the way, is the same word as since, Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in His steps He committed no sin.

Neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.

Christ, same word for righteously. Christians have been called by God to a life of suffering and a life of persecution.

This can happen in the workplace. It can happen in any realm of life that we may find ourselves in. we look at some of this last week.

[15:33] Anytime a true believer is suffering or being persecuted, they must look to Christ Jesus as both their standard and their example.

For Jesus, the very path to glory was the path of suffering. This is captured by Dr. Luke in the Gospel that bears His name.

Luke chapter 24, verse 25 and 26, And He said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory? Well, there you have it, guys.

Since the path of glory was the path of suffering for our Lord, the same was true of His genuine followers. Peter uses a very important phrase in this passage.

[16:39] Again, he says, since Christ also suffered for you. The meaning of efficacious is having the power to produce a desired effect.

A good example of something efficacious is that of the substitutionary death of Christ. It became efficacious by substitutionary death.

He became the sin bearer for all who would believe. Christ, we know, died a redemptive death through redemptive suffering.

There is no parallel among other believers. You can't say, Jesus' death, that reminds me of Jesus and it reminds me of Joe Smith.

I'm sorry, I know a few Joe Smiths, I don't think they quite measure up. They did not die a substitutionary atoning death.

[17:55] But there are some features that people experience that are impressive. Nothing Jesus ever did deserved the death penalty. He also died the death of a criminal though he committed no crime.

I've dealt with people that did commit crime and actually got the death penalty and it's been carried out. people say, you ever lose sleep over that?

No, but I lose sleep over the people they killed. Many of whom were police officers in Fort Worth. he died the death of a criminal though he committed no crime.

He was perfectly sinless. Fox's Book of Martyrs is filled with examples of people who died similar deaths. Christ died as an example for all of us.

As good as those people are in Fox's Book of Martyrs, they were still sinners. Jesus committed no sin. He did die as an example for us.

[19:11] It is how we should respond to unmerited persecution and punishment. Peter says as much with these words he left you an example.

I like that. Leaving you as an example. Talking about the Lord. The greatest example we have in the Holy Bible are the words I just read to you from the entire chapter of Isaiah 53.

And I challenge you guys here read that every night or every day at least once for a month. We will all grow as Christ becomes more and more our example.

Alan Stibbs was a prolific writer of books essays and commentaries including one that was entitled The First Epistle of Peter.

That's a pretty good title to look at. Here's a small portion from his commentary. In the unique instance of our Lord's passion when the sinless one suffered as if he were the worst of sinners and bore the extreme penalty of sin there is a double sense in which he may have acknowledged God as the righteous judge.

[ 20 : 49 ] On the one hand because voluntarily and in fulfillment of God's will he was taking the sinner's place and bearing the sinner's sin.

He did not protest at what he had to suffer. Rather he consciously recognized that it was the penalty righteously due to sin.

So he handed himself over to be punished. He recognized that in letting such shame pain and curse fall upon him the righteous God was judging righteously.

On the other hand because he himself was sinless he also believed that in due time God as the righteous judge would vindicate him as righteous and exalt him from the grave and reward him for what he had willingly endured for others sake by giving him the right completely to save them from the penalty and power of their own wrong doing.

So the Lord Jesus is the complete and perfect example for all believers to be the righteous judge.

[ 22 : 19 ] Saints are not sinless. If you believe that we are meet with me privately and I'll fill you in on me. Saints are not sinless but they are righteous when hidden in Christ.

We bear his righteousness. righteousness. He bore their sins and now we bear his righteousness. Paul gave great commentary on this.

Listen to his words in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17 and 18. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.

For the things that are seen are transient but the things that are unseen are eternal. what we experience in terms of suffering is trifling compared to the eternal weight and better that's the word the heavy mass of glory in the life to come.

In addition to our perfect standard for suffering in the life to come we have the perfect standard for suffering we have the perfect substitute for that suffering.

[ 24 : 05 ] 1 Peter 2 24 for he himself bore our sins. There's your substitution. Christ bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness by his wounds you have been healed.

Peter is an expert at pointing out that Jesus is our perfect substitute. and in this regard Peter is much like Paul.

Dr. MacArthur in his commentary refers to another expert on the substitutionary atonement whom I was introduced to not physically but in his writings by Dr.

McBride our former pastor and that's Dr. Leon Morris an Old Testament professor minister he also snuck in a lot of commentary on New Testament Dr.

Morris lived 1914 to 2006 he was an Australian Anglican minister he was a renowned scholar both Old and New Testament he wrote several commentaries and theological works such as the atonement and the New Testament theology listen to these words of his redemption is substitutionary for it means that Christ paid that price that we could not pay he paid it in our stead and guess what we go free justification interprets our salvation judicially and as the New Testament sees it Christ took our legal liability took it in our stead was there a price to be paid he paid it was there a victory to be won

[ 26 : 19 ] Dr. Morris says he won it was there a penalty to be borne He bore it was there a judgment to be faced he faced it again Dr.

Morris to put it bluntly and plainly if Christ is not my substitute I still occupy the place of a condemned sinner I'm still under condemnation if my sins and my guilt are not transferred to him if he did not take them upon himself then surely they remain with me if he did not deal with sins I must face their consequences if my penalty was not borne by him it still hangs over me back in 1st Peter chapter 2 Peter explained that Christ died so that believers might die to sin and live to righteousness this is Peter simplified way of saying what the apostle Paul said but Paul used a lot more words when he came to this I'm still going to read it Romans chapter 6 verses 3 to 11 Paul says do you not know that all of us have been baptized into Christ Jesus and we were

baptized into his death we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father we too might walk in newness of life! if we have been united with him in death like his we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his we know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin for one who has died has been set free from sin now if we have died with Christ we believe we will also live with him we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again death no longer has dominion over him for the death he died he died to sin once for all but the life he lives to God he lives to God so you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus Romans 6 verses 3 to 11 our last point this evening is this the believer is perfect shepherd through suffering Christ is the believer is perfect shepherd and it came through suffering 1 Peter 2 verse 25 for you were continually straying like sheep but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls hey I like that and verse 25 really alludes to our starting point in Isaiah 53 all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all Isaiah 53 6 what does a shepherd do that is so essential in that culture he brings the sheep into the fold his fare to do so ultimately exposed the sheep to attack and eventual death by wolves the good news is that

[ 30 : 35 ] God has determined that all believers sin should fall on Jesus the great shepherd and Peter points out that these sheep were continually straying No sheep has ever earned a Phi Beta Kappa they're not the smartest animals they were wandering around like sheep do they were like sheep without a shepherd that's how Jesus described them in Matthew 9 36 but these sheep have come under protective care of the shepherd by substitution substitution is so important and there are theologians today that can't define that he took our place on the cross he didn't deserve to be there I did and he took my place and now because he took our place everyone for whom he died is being cared for by the shepherd and guardian of their souls that's

Jesus he's the guardian he's the shepherd Jesus cares for his flock every last one of them and the Lord is the great substitute and the great shepherd and you know as I studied this and I thought to myself this really speaks to the fact that the first people that heard the herald that the Messiah was coming were shepherds that's so poignant shepherds weren't even allowed in the synagogue why they smelled like sheep they weren't allowed in they couldn't go worship on Saturday or Friday night well they they had a cathedral to worship in stars above angel you'll find him lying in a manger amazing never underestimate the importance of substitutionary atonement it's real simple he took our place he died in our place let's pray gracious father we thank you for the word of god we thank you lord that it's powerful it's without any mixture of error we thank you for the lord jesus christ who could come back at any moment and he will come back when the time is right lord may we worship you in spirit and truth all the while glancing upward because we know that our redeemer draweth nigh and what a privilege it is that we can pray this in every prayer we ever pray in his name amen