

Grace to you and peace from Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

Just as many were astonished at You, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.

Text: Isaiah 52:14 A 4/2/17 Passion History, part 5 Psalm 66 Responsive Psalm: 27
Hymns: 760, 172 (1, 4, 6, 8), 153, 145

JESUS' SUFFERING MEANS OUR SALVATION

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He! 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
'Tis the true and faithful Word. (TLH #153:1)

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

So far our Lenten texts have been from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. This morning's text from the end of chapter 52 begins by addressing Jesus **directly** ("*Just as many were astonished at You...*"), then changes to talking **about** Jesus ("*...so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men*"). With these words Isaiah describes Jesus' physical appearance during His trials and especially when He was on the cross. This vision of our brutalized, disfigured Savior is hard for us to look at. It's hard to hear about all the terrible things that were done to Jesus and what Jesus suffered on the cross. It's hard to face our own sinfulness that caused our Savior to suffer so. Yet at the same time we rejoice in our Savior's great love for us in putting Himself through it all, and we rejoice in what His suffering accomplished for us!

Our Savior suffered terribly. They hit Him in the face. They spit in His face. They mocked Him, telling Him in effect, "You are **not** the Son of God!!" They lied about Him. They pressed a crown of thorns onto His head. They scourged Him. Jim Caviezel was the actor who played the role of Jesus in the movie, "The Passion Of The Christ." During the filming of the scene of Jesus' scourging, Caviezel was accidentally actually hit with a stroke by the whip. It knocked the air out of his lungs, and he couldn't breathe for some time. In actual scourging the victim was literally beaten half to death; sometimes worse. Jesus had nails driven through His hands and feet. He was crucified – an extremely cruel, torturous way to die. As Jesus was dying His enemies added to His torment by making fun of Him, and telling Him to prove He is the Son of God by coming down from the cross.

As terrible as Jesus' physical suffering was, His greatest suffering was in his soul and spirit. The Bible says, "[God] made [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21a). So completely did Jesus take our sins away from us and upon Himself that He felt all of our sin and guilt as His own sin and guilt. That's why He said to His Father in the prophetic 69th Psalm, "O

God, You know My foolishness, and My sins are not hidden from You” (v. 5). Jesus felt every weakness, everything ever done wrong, all the sin-sick filth, all the guilt and shame of every person who will ever live. Jesus felt His Father’s righteous anger over all of our sins, and bore His Father’s just punishment for all of our sins. Isaiah says in his 53rd chapter that Jesus’ Father “[*crushed*] Him, putting Him to grief” (v. 10, NASB).

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
 Was there ever grief like His?
 Friends through fear His cause disowning,
 Foes insulting His distress;
 Many hands were raised to wound Him,
 None would interpose to save;
 But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
 Was the stroke that Justice gave. (TLH #153:2)

On the cross Jesus suffered hell for us. What exactly does that mean? The Bible says that on the Judgment Day Jesus will tell the unbelievers, “*Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Mt. 25:41). Hell is a place of eternal separation from God, and eternal punishment. Jesus suffered hell for us on the cross when He was punished by His Father for our sins, and separated from His Father, crying out, “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*” (Mt. 27:46). Jesus didn’t have to suffer **eternally** to save us from eternal suffering in hell. Because He is **God**, what Jesus suffered once and for all on the cross delivered us from eternal suffering.

Looking at all that our Savior suffered forces us to look at ourselves and our sins that caused it. In the words of the hymnwriter, “Ah! I also and my sin, wrought Thy deep affliction; This indeed the cause hath been of Thy crucifixion” (TLH #140:3b). When we see how terribly our Savior had to suffer, we see how terrible our sins and our sinful condition are in God’s eyes. It took nothing less than the suffering and death of the Son of God to pay for our sins.

Ye who think of sin but lightly
 Nor suppose the evil great
 Here may view its nature rightly,
 Here its guilt may estimate.
 Mark the Sacrifice appointed,
 See who bears the awful load;
 ‘Tis the WORD, the LORD’S ANOINTED,
 Son of Man and Son of God. (TLH # 153:3)

The Bible tells us about all that our Savior suffered and His death so we can know that Jesus paid the full price for every one of our sins. Galatians 2:21 says, “*If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly*” (NASB). To put it another way, because Jesus paid for every one of our sins on the cross, there’s nothing left that we can do or have to do to make up for our sins. Just before He died Jesus declared, “*It is finished!*” (Jn. 20:30). John assures us, “*The blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleanses us from all sin*” (1 Jn. 1:7).

Joseph was told about Mary's baby, "*You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*" (Mt. 1:21). Because Jesus suffered and died for our sins on the cross, we are saved!

John says, "*In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation*" (or "*atoning sacrifice*") "*for our sins*" (1 Jn. 4:10). In sending us His Son to die for our sins on the cross, God shows us how much He loves us. Jesus says, "*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends...*" (Jn. 15:13-14a). By all that He suffered for us, and making the ultimate sacrifice for us, Jesus shows us how much He loves us.

The Apostle Paul says, "*God sent forth His Son, ... born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*" "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')*" (Gal. 4:4b-5; 3:13). Part of "*the curse of the law*" is that we deserve eternal death in hell because of our sins. Jesus put Himself under the law's curse for us, dying for our sins on the cross in our place. Because Jesus died for us, we are God's forgiven, saved sons and daughters. John says, "*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*" (1 Jn. 3:1a).

"*For God so loved the world*" – God loves the whole world, including you and me, so much – "*that He gave His only begotten Son*" – that He sent Jesus to die for our sins on the cross – "*that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" – that everyone who believes in Jesus is going to heaven! (Jn. 3:16)

"*Just as many were astonished at You, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.*" It's hard to hear about all that our Savior suffered for us. But we are eternally grateful that He did. Jesus' suffering means our salvation!

Here we have a firm foundation;
 Here the refuge of the lost;
 Christ the Rock of our salvation,
 His the name of which we boast.
 Lamb of God, for sinners wounded,
 Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
 None shall ever be confounded
 Who on Him their hope have built. Amen. (TLH #153:4)