

¹ *Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?* ² *For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.* ³ *He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ...* ⁵ *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*

Text: Isaiah 53:1-3, 5 A 3/5/17 Passion History, part 1 Psalm 98 Responsive Reading: Ps. 96
Hymns: 155 (alt. tune), 762, 166, 179

BELIEVE IN JESUS, AND BE SAVED!

1. Jesus lived a perfect life for you

2. Jesus gave His life for you

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

In all of our funerals the pastor assures the people there that the person who died is going to heaven because he or she believed in Jesus. Once, after a funeral I conducted, a visitor told me, “You make salvation too easy.”

– 1 –

We have to confess with David, “*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me*” (Ps. 51:5, NIV). We’re all infected by Original Sin. Adam and Eve sinned. Every human being is a descendent of Adam and Eve. Therefore from the minute our life begins at conception, every human being inherits a sinful nature from Adam and Eve. The angel Gabriel told the virgin Mary that she would become the mother of Jesus: “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God*” (Lk. 1:35). The Son of God received His human nature from Mary. But because He had no earthly father, He kept His divine nature. Jesus Christ, true Man and true God, was our sinless Substitute from the moment of His conception.

Our text is from the well-known 53rd chapter of Isaiah prophesying Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection. Isaiah said, “*For He*” (Jesus) “*shall grow up before Him*” (His Father) “*as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.*” Isaiah prophesied of Jesus’ life on earth. Although Jesus is God, while He was on earth He looked like a normal human being. The fourth chapter of Hebrews tells us that Jesus was “*in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*” (v. 15). As part of what He had to do to save us, Jesus allowed Himself to be tempted in every way any of us is tempted. Because He was also human, every temptation Jesus faced was a real temptation. Because He is God, Jesus perfectly resisted every temptation. From the time He was little, with Joseph and Mary and His brothers and the other children, till the time He died Jesus faced temptations: temptations to ‘go along with the crowd’ and say and do things He shouldn’t in order to be accepted and liked; temptations to be irresponsible and rebellious, temptations to do foolish and wrong and bad things, temptations to worry and complain and not trust in His Father, and every other kind of temptation. Yet no matter how much pressure or ridicule or persecution He faced from others, Jesus always stood up for what God says is right and refused to go along with what God says is wrong. Jesus always treated everyone the way God wants us

to. He never once did or said or even thought about anything wrong. Jesus perfectly obeyed everything God tells us to do in His Word.

The Bible says that as He was growing up “*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature*” (Lk. 2:52). Although Jesus is God, because He also became human during His life on earth Jesus had to grow in knowledge and understanding of Scripture. As a twelve year old boy in the temple Jesus told Joseph and Mary, “*Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?*” (Lk. 2:49). As a boy Jesus already knew that He is the Son of God, sent by God the Father to carry out His will. From the time we were little, for every time we’ve had a poor attitude about something, for every time we’ve failed to do what we should have done or done what we shouldn’t have done, for everything we’ve ever thought or said or done that was wrong, we have Jesus’ perfect life as our Substitute, covering every one of our sin and earning heaven for us.

– 2 –

Isaiah prophesied about Jesus, “*He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*” Jesus knew that He Himself was that “*Man of sorrows*” who would be “*despised and rejected*” by so many. He understood His Father’s will that He would one day have to allow Himself to be put to death in order to save us. We sing in one of our Lenten hymns:

This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great Friend,
 The Lamb of God, our Savior;
 Him God the Father chose to send
 To gain for us His favor.
 “Go forth, My Son,” the Father saith,
 “And free men from the fear of death,
 From guilt and condemnation.
 The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,
 But by Thy Passion men shall share
 The fruit of Thy salvation.” (TLH #142:2)

As God Jesus understood how sinful we all are, and how sinful and corrupt this world is. Yet He did not say that we weren’t worth saving. Jesus never once complained about anything He had to go through all during His life because of our sins, and for our salvation. Jesus didn’t say it wasn’t fair, and refuse to put Himself through it. Jesus never once did these things or anything else that’s wrong, so perfectly and completely is He our Savior, and so perfectly and completely does Jesus love us.

Jesus knew and understood Isaiah’s prophecy about Him: “*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*” Jesus knew that the time was coming when He would have to bear the sin and guilt of the whole world, and be mocked and blasphemed and humiliated and flogged and crucified, and bear His Father’s righteous anger and punishment for all of the world’s sins, and be forsaken by His Father, and die. And as that time drew near the Bible says that Jesus “*resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem*” (Lk. 9:51) to put Himself through it all so that we could be saved. The Bible says that it was “*for the joy that was set before Him*” (the joy Jesus felt over our salvation which He knew He would accomplish by His death) that Jesus willingly “*endured the cross*” for us (He. 12:2).

We sing in another Lenten hymn:

Thou hast suffered great affliction
 And hast borne it patiently,
 Even death by crucifixion,
 Fully to atone for me;
 Thou didst choose to be tormented
 That my doom should be prevented.
 Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
 Dearest Jesus, unto Thee. (TLH #151:6)

Just before He died Jesus cried out, *“It is finished!”* (Jn. 19:30). From the moment Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin, Mary, throughout every temptation the devil threw at Him all His life, to the moment He gave up His life, **everything** Jesus had to do to save us was finished. In place of our sinful nature, Jesus was conceived and born sinless. In place of our sinful lives, Jesus lived a sinless life. Instead of us being punished forever in hell for our sins, Jesus allowed Himself to be punished on the cross in our place. There is nothing **we** have to do to earn God’s forgiveness, nothing **we** have to do to make God accept us and love us, nothing **we** have to do to make ourselves worthy to go to heaven. **Jesus** did it all for us.

Isaiah asked, *“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”* Who believes this Gospel message – this powerful *“arm of the LORD”* that saves us? *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved”* (Jn. 3:16-17). God loves every one of us so much that He sent His only dear Son to earth to live a perfect life and offer up His life on the cross to save us. Everyone who believes in Jesus is not going to hell, but has eternal life in heaven.

Speaking of our salvation by His grace through faith alone God says, *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways.... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts”* (Is. 55:8-9). If God’s free offer of salvation in Jesus seems too easy, think of what it cost Jesus. Our salvation wasn’t easy for Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane when He knew that the time had come for Him to suffer and die Jesus said, *“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death”* (Mt. 26:38). *“Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (Lk. 22:43-44). Hebrews 5:7 says that Jesus *“offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to [His Father] who was able to save Him from death.”* What good work of ours could we possibly add to the perfect life that Jesus lived in our place? What sacrifice could we possibly add to Jesus’ perfect sacrifice on the cross in our place? When the jailer asked, *“What must I do to be saved?”* he wasn’t told to **do** anything. He was told, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved”* (Ac. 16:30b-31a).

Jesus lived a perfect life for you. Jesus gave His life for you. **BELIEVE IN JESUS, AND BE SAVED!** Amen.