



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Grace is Enough

April 5, 2020

Isaiah 53:1-6

Clint Pressley

¹*Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

²*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.*

³*He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

⁴*Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.*

⁵*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.*

⁶*All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

(Pastor prays)

The ground under our feet feels unsteady. We have lost the equilibrium of routine and the security of sameness. School is different, work is different, home is different, and church is different. And yet, God remains the same. So with the crutches kicked out from underneath us,

our good God is what we have left to hold onto. So we pray for His grace and we pray for His provision and we long to know that everything is going to be okay, and that longing drives us back to the fountain from which all blessings flow.

Here we are one week before Easter, an Easter week like no other in the last 100 years. There is no instruction manual for walking through a pandemic at Easter, so we go to the book that speaks. We go to God's Word and He takes us to Jesus, and He throws us into the gospel of grace on every page of this book. And it's that Gospel, —the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - that settles our fears, reorients our bearings and stabilizes our equilibrium. And there's no better place in the Old Testament to see that Gospel than in Isaiah 53.

Last week I preached Romans chapter 10. In that chapter Paul actually quotes this passage. And the more I read this passage, the more I thought of you and the great grounding encouragement that we can receive from God today as we look at Jesus and, more pointedly, at the cross of Jesus as described by Isaiah 700 years before the coming of Christ.

This passage is great in several ways. It has great evangelistic value. It is a stunning Old Testament description of the substitutionary death of Jesus to atone for our sins. It has great devotional value. You would do well to take verses 4, 5 and 6 and think about Jesus in the place of sinners. It has great encouragement value. When you read it, it's clear that God made a beautiful place for salvation before the foundation of the world and predicted it through a man named Isaiah. Meaning, he has our lives in his hands. I just want to walk through the passage today like a Bible study and drink in God's grace found in Jesus.

Grace is Going to See Us Through

I'd like to take this passage and walk through it and point out several things. Any objections to that? OK, upon hearing none let's get with it!

Two Foundational Truths of the Gospel

You find them in verses 1-3. There's a lot there, but let's first look at the description of Jesus.

He's fully divine. We see that in verse 1. *¹Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?* Arm of the Lord. To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? That phrase, “arm of the Lord” is used by Isaiah in chapters 51 and 52 to speak of God Himself. This is telling us that Jesus is fully God and He is worthy of your life and struggle and worship. The arm of the Lord is God's awesome power to save and sustain and protect you. The arm of the Lord is the Lord Himself acting in person on your behalf! The arm is

barred, the sleeves are rolled up for action because Christ Himself is getting personally involved in your anxiety, fears and deeply held concerns. And as He does so, He is reminding us that He is Lord and there is no other. In addition to that, the arm of The Lord is a reminder that He has the sovereign power to do whatever it is He wants to do. He was Lord yesterday. He is Lord today. And if you look out into the future, He stands as Lord. He is fully divine.

He is fully human. Let's trace out the biography of Jesus in verses 2-3. Verse 2 says He grew up before Him. That is incarnation and the majesty of the Trinity. He is fully God yet completely distinct, having all of our characteristics. Verse 2 says He was unimpressive. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him; no beauty that we should desire him. Whatever weaknesses or frailties we have, He had them as our representative. The Bible even says that He was tempted in every way and yet without sin. He understands sorrow. To be human is to understand sorrow. He was despised, grossly underestimated; He was rejected. Have you felt like that? He felt it first.

He was sorrowful. A man of sorrows because He takes our sorrows as His own. It's why the Bible can say that the Lord is close to the broken-hearted. He was undervalued. The world esteemed Him not. Have you ever felt like that? You give yourself to something or to someone and they just ignore or take advantage of it. Jesus has been the most undervalued person to ever walk the earth, and when you feel like that, run to Jesus. Think of Jesus. Go to the cross and let the blood of Jesus give you your value.

There are two fundamental truths of the Gospel: Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Two Necessary Acts of the Gospel

I'll make this one short. You'll find these two tucked into verse 1 and they are both in the form of questions. Let's take the last one first.

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? Here is the sovereign act of God, to “reveal” is to uncover the truth. It's what God must do in the Gospel. He must act. He is actively revealing Himself in creation. That is called “general revelation.” He's actively revealing Himself in Gospel proclamation. We need Him to break in. When we pray for lost people, this is what we are praying. It's what the old hymn said, “all is vain unless the spirit of the Holy One comes down.”

We pray that God would uncover but that's not all that is involved in salvation. Look again at the first question. *Who has believed what he has heard from us?* Here is human responsibility, that which God has uncovered must be received as the truth. What has God sovereignly revealed? God has revealed and I'm asking you to believe.

There are two fundamental truths of the Gospel. And two necessary acts of the Gospel.

Six Great Exchanges in the Gospel

Here is the plutonium core of Christianity – substitution. It's what happens at the cross.

Jesus gets the pain – we get stability. It's in verse 4. *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.* Grief is the damage of sin. It's emotional, physical, and psychological damage. "Borne" means shouldered. Jesus takes that damage so you can be whole and complete at the cross of Jesus.

Jesus gets sorrow – we get joy. He carried our sorrows. He accepts our sorrow as His own at the cross. Go to Him there when you are overwhelmed. He carries our sorrows. Look, because we don't have the emotional strength to carry our sorrows, He takes them as His own. He lifts them off of us and, at the cross, He carries them as if they were His own.

Jesus gets punishment – we get grace. Look at that exchange; it's the substitution. In verse 5 it tells us, *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.* He was pierced for our transgressions. Transgression is willful rebellion. He was pierced for our transgressions. For our transgressions. That is cause and effect. Our sin is the cause and Jesus being pierced is the effect. The force of the word "pierced" cannot be ignored. It's used several times in the Old Testament to prophesy about Jesus. The most famous is in Psalm 22:16. *For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet.* At the cross, Jesus is in the place of sinners.

He was crushed – we are forgiven. Crushed, it's the flavor of agony and the awful price to make us acceptable to God. From the top of His head, punctured with a crown of thorns, to the soles of His feet that were nailed to a cross. He was nothing but wounds and bruises and sorrow. For our forgiveness, Jesus was dying in the place of sinners.

Jesus gets chastised – we get peace. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace. His head to be spat upon and beaten. His shoulders to carry the cross. His back for scourging and whipping. His side for a sword. His hands to be pierced. His feet for hobbling so that we could have the one thing that we can't buy or create. That is peace with God. It's what we cling to now more than ever. We trust and find confidence; we rely on His sovereignty and rejoice in His provision.

With His wounds, we are healed. It's the death of Jesus on the cross that heals the human condition, and verse 6 is the biography of every person who has ever come to Christ or ever will come to Christ.

One far-reaching promise

Let me show you here in verse 6. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. Look, your sins, all of them — lust, hatred, greed, worry, lying, legalism, laziness, gluttony, selfishness, pride, and whatever else you can think of that you rightly feel guilty about – God has put the punishment that you deserve onto Jesus... the divine act of God gathering into one place all of our sin and placing all of that sin on one substitute.

Jesus died on the cross, paying for all the sins of every sinner who will ever be saved. I'm pleading with you to look to Jesus as your substitute and Savior and give your life to Christ today. Because God's grace in Jesus is enough and His grace will see us through.

There are two fundamental truths: Jesus is all God and all man.

There are two necessary acts: God reveals, and we believe.

There are six exchanges at the cross:

- He takes the pain – we get stability.
- He takes sorrow – we get joy.
- He takes punishment – we get grace.
- He is crushed – we are forgiven.
- He is chastised – we get peace.
- He is wounded – we are healed.

And there is one far-reaching promise: The Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Come to Jesus.

I want to close with three ways you can respond:

- We want to pray for you specifically.
- We want to pray for the lost and
- we pray for you to give your life to Christ.

(Pastor prays)