

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

THE UNEXPECTED SERVANT

ISAIAH 53:1-12

APRIL 5, 2020



MAIN POINT

Jesus the Messiah came in an unexpected way: as a suffering servant. He calls all who He has redeemed to follow His example by living sacrificially for others.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. Describe a sacrifice you have made in the past to achieve a personal goal or display an act of devotion (i.e. practicing Lent, pursuing weight loss, etc.).
2. What feelings and struggles did you experience during that period of sacrifice?

Leader: Today we will study prophecies in Isaiah 53 that predicted the greatest act of sacrifice ever made. On the cross, Jesus paid the debt of every sin in the history of mankind—even those that will take place in the future. Only the perfect Son of God could perform an act of sacrifice that would sufficiently satisfy God's requirement for repayment. Our hearts should be overwhelmed by continual gratitude to Jesus for His sacrifice.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 53:1-6 .

3. How is the servant described in these verses? What thoughts or feelings arise as you read this description?

4. Read Matthew 21:8-9. What expectations did the people have for the Messiah according to these verses? How did that contrast with the description given by Isaiah?

5. Isaiah said that the people who saw the servant would not value Him and this was proven true in Jesus' day (see Matt. 27:19-26). How is Jesus despised and devalued today?

Leader: Jesus Christ was despised and rejected by men. As in Jesus' day, people's rejection today is due to their unwillingness to believe the truth of God's Word. People fail to see the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and overlook the one Way in which God has provided for forgiveness of their sins.

6. Isaiah foretold that Jesus would be pierced and crushed for our iniquities. What do these words teach about how seriously God views our sin?

7. Using Isaiah 53:4-6, how would you explain Jesus' purpose and mission to someone who had never heard of Him?

Leader: Despite His earthly treatment, Jesus, as God's servant, fulfilled the plan for which God sent Him. He took upon His body the punishment due all mankind for every sin ever committed—and every sin to be committed afterward. Our sins cost Jesus His physical life along with unspeakable suffering and humiliation.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 53:7-12.

8. Verses 7-9 describe the unjust oppression and affliction that would be suffered by the servant. How does verse 10 explain the reason behind this suffering? What does this indicate about God's love for you?

9. How could the Messiah "see His seed" and God "prolong His days" in verse 10 if He was already in His grave in verse 9?

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Leader: Isaiah foresaw that the Messiah would bear the iniquities of His people, that he would die, and he also saw that He would rise from the dead. That is why Isaiah knew that the Messiah's days would be prolonged after His death. Because Jesus bore the sins of His people and rose from the dead, the Holy Spirit takes out our old hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh when we trust in Christ by faith. This is the fruit that grows from the seed of what Christ the servant suffered.

10. Verse 12 says that the servant would have a portion among the great and divide the spoils with the strong. How do those who trust the sacrifice of Christ experience the abundant blessings that Jesus has earned?

11. What is our responsibility as followers of Christ to live sacrificially that others might also experience those blessings? Why is this a necessary aspect of following Jesus? How does the end of verse 12 give us insight into this?

Leader: There are many joys in the New Covenant, and some of the chief joys are that we are now in communion with God by faith in Jesus Christ, that we have the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, and that God has promised to raise us all from the dead as He did Jesus Christ. The natural response to this awe-inspiring work of Christ in our lives is to share the good news with others that they might experience these same blessings.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

12. How did Jesus display extraordinary humility in coming to earth as the suffering servant (see Phil. 2:5-11)? How are we called to live sacrificially as those who have been redeemed by His sacrifice?

13. How is God calling you to live sacrificially in a unique way during this season and as we move toward the celebration of Easter? How will you respond?

Leader: There are unique opportunities for sacrifice in the season in which we are all living. This may mean the sacrifice of giving up our freedom by staying away from others, the sacrifice of reaching out to neighbors, the sacrifice of coming out of isolation to check in with others, or the sacrifice of giving up resources for the benefit of others. Consider how far you are willing to go to love others during this time and how God might be challenging you to go further.

CLOSING THOUGHT

God and your church love you.

PRAYER

For your closing prayer time, give your group members the opportunity to spend some time in quiet, reflective prayer. Jesus willingly identified with sinners, dying our death, in order that we can live. As you reflect on what Jesus has done for you, consider how you need to respond to Him.

MEMORIZE

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

— Isaiah 53:5

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

ISAIAH 53:1-12

53:1. The speakers of these verses (“we”) are likely both the prophet and the community he represents. The “arm of the Lord” refers to His victorious power, ironically revealed through a Suffering Servant.

53:2-3. A young plant growing up in dry ground would be withered, thus providing an appropriate image of the man of suffering. Just like a withered plant is uprooted and thrown away, so the Suffering Servant was rejected by men.

53:4-6. For the first time, the reader learns that the Servant suffered on behalf of others. Even so, people did not recognize it, and He was rejected as One struck down by God for His own supposed sins.

53:7. Though not suffering for His own sins, the Servant suffered silently and willingly. Philip used this passage to tell the Ethiopian eunuch the good news about Jesus, who silently bore His crucifixion (Acts 8:31-35; 1 Pet. 2:23).

53:8. For the first time, the passage reveals that the Servant’s suffering culminated in death.

53:9. The Servant died unjustly and was buried as if He were an evil man. The pairing of the wicked with the rich man implies that the wealthy man got his riches by deceit. This may be confirmed by the final statement of the verse that the servant had not spoken deceitfully. Jesus was literally buried with a rich man when He was placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-56).

53:10-11. That God was pleased to crush the Servant sounds mean-spirited, but His pleasure is explained by the fact that the Servant’s suffering will justify many. What seems harsh will turn out to be gracious. The Servant’s pain, suffering, and death will function like a restitution offering (Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). The sin of God’s people was such a transgression.

53:12. Returning to the theme at the beginning of the poem (v. 52:13), the suffering of the Servant will give way to His exaltation. Jesus’ suffering culminated in the crucifixion, but gave way to the resurrection.