

See, my servant will act wisely;
 he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.
 14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
 his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man
 and his form marred beyond human likeness—
 15 so will he sprinkle many nations,
 and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
 For what they were not told, they will see,
 and what they have not heard, they will understand.

53 Who has believed our message
 and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
 2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
 and like a root out of dry ground.
 He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
 nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
 3 He was despised and rejected by men,
 a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
 Like one from whom men hide their faces
 he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
 4 Surely he took up our infirmities
 and carried our sorrows,
 yet we considered him stricken by God,
 smitten by him, and afflicted.
 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
 the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
 and by his wounds we are healed.
 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
 each of us has turned to his own way;
 and the LORD has laid on him
 the iniquity of us all.
 7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
 yet he did not open his mouth;
 he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
 and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,

so he did not open his mouth.
 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
 And who can speak of his descendants?
 For he was cut off from the land of the living;
 for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
 and with the rich in his death,
 though he had done no violence,
 nor was any deceit in his mouth.
 10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to
 suffer,
 and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering,
 he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
 and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.
 11 After the suffering of his soul,
 he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
 by his knowledge my righteous
 servant will justify many,
 and he will bear their iniquities.
 12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
 and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
 because he poured out his life unto death,
 and was numbered with the transgressors.
 For he bore the sin of many,
 and made intercession for the transgressors. (NIV 84)

Theme: Jesus—The Suffering Servant

1. He humbled himself
2. He willingly suffered and died
3. He was exulted into heaven

Today, on Good Friday, we celebrate the suffering of death of Jesus. And for our service today as we take a look at yet another name of Jesus—servant, we look at his suffering and death. We can clearly see Jesus as a servant on Good Friday; we are able to talk about his suffering and death. But we may have issues with

seeing why. It may be hard for us to see that Jesus is not just our suffering Servant, but also our Savior. So today we celebrate the suffering of God's servant because he is also our Savior.

Our text for this evening is the fourth of what scholar's call, "the servant songs." These are portions of Isaiah that talk about the suffering of God's servant. This servant of God is none other than Jesus. He is one God chose to suffer and die for us. But this servant of God isn't just a servant. Jesus, of course, is also God. But when we look at Jesus we don't see God. Especially on Good Friday. We see a man who was beaten, flogged, crowned with thorns. We see a man covered in blood. We see someone nailed to a cross. Someone who died. We don't see an all-powerful God.

No, we see someone who humbled himself. Isaiah describes the way Jesus looked this way: **there were many who were appalled at him— his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man.** Jesus was beaten so much that he looked disfigured. Here we see that God humbled himself to take the form of a man. But now he is even worse than a man. Not only could people not recognize him, but people couldn't even tell he was a human. He was so appalling that people were speechless before him. Kings and others who were used to seeing atrocities would be so shocked when they saw his appearance, they weren't even be able to open their mouths.

This servant certainly didn't look almighty and powerful when he suffered and died. But it didn't seem as if he was God before then either. Isaiah explains, **He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.** Jesus wasn't like a big majestic tree. He wasn't one that people stood in front of and marveled at just because of his appearance. Jesus was the exact opposite. He was one that people ignored. He was one that people didn't give a second thought. Instead of a large tree, he was a tender shoot. You know the tiny plant that starts growing at the base of a tree after it is cut down. It is typically worthless—and bears no fruit. Or he was like a root out of dry ground. Roots are worthwhile when they are in the ground, especially if it has moisture. But a root out of dry ground does nothing—it is useless. That is what Jesus seemed like

He had **no beauty or majesty to attract us to him.** There was nothing from his outward form that we should want to follow him. And for this reason **he was despised and rejected by man.** That is what we do by nature. We reject Jesus as God. We don't see him as God—we think its ridiculous that someone could be God and man at the same time. Our sinful nature thinks that it's foolishness for an all-powerful God to willingly suffer and die. And even as Christians we may reject this servant from time to time. We ignore him for the sake of our own wants and desires. We do what we want to do at his expense.

For this reason Isaiah said Jesus was **a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering, like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.** We may not have wanted anything to do with Jesus, but that didn't stop Jesus from suffering and dying for us.

Isaiah begins verse four, **Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.** And in verse five, **he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities.** Jesus suffered and died because of our sins. Our infirmities, sorrows, transgressions, and iniquities caused Jesus so to suffer and die. For he didn't die for his own sins. He didn't suffer to remove the guilt of everything he had done wrong. If we didn't sin against him, he wouldn't have had to come down to this earth. If we had only done what we were told to do, he wouldn't have had to suffer and die. But we did sin. So Christ came. And he nailed all our sins to himself on the cross.

It is amazing enough that Christ suffered and died on the cross. But it is even more amazing who Christ did it for. He did it for his enemies. He did it for those who hate him. He did it for those who stray from him and his will. Isaiah explains, **We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.** Because of our sin we deserve nothing but his wrath and punishment. We deserve to suffer forever because we constantly stray from God's Word. It was for these straying sheep that Christ came down to this earth. It was to save his enemies from eternal damnation.

For our iniquities, our sins, he was crushed. He was crushed by God. Christ became guilty of all our sins. And not just all the horrible

things you have done wrong; but every single sin of the entire world. Unbelief included. Therefore God rejected him. Jesus cried out, **My God, my God, why are you forsaking me?** Jesus was suffering through the pain and agony of hell. He was separated from God and his love. He suffered through hell for us. He did it, so we wouldn't have to.

Because Jesus was forsaken by God, Isaiah can say, **we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.** We just sang the great hymn, "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted." Those opening lines were based on our text. Jesus was stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God. Because of the sins he took up on himself. Jesus knew this was going to happen. Jesus knew he was going to be slapped, beaten, and flogged. Understood that he was going to be crowned with thorns and nailed to a cross. And yet, he willingly went through it. He willingly suffered and died on the cross. And he didn't complain. He didn't whine that it wasn't fair. As Isaiah says in verse 7, **he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.** Our servant suffered and died willingly.

Isaiah says, **the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.** The punishment that Christ suffered brings us peace. Peace knowing that our sins are not counted against us. Peace knowing that we won't suffer for our sins. We will not end up in hell with the devil. Instead, through Christ we will live in heaven forever. And there we will have complete peace. Through the wounds of Christ we are healed from our wounds. Wounds so large that no doctor, let alone ourselves, could do anything about it. The wounds of sin that could only be healed through the blood of God. The wound of sin is death—but that had been wiped away through Christ's death.

Christ died for us. He was put in a grave like a common man. This was the case even though he had done nothing wrong. And because of what he did for us, God exalted him.

For Good Friday is not the end of the story. Our servant didn't just die. He wasn't just laid in a grave. You can't go and visit his tomb. For he is not there. He is up in heaven. And he lives there eternally. And all his believers are with him. Why is Christ up in heaven?

Because God was pleased with what he did for us. He was pleased that he took our sins upon himself. That he would put his life on the line so that his enemies would be declared not guilty. As God says through Isaiah, **my righteous servant will justify many.** Christ's death meant life for us. Because Christ willingly did this for us, God exalted him. He lifted up to heaven. And gave him control over all things. Isaiah said that God, **gave him a portion among the great.** And not just among the great, but over the great.

That is why we call today Good Friday. We call it good not because it is good that Jesus died. But it is because of what he did when he died. Because through it he made us good in the eyes of God. He became our Savior. The first words of our text sum up the outcome our suffering servant. **My servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.** No longer is Jesus humble. No longer does he have nothing to attract us to him. Now we see him as our Savior. Now we see him as our God. We see him as the one who willingly gave up his life, so we could live.

Today we celebrate a death. Not because Jesus died, but because through his death he became our Savior. Our servant suffered so we wouldn't have to. For us he died. We are able to celebrate his death because in few days we celebrate his life. Amen.