



Behold My Servant – Advent Through Isaiah’s Songs
Wk. 4 The Gift of Redeeming Love
By Pastor Jody May 12/21/2025

[CALL TO HEAR]

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 ESV

He Was Pierced for Our Transgressions

- ¹³ Behold, my servant shall act wisely;
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted.
- ¹⁴ As many were astonished at you—
his appearance was so marred, beyond
human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the children of
mankind—
- ¹⁵ so shall he sprinkle many nations.
Kings shall shut their mouths because of
him,
for that which has not been told them they
see,
and that which they have not heard they
understand.
- 53** 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.
- ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is
silent,
so he opened not his mouth.
- ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken
away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the
living,
stricken for the transgression of my
people?
- ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
- ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong
his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
- ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and
be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, **my
servant,**
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
- ¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the
many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the
strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the
transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the
transgressors.
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Pastor – “People of God, this is the Word of God.”
People – “Thanks be to God.”

Pray

Illustration

Well, culture has definitely tapped into something as we can all see by a specific genre of entertainment that is proliferated this time of year. It started back in the early 2,000s with movies like *Love Actually 2003* and *The Holiday 2006* and since then an up and coming digital media company took those beginnings and ran with it. Now, like me I wonder, if you have noticed that whenever you walk by the women of the house and they are settled down for the evening this time of year, if perhaps they are watching something to do with a Christmas Romance story on **Hallmark**? Don’t get me wrong, for some odd reason I can easily get talked into watching a Hallmark Christmas story which reminds me of the **Christmas Popcorn** in a tin; their fluffy, light, and makes you quasi content. But that’s it, you can’t let popcorn replace a meal, and we can’t let cheesy Hallmark movies replace the gift of love we have been given during Christmas.

I mean we all know the story line of a Hallmark Christmas Special. Professional person travels to small town where they meet up with a person of past interest, who will teach them, like a Christmas Carol Ghost, the true meaning of Christmas. Then, in the end, true love is discovered as the gift of Christmas and of course everyone leaves their big-city job of high pay and adventure, to move to small town America to experience Christmas love all year long. OK so look, it’s a popcorn feeling filler, enjoy it I know I will, but just don’t let it spoil your dinner. ;)

What’s the main Christmas dinner we all have been delivered this time of year? You know this one, it’s the most popular verse in the Bible!

For God so LOVED the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. – (John 3:16 ESV) God loved us and the result of that love, since we would not return to Him, He sent His Son to us, and if by faith you believe that He came for you, you get a



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second present, ETERNAL LIFE! Now that has every Hallmark story beat, that fills you up, that makes you contentment. Romantic love, while it is nice to experience during the holidays, is not what Christmas is about, it is about the gift of a Son, a Savior, a PERFECT SERVANT.

Introduction

That brings us to this 4th and last week of Advent where we have been going through Isaiah, and his four songs about a servant. This servant was not Israel, they had failed in the attempt to follow God, and to show the world He is worthy to be praised. No, this Servant is better, it’s about a man who would come. Son of God AND Son of Man. And as we have learned thus far, He is able to hold all our HOPE, He is able to bring us PEACE with the Father, He is able to deliver great JOY by never turning His back on the goal of restoration and redemption, and now we will see that we can receive a better LOVE than we have ever known for He has LOVED US more than we could ever LOVE Him. That’s how this story wraps up, we receive LOVE through the act of SELFLESS LOVE, and now by the Servant’s work, we can keep that LOVE forever! Someone say AMEN!

Today we have 5 points we are going to cover because the song today has 5 different stanzas. Each section builds a truth about the love of this Servant, but it does it in a different way than what you may be used to at Christmas time. This is not the peaceful story of a baby in a manger, this is not about the joyful heralding of angels, nor is it about the destitute shepherds seeing a child in swaddling clothes. This is His story to be sure, but it looks forwards to when that baby will be a man, and when He comes to the point of His visit to this earth: to fight injustice, to crush the serpent’s head, and to lose His life in a glorious battle, in an awful display of treason, murder, and blood. All ordained, all a part of the plan, so that we His people could be saved.

MP:

The Servant’s Love is Strong Enough to Save You!

This song has a name too, it’s called, “**He was Pierced for Our Transgressions**”. That is the name of this love song to us from God. It’s not a song that sings



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not of our beauty no, it sings of our need to be saved. It is not a song that sings of why we should be sought after, but it sings of why we should chase after Him. It is not a song that makes you feel good when you first hear it, but it is a song that you want to listen to for the rest of your life, for in its’ dark depths lies the most beautiful love story you will ever hear. So, listen well family as we dive one more time into the poetic mind of Isaiah and see why, out of all people on this earth, you are the MOST blessed.

1. The Servant’s Success: He was “Repulsive” but “Redemptive”.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>¹³ Behold, my servant shall act wisely;
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted.</p> <p>¹⁴ As many were astonished at you—
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,</p> | <p>and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—</p> <p>¹⁵ so shall he sprinkle many nations.
Kings shall shut their mouths because of him,
for that which has not been told them they see,
and that which they have not heard they understand.</p> |
|--|---|

V.13 stands in contrast to v. 14, the **marring** of the servant, it means a total disfigurement of His face, there is a beating to the point of non-recognition. I don’t know about you, but when someone let’s, themselves get beaten, “*beyond human semblance/beyond that of the children of mankind*” (v.14), to me that’s not path of a smart man. That’s why I am glad Salvation is not based on how I see things. God thinks the Servant acted wisely, prudent (13), and because of that Jesus is lifted up (by the Father), He is exalted for perfected wisdom. The Wisdom of God, strengthened by the resolve of God, led to the disfigurement of God; that which was most beautiful was made to look like the worst of us.

Then by His work, by His exaltation, the nations were sprinkled (v.15) like the unclean in the OT with the blood of a sacrifice. You see the resurrection, His fame, His story, **that’s EXALTATION**, it traveled to the nations, and the nations were brought to the recognition of this most famous love story of all



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time. That a God came and sought His own, was wounded/marred beyond recognition by His own, and by allowing that, saved His own out of all the nations.

What does it say to us when we see someone so marred in this song of brutal love?

Reality #1 Our sin is that bad, there is nothing you could do about it.

Isaiah 64:6 ESV

⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

We can’t clean up the mess of our sin, our rebellion, our desires, our falsehood; polluted/used garments can’t wipe up that which has an unending uncleanliness. In the end whatever we try to do to clean up ourselves dries up and blows away like a dry leaf in the wind, while the problem remains of still being unclean.

Isaiah himself earlier in his book, came to the stark reality of how bad his sin was when God recruited him to be his mouthpiece.

Reality #2 God’s Holiness and Righteousness is beyond our comprehension.

Isaiah 6:3 ESV

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

This **alien reality, this unreal unworldliness**,¹ it had brought Isaiah to his knees where he had to admit:

Isaiah 6:4-5 ESV

¹ But why the three-fold repetition “holy, holy, holy” (called the *trihagion*)? The repetition of a name or an expression three times was quite common among the Jews. In [Jeremiah 7:4](#), the Jews are represented by the prophet as saying, “The temple of the Lord” three times, expressing their intense confidence in their own worship, even though it was hypocritical and corrupt. [Jeremiah 22:29](#), [Ezekiel 21:27](#), and [2 Samuel 18:33](#) contain similar three-fold expressions of intensity. Therefore, when the angels around the throne call or cry to one another, “Holy, holy, holy,” they are expressing with force and passion the truth of the supreme holiness of God, that essential characteristic which expresses His awesome and majestic nature.



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⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!

Nothing he could say or do could justify him, God is too Holy, he had seen Him truly and knew he had no chance standing in God’s presence!

But just like Isaiah discovered, God does the work of bringing us back near to Him.

Isaiah 6:6-7 ESV

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

My friends Jesus became repulsive to become redemptive, for when we see His Regality marred by our Rebellion, we too become undone! But we too, for those He calls, those that receive faith, are atoned for, we are the sprinkled nations, our guilt is taken away, and sin is atoned. The Servant’s Love is strong enough to save us, He removes our guilt, and atones for sin.

2. The Servant’s Suffering: He “lived” to be “rejected”.

53 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.



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Jesus started His life with no pomp or circumstance; you all remember that much from the first Advent. He was born in a manger, no one had any room for Him, in His own royal ancestral home of Bethlehem. He grew up in Galilee like a root out of dry ground, like a weed in the crack of a walkway, there was nothing added to Him to bring attention to Himself. Everything about Jesus, His life, His achievements were hidden, not displayed. God hid from the world the most glorious person in all of existence so that no one would try to keep Him from His labor of love.

How do you think Jesus would have fitted in during our time when all people can do is post pics and stories about themselves. He needed not recognition to continue on in His life, His glory would come later after His hard work. I wonder how many of us would be upset if the Lord said to us, to be like Him give up your story telling about yourself and let your deeds and life point to His glory instead. Would you Christian be ok with that? Would you find it a privilege to know life, like Jesus knew life?

Not just hidden was the Servant, but by Him not drawing attention to Himself He was despised for it – *He was despised and rejected this man of sorrows.*(3) Jesus had all the answers, but no one liked His reasoning, Jesus had all the skill, but they didn’t like how He used it, Jesus had nothing but love for His fellow man, but they despised how He offered it. Nothing Jesus could do could make sinners happy while He was alive, for everything He did, reminded people they were not good enough.

What does it mean to see someone too good to be true and still rejected?

Family, Jesus’ love song to us, is not just about the suffering on the cross, it was the life He lived when no one appreciated Him, no one understood what He was trying to do for us, and all people wanted to do was use Him. Yet the servant’s love song to us consists of this. He knew it would be this way, He chose for it to be this way, so that no one would get in His way, when it came to living a life that would produce a saving blood, a cleansing blood, a satisfying blood of atonement. He did it because He loved you. Family, do you see how the Servant’s Love is strong enough to save you?



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3. The Servant’s Significance: He was our sin bearer.

- 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;

Isaiah assures us that what we see Jesus bearing in His life is the effects of our lives. The things He was sent to deal with came from our actions not His. The word ‘griefs’ (4) in the Hebrew also means *sickness*, or ***grief due to sickness which brought us sorrow***. He bore it, He carried it, He removed it:

Psalm 103:12 ESV

as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

You know as children, one of the times you feel most loved is when you are at your sickest and your mom babies you back to health. That is what the Lord does for us; when you can’t care for yourself but the Lord nurses all back to health. But we also see in our tragic song of love how we treated that care, *we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted*. That’s what the crowd thought the day when they called for Barabbas. Jesus, you deserved this, you brought this on yourself, this is your doing and your death is payment by God.

Isaiah reminds us ‘no’, this is definitely our doing. He was crushed and chastised for us, what we deserved. By those wounds, we His people are healed. To remove our sin from the east to the west means to bear them Himself in order to get it done, so you wouldn’t find them, so you would be sick no more.



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What was our reaction to the depths of God’s Steadfast Love, that He would bear such a cost?

It says our reaction to this great feat was to ‘go astray’, that word also means to stagger as if one was drunk. It is the appearance of not taking this seriously, it has no effect on us, we act oblivious and unphased, and yet God’s love waits for us, it guides us into realization. The good shepherd Jesus told us goes after the wayward sheep so that He can take our sin away (**Luke 15:1-17**). The Servant’s love is strong enough to save, its’ strong enough to bear our sin, and its’ strong enough to go after strays. Do you really know of anything better family?

4. The Servant’s Suffering: He died in Innocence.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.</p> <p>⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered</p> | <p>that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?</p> <p>⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.</p> |
|---|--|

This servant again goes through with such an astounding act of love, it could never be copied again. Did you see how He endured His treatment? He did it without ever offering a word of defense or defiance but accepted defamation with determination. That’s how a Passover Lamb dies, a lamb doesn’t die in defense, they don’t give any, they were raised with the purpose to be sacrificed, and that was how Jesus was going to love us.

What does it say to us that Jesus died without getting the final word?



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It means He endured a torture that we didn’t know about. Here is the only man in the world that will die while not just being innocent of a particular grievance, but of all sin? Never has the world seen such a travesty, yet the God who made everything by His Words, chose not to open His mouth, because no one can stand against His judgment. Jesus doesn’t correct in that last moment, Jesus doesn’t defend Himself and cause the guilty to drop at His feet, Jesus doesn’t call angels to His aid. No, the servant dies quietly bound and the Lion of Judah gives no roar of defiance in His death.

He was offered no acquittal after His death and was going to be thrown into a pit with the thieves if not to fulfill this prophecy for us, He was given to Joseph of Arimathea to be put in a rich man’s tomb. He had no place to lay His head while alive and He had no place to rest when He was dead. The Servant’s Love is strong enough to save us, for it is strong enough to suffer a wrongful death for an innocent life.

5. The Servant’s Success: He was Crushed but Crowned Victor!

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to
crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering
for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he
shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper
in his hand.

¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he
shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the
righteous one, my servant,

make many to be accounted
righteous,
and he shall bear their
iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide him a
portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil
with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to
death
and was numbered with the
transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the
transgressors.

God the Father, it was His will that was done, *the will of the Lord* (v.10), and because Jesus was obedient, to pay for the sins of God’s lost children, Jesus



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was rewarded with *spoil* (v.12), that is war talk for when you fight and defeat an enemy you keep what is his, the spoils of war. Jesus fought the good fight, He started the faith, He mapped out the race, and He rescued the prisoners to set them free (**Is 61:1**). He was rewarded a resurrection for being innocent and righteous, and He was rewarded an extended family, offspring of His work. He was rewarded eternal life in new body, and He was rewarded prestige and authority as the **right hand of God**. The Servant was crowned victor and the path through to His coronation lied in getting crushed for our freedom.

What does it mean that Jesus shared with us the fruit of all His perfect and hard work?

The love does not stop there though, in the text it says that He will divvy out to the strong, they that endure life and don’t give up the faith, with them He shares what He has earned. Eternal life is yours, not by your work, that was shared with you by Him. New resurrection body, that was not because you were a good boy or girl, that’s because He was the perfect Son. Rewards in heaven, crowns of glory, those were made available by Him because yours were spent and gone like the prodigal Son. Everything you have now and everything you will have in the future is because the best big brother, the glorious Messiah, the selfless King, and Suffering Servant’s Love is enough to save you AND reward you for the work you did not do.

Family we could spend the entire day combing the scripture and talking about this great love that Isaiah wrote about here in His last song. BUT what I would like to do is help my brothers and sisters do something for Him for this Christmas, not to earn favor, not to show your worth, no, simply because He is worth it.

[CALL TO OBEY]

- **Practice Repentance instead of Stubbornness.**
Romans 3:24-25



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²² ... **for all who believe...**²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a **gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his **blood**, to be received by **faith**.

As Christians we know this much, Grace is a Gift, and that Gift was the Suffering of the Servant. By His replacement for us, that is PROPITIATION, we receive that gift of cleansing blood by Faith. That person turns from sin when they find it, that person fights with what keeps Him from honoring Christ, that person stops arguing why they do what they do, and they start fighting for the one they love.

- **Practice Thankfulness instead of Ungratefulness.**

Family it is an easy thing to walk around complaining about what you don't have, but when we believe Christ loves us, you are realizing you have all that you need. Believing you have received Him means our **covetousness** must flee. Be thankful for what you have, and like me, if you have encountered some hard times due to your foolish decision making, confess and turn back to Him, and let Him as Isaiah says carry that burden far away, and try again.

- **Practice Engagement instead of Avoidance.**

Family let's be honest one of the hardest things to do is get involved with other people when you have a hard time trying to take care of yourself. Hopefully though today you saw something in how Jesus loves. What brought Him contentment, fulfillment, and joy was pouring out His life for others. This year if you want to experience feelings of contentment as Paul says, *in all things*, then spend more time in the service of others and be amazed as your problems disappear in the concern of others.

All these things are possible and here's why I know this.

MP:

The Servant's Love is Strong Enough to Save You!

Family, I pray you enjoy the Love of the Savior this Christmas and you put not your hope in the Holiday, that will fail you. Instead, put your Hope in the One whom it is all about, for He truly Loves you.



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Prayer

Communion

Luke 22:14-20 ESV

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this **Passover** with you before I **suffer**. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. He lived a life that when God called Him to Holiness He obeyed. He abandoned all personal dreams to live His life for self and absorbed the will of the Father as His own. Even when confronted with the horrifying truth of the songs of Isaiah, He turned not His back to the path. He lived a life we could not do, and He loved the Father as He deserved. The strong shoulders of the Savior carried the burdens of His people. Praise be to Him for His commitment to the plan of Salvation.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. The Suffering Servant Jesus Christ gave us the most precious gift of soul cleansing & sanctifying blood, and by the wounds of THE Messiah, this Servant, we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, and all that were of His flock have been returned to the fold. Praise be to Him for His everlasting love to God and to us!

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]. * The Congregation will stand.

Elder – **“Christians, what do you believe?”** Congregation - recites the LBCF 1689



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Chapter 11 Of Justification, Paragraph 1: Justification Is Forgiveness and Imputation of Righteousness

Everyone whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies. ¹

God does not justify people by infusing them with righteousness, but rather by forgiving them and by counting and accepting them as righteous. ²

Justification is not based upon anything done within or by them but is based upon Christ alone. ³

It does not impute faith, the act of believing, or any other gospel obedience to them as their righteousness. Rather, it imputes Christ's active obedience to the entire law and his passive obedience in his death for their entire and only righteousness by faith ⁴, a faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God. ⁵

¹ Romans 3:24, 8:30; ² Romans 4:5-8, Ephesians 1:7; ³ 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, Romans 5:17-19; ⁴ Philippians 3:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10; ⁵ John 1:12, Romans 5:17

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that provided the perfect gift for us of Grace; His only begotten Son.

Go in the name of the Son, who provided for us the perfect life we did not deserve, that earned us eternal life.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that opens our eyes to the greatest of all Love stories, now go and live reflecting that truth to the world!



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