



## Understanding the Cross - The Suffering Servant

### Key idea:

Jesus, the Servant of the Lord, suffered and died in payment for our sins, but through that very suffering and the resurrection He was victorious to bring us salvation.

### Key text:

Mark 15:15

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. <sup>14</sup> 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 — <sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>53:1</sup> Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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.

### **Key points:**

1. The suffering of Jesus was prophesied in Isaiah 52-53, over 700 years before it happened.
2. Jesus' suffering was not just at the cross, but throughout His entire ministry.
3. The servant (Jesus) suffers not for His own sin, but for our sin.
4. The cross reveals the beauty of God's holiness, integrity, and love.
5. There is no other way for salvation except through the suffering and death of Jesus.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How does Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering servant challenge our understanding of what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah?
2. How does understanding that Jesus' suffering was prophesied long ago impact your view of God's plan for salvation?
3. The teaching mentioned that we often "esteemed Him not." In what ways do we still struggle to fully appreciate or value Jesus today?
4. In what ways does the concept of the 'beauty of the suffering servant' reshape our perception of Christ's sacrifice on the cross?
5. How does the idea of Jesus being "beauty incarnate" challenge our cultural perceptions of beauty?
6. What does it mean for us that it was 'the Lord's will to crush him,' and how does this affect our view of God's love?
7. Discuss the statement: "Be killing sin or sin's gonna be killing you." How does this relate to our daily walk with Christ?
8. How does the cross demonstrate God's love in a way that other religions or philosophies do not?

9. In light of Isaiah's prophecy and its fulfillment in Christ, how might we reframe our understanding of success, power, and victory in both our personal lives and in the church?

**Practical Applications:**

1. This week, spend time meditating on Isaiah 53. Write down your reflections on how this prophecy relates to Jesus' life and death.
2. Identify an area in your life where you're tempted to minimize sin. Pray for God's help in taking that sin seriously and actively working to "kill" it.
3. Look for opportunities to share the beauty of the gospel with someone who may not understand why Christians focus so much on the cross.
4. As we approach Easter, create a personal plan to reflect more deeply on Christ's suffering and its significance for your life.
5. In moments of difficulty this week, remind yourself of Christ's intercession for you. How might this change your perspective on challenges?
6. Practice explaining to a friend or family member why there is no other way for salvation except through Jesus' death on the cross.