**Who Would Have Believed Our Message?**

**Isaiah 52/53 Sermon**

This is the last of four Servant Songs in Isaiah (42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12) They are songs of the triumph of the Suffering Servant.

Ex: Read Isaiah 42:1-9

Messiah will bring justice to the nations, yet he will not cry out or raise his voice in the streets!

In fact, a bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.

So, how will he bring about justice? (v. 4) And how will he be a light to the Gentiles? (v. 6) And how will he free the captives from prison without an army/without even crying out? (v. 7) We will find out in our passage.

Jesus is a lion and he is a lamb. Rev 5:5-6 Here Jesus is both “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” to God’s enemies and he is “a lamb, looking as if it had been slain” to God’s people.

Isaiah 52:13-15 How will all this work? How will the servant bring about justice?

v. 13 My servant/Messiah will act wisely. How?

v. 13 The Messiah will be lifted up. Sounds great, right??? No! Jesus in John 12:32 I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto myself.

What is the means by which Messiah will bring justice to the nations? By being lifted up. By submitting to the powers of the world, and by triumphing over them on a cross. By submitting to a dehumanizing and humiliating torture and execution.

God’s enemies—the same ones who enslaved us in Egypt, will “lift up” Jesus.

Jesus will conquer by submitting to his enemies.

Of course, this is not the only way Jesus was lifted up.

1. On the cross.

2. In his resurrection.

3. In his ascenscion.

4. When we lift him up as we share our faith.

So, what did this look like?

v. 14 He was brutally beaten to the point that he barely looked like a man. That is my Savior Jesus!

v. 15 His blood will sprinkle many nations. This is the same blood we came into contact with when we were baptized into Christ.

Isa 53:1-3 The Messiah/Suffering Servant:

Who would believe it? This is amazing. Stupendous. No one ever would have imagined it. Messiah is the arm of the Lord. “Arm” represents agency or power. Isaiah 40:10 “The Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

So, what is this powerful arm of the Lord like?

v. 2 Like a tender shoot. A child. He begins as a baby. A helpless little one. Not a very auspicious beginning!

v. 2 “no beauty or majesty.” Not what the world expects. The ultimate anti-hero. An average Joe/Jose Like Samuel and Jesse…

v. 3 Despised and rejected. Held in low esteem. This is Jesus! This is the arm of the Lord. Who would have believed it?

Isa 53:4-6 v. 4a He took on our pain and suffering.

Q: How did that work?

Hebrews 2:14-18 He shared our humanity. “Fully human in every way.” (v. 17) He suffered when he was tempted (v. 18) Heb 4:15 tempted in every way just as we are.

v. 4 He took it up. He took the suffering on himself. It was not thrust in him.

v. 4b But we got it all wrong. We did not see it that way at all. We thought it was a sign of weakness. How foolish we thought! Submit to humiliation at the hands of your enemy? How weak?

Who would have believed it!?

v. 5 cause: Our transgressions effect: led to his piercing

 cause: Our iniquities effect: led to his being crushed.

But…

Cause: His being punished (instead of us), effect: led to our peace

Cause: His wounds effect: led to our healing.

v. 6 We left God, but he did not leave us. We were the Prodigal Son.

Here is the reason that Jesus sweat blood in Gethsemane. ALL of our sins were put on him.

Look at this !!! the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. What was that like? Imagine the pressure!!!

Like 53:1 Could anyone have believed this? Do you have any concept what Jesus did for you?

How can his suffering, pain, piercing, and wounds bring us peace and healing? See 1 Peter 2:23-25

Isa 53:7-9

Oppressed, afflicted, led like a lamb to the slaughter. Sounds helpless, but was he helpless? No! Yet he went like a lamb. He did not resist at all. He did it willingly. See John 10:17-18 “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

He was not the typical sacrificial lamb at all.

Jesus was silent: See Matt 26:59-63 for example.

Assigned a grave with the wicked (plural) and the rich (singular: Joseph of Arimathea, an interesting prophetic note): See Luke 23:32-33 (crucified with criminals—the wicked). See Luke 23:50-56 (with the rich. Joseph of Arimathea)

Read Isa 53:10-12

Verse 10, the King James Version says “it pleased the Lord to bruise him”, why would God be pleased by Jesus being crushed?

53:1 Who would have believed it?

God was not “pleased” (ie happy) by Jesus suffering directly but by the reconciliation it produced.

53:11 But that is not the end of the story, is it? After all this suffering, “He will see the light of life.” He will be resurrected after his suffering and death.

Verse 12, what is Jesus’s portion among the great?

God raised him from death.

He raised him to his side in the throne room of God. See Philippians 2:5-11

Isaiah 54:1-5 The result of the work of the Suffering Servant: This “barren woman” is the Gentile nations. We are this barren woman.

The one with a husband (v. 1) is unfaithful Israel.

The motif of barren women is quite common in the Bible. Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth. God makes the barren fruitful.

You are that barren woman, as is the church.

v. 2 lengthening our cords and strengthening our stakes = the kingdom, the number of saved growing greatly.

v. 3 Where? To the right, to the left to all nations. To their cities with all their desolate people, living their desolate lives.

v. 4-5 Our humiliation will be removed. Our reproach will end. And God will be our husband.

This is what the Suffering Servant did for you and for me.

Who would have believed our message???!!!

Like a tender shoot.

No beauty or majesty to attract us to him.

Yet Jesus was beaten—marred beyond human likeness.

Jesus was lifted up.

He poured out his life unto death.

He bore the sin of many and made intercession for our sins.

So let us sing like a barren woman who gives birth to many children.