

Isaiah 53:1-6

"The suffering Savior calls forth suffering disciples."

Intro:

I hope this morning finds you all caught up on Christmas shopping... Something special about this time of year is that it seems like we take a collective break from the rat races we all run to focus in on spending time with others and loving each other through getting gifts. However, when it's all over we return to our respective rat races.

What is your rat race?

Said positively: **What is the goal that you are running after?**

(Encourage to write it down)

In today's passage in Isaiah, we get the coming Messiah's answer to that question. To this point in our advent series we've celebrated that the coming Messiah would be Immanuel- God with us, that he is the coming King of Kings, and that he is the Light of the world. This morning we focus in on an aspect of his identity that speaks to his ultimate goal. His life's goal is one that, if we had input ahead of time, we'd probably tell him is lunacy.

To put it succinctly, **his goal was to suffer in order to save his people.**

This matters though because we are not just called to mentally acknowledge the baby in the manger and the man he would become, but **to follow him**. So, as we focus in on his life's goal it will beg the question for each of us this morning:

Is my life's goal in line with his life's goal?

Because, we find based on our passage this morning that for those who follow Jesus, it's not enough to set our sights on the American dream or the middle-class dreams of steady jobs, 401k's, obedient children, vacations, and leisure. The goal of these things is largely self-preservation, but...

The suffering Savior calls forth suffering disciples.

Read Isaiah 53:1-6

Context:

Beginning in chapter 49 of Isaiah and moving through chapter 52 there is a growing celebration of the coming salvation of the Lord for his people.

- Like a crescendo, the excitement over God's salvation has been building and building as Isaiah hits a fever pitch in Isaiah 52:10

**10 The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.**

However, the music of the great prophet takes an eerie turn towards to end of chapter 52, and in chapter 53 Isaiah's point becomes very clear:

- salvation not through a valiant hero, but through a despised, suffering servant.
- The arm of the Lord would not be bared in stunning power, but in dreadful suffering.
- A shocking twist, even offensive to the senses, to Isaiah's hearers.
It should be to us as well.

The savior would be despised, rejected, and subject to suffering but not because God just decided to do it that way, but because it was required to save you and I.

Christ's suffering in life (v1-3): Obviously, we know the Savior to be Jesus and the ultimate moment of his suffering to be his death on the cross, but we see that the suffering of this Savior is more than just the moment on the cross, but it would be a life of suffering leading up to

the cross.

Read v1-3

- The arm of the Lord would be bared in the coming of one who is not like a mighty oak, but more like a root out of dry ground.
 - my gardens: outside weeds look mangy and pathetic compared to the lush greenery growing in the moist soil.
- **Not with majesty and beauty**, but anonymity of a **mundane average Joe**.
- As a poor craftsman from a nowhere town, Jesus would have fit right in with the despised and reject of society- embracing the sorrows and grief of the poor and disheartened.

It's at this point we should pause and think about the fuller picture:

- Jesus is God!
 - The one who causes rains to fall and towering trees to grow came as one more associated with a weed in parched dirt.
 - The one who's majesty should draw every heart and face upward into eternity came as one with no beauty- even as one from whom men hid their faces.
 - The real desire of every heart came as one that none would desire.
 - The God of love, joy, peace, and righteousness came to live a life characterized by derision, rejection, and grief.
- Jesus lived a perfect life, but his life was certainly not perfect.
 - anticlimactic birth
 - born in a dingy cattle stall to a poor unwed teenager
 - precursor to his life of sorrow and grief.
 - We're tempted to clean up the manger in our nativity sets just like we're tempted to add beauty to Jesus' life that just wasn't there.
 - His life was one of inward beauty as he perfectly obeyed and walked with God the Father in the power of God the Spirit,

but he was no outward hero- Jesus was one from whom men hid their faces in disgust.

APPLY: This is God's coming salvation for his people. Jesus' work isn't limited to his death, he came to live as well- **he offered all of his life to redeem all of your life.**

- If we focus only on Jesus offering himself in death, we will be tempted to simply treat him as a ticket to heaven when we die, but Jesus lived for you as well so that in your droughts, in your anonymity, in the monotony of life, in the rejection and grief you can experience his redemptive power.
- So, look again at the dirty manger, recall Jesus' life of grief and remember that he came to live a life of blandness and suffering to breathe life and joy into your blandness and suffering!

Christ's suffering in death (v4-6): we don't want to forget about the life that Jesus lived for us, also know that Jesus didn't *just* come to live.

- See his life's goal was always before him especially in the book of Luke: his face was set on Jerusalem
 - Luke 9:51 height of ministry
 - Luke 18:31-33
- Isaiah 53:4-6 spells out in detail what awaited Jesus in Jerusalem:
 - **v4-6**
 - notice the **"he" and "our" language**- this is **substitutionary** language. Every descriptor of "he" is meant for you and I, but he bore it in our place.
 - Heaviest **load that he carried** up to Golgotha was not the cross on his back, but the **sorrows** brought on by your sins and mine.
 - **Stricken** by God not for his own sins but for your sins and for mine.

- **Physically pierced** through in his hands, feet, and side, but more importantly, Jesus was **pierced in soul** for your transgressions and mine.
- Not merely treated severely, but **completely crushed** under the eternal wrath of his Almighty, Righteous Father for your sins and for mine.
- You and I deserved to carry our own sorrows and griefs, we deserved to be stricken by God, we should have been pierced through and crushed for our transgressions. But, **instead Jesus came to stand in our place.**
- Why such severity? We must it be this way?
 - **V6**
 - Sheep
 - All, every one
 - we all have chosen to throw off not just the law of God, but his Person. We have all chosen to worship our own desires rather than our Creator who is blessed forever.
 - This is our sin, our iniquity, our transgression at the root.
 - This is why so sever- not just **because** we sin but **for** our sin
- Praise God that he did not leave us in this condition... his mercy and grace. Praise God for that baby in the manger that we celebrate every December.
 - Came so that the Lord could lay on him the iniquity of us all.
 - Came to bear our penalty so that we might have peace and healing- now and for eternity.

This substitutionary language reminds us of the only proper place for us to find lasting hope this morning: in the person and work of Jesus, the suffering Savior.

If you don't know Jesus or have conflicting notions of what Christianity is all about, look no further than Isaiah 53:1-6.

- His suffering highlights your need!
- The depth of his suffering highlights the seriousness of your sin.

- God will have none of our propensity to soften the ugliness of our sin, but, in Christ's suffering, he will take on the full punishment for it.

Christ's suffering disciples: find hope, joy, and peace in the Savior as we remember why he came, but we **don't forget that the manger scene and the savior laying in it calls forth to us to follow much the same way.**

- **Romans 12:1**

- Jesus gave up his whole self in life and death and so our call is to offer up our whole selves as his followers

- **John 13:34-35**

- How specifically do we offer up our whole selves?
- Jesus enters the world not to take by force what isn't his, but to suffer and die in order to redeem and remake what's already his. **Rather than wielding his power and taking what is rightfully his, Jesus empties himself to redeem his beloved people.** He does the same in our lives: enters our lives to redeem and remake what's already his.
- How are you doing this for others?
- Parents and kids?
- Friends?
- Spouse?
- With your money?

- The suffering savior calls forth suffering disciples

- Not joyless, think of Hebrews 12- **for the joy set before him Jesus endured the cross!**
- For the joy of walking with our Savior now and forever, we each take up our cross daily to follow him!
- Charge: spend some time in Chapters 54-56 of Isaiah this week; these chapters spell out the effect of the Salvation that the suffering Savior would bring for God's people. In

those chapters you'll find joy, optimism, action, advancement, righteousness, and justice.

- Salvation isn't an intellectual exercise for the people of God in Isaiah and it shouldn't be for us either.

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As you see the many manger scenes- at home, Christmas on Comstock, Cherry Lane, etc. be reminded of the life and death that your Savior came for- he came to suffer so that you might be healed, he came to face torment so that you might have peace, he came to die so that you might experience true life in him.

If you've experienced this true life, that same manger scene calls you forth to a life of joyful suffering as you walk with your suffering Savior. Jesus has not called us to a life of self-preservation, but to a life of self-sacrifice for his glory and for his kingdom.

So what is your life's goal?

Is it to walk with your Savior in a life of joyful suffering so that others may be lifted up?

Whatever your station in life, is this your goal?