

SERMON SERIES

DISCUSSION GUIDE

STORY OF FAITH: WEEK 9

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—everyone—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

As the Story of Faith progressed, we saw the need for the Passover lamb and the Mosaic sacrifices. The people were sinful and deserved death (Rom. 3:23 and 6:23), so an animal sacrifice was required to cover their sins. Yet, as the years went by, the Jewish people and their kings fell further away from the covenant Law and deeper into sin. The animal sacrifices were just a temporary fix, and unable to solve the problem! The Mosaic Law and its sacrificial system could not remove sin once and for all. They needed a permanent solution.

Around 700 BC, God gave the prophet Isaiah a vision that pointed toward the definitive answer to the sin problem: the suffering servant. While Jewish scholars thought Isaiah 53 referred to a redeemed Israel, this passage actually takes us to the cross. That these verses apply to Jesus Christ is proved by John 12:38, Matt. 8:17, Acts 8:32–35, Mark 15:28, Luke 22:37, Rom. 10:16, and 1 Peter 2:24. In fact, Isaiah 53 is quoted or referred to at least eighty-five times in the New Testament (Wiersbe, 1993).

In Isaiah 53:6 we see that the covenant penalties for sin are laid on the suffering servant as a substitutionary suffering. In other words, he would take the punishment that they (and we) deserved and remove sin once and for all. The seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of Judah were all one and the same with the suffering servant. This had been God's plan all along!

Yet, there was still one more problem... to reverse the effects of the curse, both sin and death needed to be defeated. This leads us to our next stop in Ezekiel 37 (next week).

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ISAIAH 53:1-12 ESV

1 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.

DISCUSSION GUIDE QUESTIONS

on your own, with family, or with your small group

Ice Breaker Question

Which one is more important: the contribution your church can make in your life and in the lives of your family members? Or the contribution you can make to the life of your church? Discuss and defend your answer.

Read Isaiah 53. In what ways can Isaiah's depiction of a suffering servant influence your approach to leadership and service?

Ponder verse 2. What does a plant or root look like compared to a majestic tree? Why might Jesus be described as a young plant in a dry ground? What incidents in Jesus' life foster this description?

How do verses 2-3 compare with Hollywood's depiction of Jesus? How does it feel to you to read that description of Him? And in what ways have you despised and rejected Jesus, too?

Reflect on how the Servant "carries our sorrows" (v.4). How does this influence your perspective on personal struggles?

If you were to share the message of Isaiah 53 with someone going through a difficult time, how would you convey its themes of suffering, redemption, and hope?