

The Dawn of the Darkest Day

The Power of the Cross #1

Isaiah 52:13-53:3

David Sunday

March 17, 2013

We're going to look at a chapter of the Bible that's been described as "The Bible in miniature—the gospel at its very essence." It's Isaiah 53 in the Old Testament. .

Though our Savior's name is never mentioned in this chapter, it's like an eyewitness account of the death and resurrection of Jesus. It's as if the author was there—following Jesus through His final journey to the cross, watching Him die, and then meeting Him at the empty tomb and seeing Him ascend to the right hand of the Father. And yet, he is writing these words seven hundred years before Christ came into the world, amazingly showing us that God knows something no one else knows—the future. Here in this passage we see the Father sketching the character of His Son under the inspiration of His Holy Spirit so we might see and savor Jesus Christ.

We're going to focus on this wonderful passage of Scripture today, Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday because it's all right here in Isaiah 53. I should say that Isaiah 53 really ought to begin in 52:13 because this is really a prophetic song of five stanzas, each consisting of three verses. In Isaiah 52:13 we get the first stanza. It's like a prologue which introduces the main themes in this song. If we skip this prologue, it's like coming into a movie five minutes late. You're missing something very important.

So let's stand together. The Apostle Peter says, *"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Peter 1:19-21).

So let us stand in awe of God as we hear His Word, beginning at Isaiah 52:13:

*Behold, my servant shall act wisely;
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted.
As many were astonished at you—
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—
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.*

*Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
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.
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.*

*Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
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.
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.*

*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.
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?
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.*

*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.
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.
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 (Isaiah 52:13-53:12).*

Thanks be to God for His Word. Amen? Where else can we go, Lord? Where else can we go? You have the words of eternal life. So show us Christ, we pray. Let this Word be to us like a lamp shining in the dark places of our hearts, shining into this dark world—giving us light and joy in Your salvation. God, we pray that You would give us more than just intellectual understanding. We ask that our minds would become the portals to our hearts where our affections would be kindled and enlivened. We pray that we would grow in our love for You and in our consecration—laying our lives before You just as You did not spare Your Son for us. Lord, as we pray this morning, shine into our hearts. Give us the light of the knowledge of Your glory as we gaze on the face of Christ in Your Word. We need the illumination and the empowerment of Your Spirit to do this. We plead, come Holy Spirit. In Jesus name. Amen.

Will We Love the Highest When We See It?

There was a debate among the ancient philosophers about what the man of highest virtue would look like when he appeared in our world, and how such a man would be received if he were to appear in our world. Most of the philosophers believed that when the perfect specimen of the virtuous man finally came onto the scene, he would be admired, loved and welcomed. Their philosophy is summed up in the words of Alfred Lord Tennyson: “We needs must love the Highest when we see it.” In other words, we have the

capacity to recognize that which is truly noble, truly virtuous and when we see the truly virtuous man, we will know it and we will love him for it.

Socrates, however, disagreed with the conventional wisdom. He said that if a truly virtuous person could be found, his lifestyle would be so different from other men, his testimony against their wickedness would be so strong and his efforts to reform them would be so persistent and unwelcome; that, instead of being admired by all people, he would be disliked and hated. He said that human beings were too degenerate and too stubborn to put up with the example and the reproof of such a virtuous person. They would almost certainly revile him, persecute him and put him to death as an enemy to their peace.

Well I wonder if Socrates had read the prophet Isaiah. His prediction of how men and women would welcome the Man of Highest Virtue is precisely what Isaiah foresaw when he spoke about the coming of the Christ. It's also exactly what Jesus experienced when He came into our world. To this day, in 2013, we who have the joyous privilege of proclaiming Jesus to others often find ourselves dismayed at how people reject the message of Jesus. We resonate with the cry of anguish that comes from the prophet Isaiah's lips in verse one: *"Who has believed what they have heard from us? [Who believes?] And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"*

An Appalling Prejudice Against the Redeemer

In the first two stanzas, from Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53:3, we find an appalling exposé of the prejudice of the human heart against the Lord Jesus Christ. We see in these verses that there is within the human heart a blinding prejudice against the Redeemer. The word 'prejudice' is defined as "an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought or reason." We have in our hearts an internal bias—an unfavorable opinion—that causes us to resist, be repulsed by and reject the Redeemer, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason we need the prologue before diving into the main body of Isaiah 53 is because here God puts the world on notice. God says to us—beginning in Isaiah 52:13—you

need to know that your prejudice will not defeat His purposes for Christ. The human heart in all its bias against Christ puts us in opposition to God's purposes in Christ. That human heart will not prevail. God's purposes will prevail.

Look at verse 13. God says, "*Behold, my servant shall act wisely...*" That word 'behold' is not just a stylistic, transitional word to get us from one section to the next. It's a command. "Pay attention. Consider! Look at My Servant. See Who He is and understand this: He is destined to occupy a position far superior to that which any human mind would guess."

"*...my servant [God says] shall act wisely...*" The word 'wisely' does not merely that He will be a wise man. Rather, it conveys that He will know and do all that is necessary to accomplish His mission. Some translations say, "*...my servant shall prosper.*" He shall be a supreme success. He will be totally victorious. He will prosper in all that God has called Him to do. God is putting the world on notice at the beginning of this prophetic song: "Although My Son, My Servant, will look like a failure in the eyes of the world—do not make any mistake about it—He is going to be a great triumph. He will be a huge success and will prosper in all that I have called Him to do. So don't pity Him. Instead, fall down on your face and worship Him!" That is what God is saying.

Look at verse 13 again. Not only shall He act wisely and prosper, "*He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.*" I'm sympathetic with some commentators who see here a three-fold reference:

- Christ's resurrection—"He shall be high"
- His ascension—He shall be "lifted up"
- His enthronement, His glorification at the right hand of the Father—He shall be "exalted."

The words of the phrase, "*He shall be high and lifted up*" only occur together in the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah. It appears four times in the book of Isaiah. The other three times refer to God Himself. Remember Isaiah 6? Isaiah has a vision in the temple: "*I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple*" (Isaiah 6:1). What God is saying here is, "My Servant occupies the highest position

in the universe. He is equal with Me in glory. He is none other than God Himself.” “*...high and lifted up...*” Exalted. That is how God views His Servant.

But that's not the way things appear when God's Servant comes into our world. Instead we find in Isaiah 52:14-15 that He is going to undergo an extremity of suffering so intense that we will be repulsed at the sight of it. This is not what we expected the Messiah to look like. Look at verse 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—*

The sufferings He would undergo would leave Him with an appearance so hideous, no one would think, "This must be the Messiah." Instead, people would look at Him in His suffering and disfigurement and say, "Is this even a human being? Is this a man who looks like this? It's '*beyond human semblance.*'" No one has ever appeared like this One would appear when His sufferings are completed.

For many to this day, it is the Savior's sufferings that are the stumbling block to belief. The cross stands as an emblem of suffering and shame and many people look at that cross and say, "How could God treat His Son, the Savior of the world, like that?" They stumble over the cross. The Jews stumbled over the cross of Jesus. Muslims today stumble over the cross of Jesus.

It is not just Jews or Muslims. All of us are repulsed by His suffering because of what it tells us about the heinousness of our own sin. We cannot read what the Bible says about the sufferings of Christ and its description of the meaning of those sufferings without concluding: "My sin is much more horrific and awful than I ever imagined it to be. If it required this for my sin to be put away, it must be infinitely more awful than I ever imagined."

Yet it was through this extreme suffering that God brought about an extremely extensive cleansing of the nations. Do you see that in verse 15? It begins with a connecting word, 'so.' "*So*" in light of the extreme suffering that has just been spoken of in verse 14— in light of this One Whose suffering so marred His appearance that He was no longer recognizable as a human being—an extensive fountain of cleansing has been opened up for

all the nations. So that people from every tribe, language, people and nation who were formerly unclean and unworthy to enter into the presence of God can now be cleansed from the guilt of all their sins. They can be reconciled to God the Father, enter into His most holy presence and know Him as Father, Savior, God and Friend. Praise God for the extremity of His sufferings because of what it opened up for us.

“Sprinkling” is sacrificial, priestly language used to speak of how the priest would sprinkle the blood to make lepers clean again and to forgive the guilty and cleanse them of their sins. God is saying to us in this stanza, “Look at what it took to wash you—to cleanse you—to make you fit to stand in My presence.”

Many people cannot get over the blood of Jesus. They are scandalized by the cross of Christ. They don't think of themselves as that dirty, that guilty, that vile, to require such horrific suffering in order to be made clean. No one would have ever thought that this is how the guilt of the world would be cleansed. Nevertheless, this is what God has done. It says in verse 15 that when this news dawns on kings, mighty men and wise men they will, *“...shut their mouths because of him.”* They will stand in awe and ponder the mystery—the depths—of what God has done in His Servant, Jesus Christ.

As we look at this great song, God wants us to be on notice from the beginning. His plan, His purposes for the suffering of His Servant will—in the end—prove to be brilliantly conceived and supremely successful. The power of the Cross will—in the end—prove to be victorious. That's what God is telling us in the first stanza.

In the second stanza, we see how people actually responded to Jesus when He walked among us. This is where Isaiah is lamenting the fact that although God's power has been put on display in His Son, His servant, many people don't believe. In verse one, he says, *“Who has believed what he has heard from us?”* The situation is the same today. The vast majority of people in the world do not believe this gospel. Right here in our own community, most people are not worshipping Jesus Christ. Most people are not eager to hear God's Word.

In the next couple of weeks leading up to Easter, there will be an up-tick in church attendance. All of that will be short lived unless God does something magnificent. Unless God bears His holy arm and reveals Christ to us and removes the prejudices of our hearts.

Otherwise, we won't believe. We won't see. The prejudice of our hearts is so strong against Jesus that we hear the good news and it doesn't sound good. We see the Savior and it doesn't penetrate our hearts. Jesus said, *“For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few”* (Matthew 7:14). Many don't believe. It's always been the case. Many of those who were closest to Jesus did not believe Him, welcome Him or understand Him.

As we look at the second stanza—especially Isaiah 53:2-3—I want to ask you a question. If you had been an eyewitness of Jesus, do you think you would have admired Him? Do you think you would have welcomed Him? Do you think you would have received Him?

Don't flatter yourself and answer too quickly here. There is strong evidence in verses two and three that all of us are blinded by a prejudice that is much stronger than we realize. Most people responded to Jesus with distaste, dismissal and avoidance. Of course people won't tell you this is really what they think of Jesus. In church we're not going to say what we really think. We're not going to reveal the hidden prejudices of our hearts. We'll pay Him some compliments.

But Isaiah exposes the hollowness of our cheap compliments. He probes beneath our pious facade. He makes us listen to what our hearts are really saying about Jesus. He articulates the unmentionable prejudices that lurk in our hearts against the Lord Christ. Notice that at the end of verse two, Isaiah includes himself in the exposé—he uses the plural pronoun “we.” As we probe the response of most people in Jesus' day, we come face-to-face with some unpleasant realities about our own hearts and our own bias. If we're going to have a winsome, compelling witness in the world, we need to recognize that their unbelief is no worse than our own. Their situation is no different than ours.

The second part of verse one tells us the only thing that makes the difference: “The arm of the Lord has been revealed in our lives.” Did you know that is the same phrase that God used when He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt? He bared His holy arm—He parted the Red Sea; He delivered His people from slavery. That same thing has to happen whenever the gospel penetrates a human heart. It takes a mighty miracle of God baring His holy arm, making blind eyes to see, deaf ears to hear, hardened hearts to become tender

and receptive. The only way any of us believes is because God has done that. He's bared His holy arm in our lives. He's acted mightily to overcome the natural prejudice of our hearts.

Let's consider these unpleasant realities of our hearts, beginning in verse two. We see:

1. We are far more superficial than we realize.

We look on the surface of things. We judge by outward appearances. We work very hard at cultivating an impressive appearance for others. Jesus didn't try to do that or even care about that. Never once did Jesus think, "How can I make myself look more attractive to people? How can I gain their approval?" That never entered His mind.

To us, His beginnings looked very unpromising. Look at verse two: "*He grew up before him like a young plant*, [He was like a tender, young plant growing up before God. He was] *like a root out of dry ground.*" He looked like one of those little unwanted shoot springing up from an exposed root that the gardener would just snip off. Jesus looked like an unpromising person appearing in the dry, barren ground of a defeated nation. It didn't look like anything significant was going to come from this Child Who was a carpenter's Son, growing up in Nazareth. Everyone was surprised when they started to realize, "This Man claims to be the Messiah. Isn't this Joseph's Son?" He did not fit the expectation people had of the Messiah.

His appearance and His personality were unimpressive. We see that in the second part of verse two: "*He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.*" Jesus never tried to put on an appearance that would make us think, "Oh, I want to get to know Him because notice what He looks like." He did not try to fake some cool personality or put on some magnetic show to draw people in. He did not cater to our superficial impressions of things.

Have you ever been in a crowd and felt like you were one of the "little people"? You see people—the movers and the shakers—having all these conversations. You try to get close to them and you feel like they are turning in another direction. You enter into the

conversation and they quickly push you to the side. Isaiah is saying that is what we did with Jesus.

The vast majority of humanity was totally unimpressed with Jesus. He did not fit our picture of a leader. We wanted someone forceful, someone attractive, someone with a compelling agenda, someone who had the program that would enhance our self-image and make us feel great about ourselves. But then we met Jesus and we felt let down. Our expectations were disappointed. We didn't see much in Him. The Son of God entered our world and we yawned. We were unimpressed. At its best, the world was bored with Jesus.

Is it any different today? Are people impressed with Jesus today? No, we're superficial. We judge by the surface of things. If that's how we look at Jesus, we will never see what God sees in Him.

2. We are far more selfish than we care to admit.

Verse three says, *“He was despised and rejected by men...”* In English, the word “despised” has strong emotional overtones of hostility and contempt. But in the Hebrew language, it means to consider something or someone to be worthless, unworthy of our attention. Almost like you didn't even notice. It just seems so insignificant that you kept on moving and never paid attention. That's how we were with Jesus. John Oswalt says,

“The Servant will not suffer a conscious and deliberate rejection so much as a hasty dismissal. Humans have ceased having any relations with the Servant because they do not see Him as having any significance for them.”

Wow. In other words, Jesus doesn't do anything for me. He doesn't fit my agenda. He doesn't meet my needs. It's not so much that we consciously, deliberately reject Him. We marginalize Him. We hastily dismiss Him. We don't have time to take His calls; we ignore His knocking at our door. We don't care to make room for Him in the busyness of our lives. Why? Because we're thinking, “What has He done for me lately? He doesn't meet my needs. He doesn't address where I'm at. He doesn't serve me the way I want to be served.”

We treat Jesus like SPAM in our email in box. We create a filter and make sure any message from Jesus goes right into the SPAM folder. We don't even want to see it. By in

large, that's the way the world welcomed Jesus. He was like an unworthy, unwelcome intruder. We're more selfish than we care to admit. We're always thinking about, "What's in it for me?" Jesus wasn't that concerned about answering that question first and foremost.

3. We are averse to suffering and grief.

We don't want suffering in our lives. We want to be happy, happy, happy all the time. We have a low tolerance for pain and a low threshold for anyone who brings their pain into our lives. We're averse to that. Verse three says that our Savior, "*...was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*" It's like it's saying grief was His closest friend. No one knew Jesus better than grief knew Jesus. It's not telling us that Jesus was morose or gloomy. It's telling us that as His holy soul walked among us, there was persistent grief that characterized His life. He saw the wickedness of mankind and its rejection of His Father and it grieved His holy soul. He felt the rejection of people; it grieved Him intensely. Where He was heading was always on His mind. The shadow of the cross was always looming on His horizon. Every step Jesus took—every day of His life—He walked deeper and deeper and deeper into that dark shadow of the cross. There was grief, sorrow and suffering constantly in His life.

Most of us, if we knew the griefs and sorrows that we are going to bear a year or two or ten in the future, we'd be paralyzed right now. We couldn't go on. We wouldn't know how to enjoy life. Not with that on the horizon. Some of you have gone through awful pain in your life. Had you known years in advance that you would go through that, you would have felt as if you couldn't go on living. God is very merciful to spare us the knowledge of what lies ahead. But not so with Jesus. He knew the suffering He was going to endure. He was "*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*"

We don't like that. So we avoid Him. We're ashamed of him, embarrassed by him. We look at Him and we say, "He's got a lot of issues. He's got a lot of failure in His life. He's got a lot of suffering. I don't want to be near that!" So "*as one from whom men hide their faces*" we went the other way. He was despised.

We do this sometimes when people are suffering. We don't know how to respond to them or what to say. We sometimes selfishly don't want to take on their burdens. So we just avoid them. We ignore their suffering.

If we're going to follow Jesus, the book of Hebrews says, "*Therefore, let us go to him outside the camp...*" where it's isolating, lonely and desolate. We have to go to Him outside the camp and we have to "*bear the reproach he endured*" (Hebrews 13:13). That's what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

A whole lot of people look at that and say, "That's not the kind of Savior I had in mind. That's not the kind of life I wanted to live." The prejudice of the human heart is so pronounced when you look at the last line of Isaiah 53:3: "*...we esteemed him not.*" Here is the Son of God. Here is the One of Whom God says, "My Servant is highly exalted—the One in Whom I delight." We looked at Him and—it's an accounting word here—we took inventory of Jesus. We sized Him up and assessed His net worth, and we said zero. He's worth nothing to me. That's the way humanity responded to Jesus. That's the way my heart responds to the Savior until God bares His holy arm, takes away the blindness of my sin, unstops the deafness of my ears and tenderizes my hardened heart. What we see here in verses two and three is a description either of what you once were, or what you now are in your response to Jesus.

Four applications:

1. Ask yourself, "Have my prejudices against Christ been overcome?" Be honest! Jesus isn't interested in pious, empty phrases. He doesn't want to know what you say in front of other people about what you think of Him. Jesus wants to know if you love, treasure and esteem Him. Be honest with yourself.

I remember that back in 2006 I met for the first time (it was really the second time but it felt like the first) one of my grandfathers—my mom's dad. His name is Ray Mowrey. I never knew him because he left my mom when she was nine years old. He didn't want to be involved in our lives. Later on, my mom told me that every Christmas she would invite him to come join us for Christmas. He only did it once when I was about four years old. That was the other time that I met him. Other than that, he was absent even though he

lived close by. When he was 84, he got really sick. There was no one left to take care of him, so he called my mom. She came into his life again and we met him. I remember the first time I went to see him. I said to him, "Do you ever think about God?" His answer was, "No, we Mowreys don't have it in us to think about God. It's just not the way we are." That's what he said.

I remember thinking, "Wait a minute! You have three grandsons that you've never known who are pastors. What do you mean, 'We don't have it in us to think about God'?" Then I took it a step further. I realized he was absolutely right. We don't have it in us to think about God. The only reason we do is because God bared His holy arm and got us thinking. He changed our hearts, opened our eyes and made our hearts tender toward Him.

I want to ask you, "Has God done removed my prejudices?" We come to the communion table. This isn't for people with little esteem for Jesus. This is for people who say, "Christ is my all. I know I'm sinful—I know I'm wicked and guilty—but I love my Savior. I need Him."

The good news is that He can bare His holy arm to you right now. He may be doing that. He may be stirring your heart. You may be realizing, "I have never thought much of Jesus." God is here. Be still, for the presence of the Lord is here. His power is moving in this place to change your heart and give you a new view of Jesus Christ. Ask Him to do this for you right now. Has He removed your prejudices?

2. Believer, look carefully at the One Whom you follow. Get it into your mind and into your heart that your road in life is not designed to be an easy, comfortable, worldly-esteeming path. If you expect that out of the Christian life, you will be disillusioned and disappointed. You follow the One Who had no form or majesty that people would look at Him. You follow the One Who had no beauty that people would desire Him. You follow the One Who was despised and rejected by men. You follow a Man of sorrows Who was acquainted with grief. You follow the One from Whom men hid their faces, despised and did not esteem Him. They didn't even give Him a second thought.

Do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not. *“Therefore, let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured”* (Hebrews 13:13). Let us deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow this Jesus, no matter the cost.

3. Church, are we courageous enough and content enough to build our ministry on Jesus Christ and His gospel alone? I can tell you, if we took a survey out there in the world of what people want out of the church, virtually no one would tell us, “I need to hear the good news of how God saves sinners through the crucifixion, death and resurrection of His Son.” People aren't thinking about that. However, that's all we really have to go on.

From my observation, many churches are not content to be centered on Christ and His gospel alone. We don't like feeling that the world thinks we're insignificant, irrelevant, unworthy of attention. We expend a lot of effort to attract people when the Bible tells us that Jesus wasn't very attractive. It takes a mighty work of God for their eyes to be opened. If we focus on the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is precisely where God's mighty arm likes to make itself known. God likes to show up where the gospel is central. Let's be content and courageous as a church to stay focused on the gospel.

4. Worship. Think about the rejection our Savior experienced on the dawn of the darkest day of His life. People thought, “Ugh, I don't like Him! I don't want to be near Him. I don't see any place for Him in my life.” They hid their faces from Him. Jesus experienced the rejection of the world.

You know what it feels like to be rejected—you have felt that sting. Some of you have felt it utterly. It's horrible. None of us has felt the rejection that Jesus felt. All of us—when we're rejected—have felt a measure of self pity. “Oh, woe is me. Can't believe what I'm going through.” Not Jesus. We esteemed Him not. Yet, *“...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Hebrews 12:2). There was joy in Him on the dawn of the darkest day of His life—the joy of knowing that God would be glorified as He laid down His life for us.

Let's enter into that joy as we worship our Savior, the Man of Sorrows. Let's sing to Him and say, "Hallelujah, Jesus!" There is no Savior like Him. Let's give Him our love and praise His name.

Oh, to see the dawn
Of the darkest day:
Christ on the road to Calvary.
Tried by sinful men,
Torn and beaten, then
Nailed to a cross of wood.

This, the pow'r of the cross:
Christ became sin for us;
Took the blame, bore the wrath-
We stand forgiven at the cross.

Oh, to see the pain
Written on Your face,
Bearing the awesome weight of sin.
Ev'ry bitter thought,
Ev'ry evil deed
Crowning Your bloodstained brow.

Now the daylight flees;
Now the ground beneath
Quakes as its Maker bows His head.
Curtain torn in two,
Dead are raised to life;
"Finished!" the vict'ry cry.

Oh, to see my name
Written in the wounds,
For through Your suffering I am free.
Death is crushed to death;
Life is mine to live,
Won through Your selfless love.

This, the pow'r of the cross:
Son of God-slain for us.
What a love! What a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross.

(The Power of the Cross by Keith & Kristyn Getty)

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