



Finished! The Victory Cry

The Power of the Cross #4 – Easter Sunday

Isaiah 53:10-12

David Sunday

March 31, 2013

The events we celebrate on Good Friday and Easter are the climax of the Christian faith. If you're visiting New Covenant, I want you to know that we celebrate the gospel every week of our lives. The gospel is the good news that God's Kingdom has broken into our fallen world in Jesus Christ and how He, the King, has come to free us from our sins and bring forgiveness and restore all that sin broke. If you are not presently part of a church home where this gospel is celebrated every week, we open wide our arms and invite you to join us—not just on Easter Sunday—but every week.

Good Friday and Easter are very special. They are like taking a trip to the eye doctor to get our prescription updated. If our focus on the gospel has gotten fuzzy or isn't as clear as it should be, events like this help make our focus more crisp. The bright colors of the spectrum of the gospel become more vivid as we revisit the Easter event in Scripture.

In 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4, the Apostle Paul says this gospel is of first importance for the church. In that passage, he describes the gospel like this:

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received; that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...

If you've been in church for a while, you've probably heard that passage hundreds of times. Think about the words: "*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...*" Paul is talking about that portion of the Bible we know as the Old Testament—39 books written prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They cover the period from the creation of the universe up to four hundred years before Christ came. Paul is saying if we read the Old Testament carefully, there we'll see the message of Christ's suffering and death for our sins. He also says we'll see the message of His resurrection for our sins.

So I want to do a little test to see if you can think of several passages in the Old Testament Scriptures that point to the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Can you think of any? It's not very easy, is it? In 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul doesn't specifically name these passages—but he assumes that we will know them. I'm sure that as Paul thought about the Old Testament and how it testifies of Christ's death and resurrection, one of the first passages that came to his mind is the one that we're going to look at in Isaiah 53 which was written 700 years before the coming of Jesus Christ into this world and has transformed millions of lives. This was the passage that resulted in the gospel first going to the African continent. We read in Acts 8:26-39 of an Ethiopian official who was riding through Israel in his chariot, reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah. He was reading chapter 53. God sent Philip the Evangelist to him, explaining how this passage of Scripture is pointing to Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. That Ethiopian official believed the gospel and brought it back to Africa.

To this day, Isaiah 53 is remarkably full of impact. In fact, one of our own pastors could tell you the story of how he met a friend in 1978 who was Jewish and he started telling this friend about Jesus Christ. Now you can probably guess which pastor this was because most of the rest of us were either in elementary school or not yet born in 1978, but this pastor was a fully mature adult in 1978. He began talking to this young woman with whom he soon struck up a friendship. As he told his Jewish friend about Jesus, he opened Isaiah 53. When she discovered this passage was in her Hebrew Scriptures and how perfectly it describes the work of Jesus Christ despite being written 700 years before Christ came into the world, she was blown away.

Let's look at what she would have read for the first time as a Jewish woman in 1978. Isaiah 53:4:

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

Looking in the New Testament, she could see how Jesus fulfilled those words in the Gospel of Matthew 8:16-17. Continue looking at Isaiah 53:4 as I read about Jesus:

*That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons,
and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This
was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: 'He took our illnesses
and bore our diseases.'*

Isaiah 53 was written 700 years before Christ and now we see its fulfillment in Christ. Now look at Isaiah 53:5-6:

But he was pierced for our transgressions; [In John 19:34, it says at Jesus' crucifixion: "One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear..."]

*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.*

Keep your eye on Isaiah 53:56 as we look at 1 Peter 2:24. It says of Jesus:

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree [on the cross], that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

We read in Isaiah 53:7-9

*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.*

It's a perfect portrait of the brutal death and surprising burial of Jesus the Christ. We read in the Gospels that after He was mocked, spat upon and brutally treated, He went meekly, submissively, never defending Himself or standing up for His own rights. After all of that, He cried out on the cross: "*It is finished*" (John 19:30). They were going to bury Jesus with the two thieves with whom He was crucified like a common criminal, but a rich man stood up—a follower of Jesus named Joseph of Arimathea—and said, "No. I want Him to be buried in my tomb—a rich man's tomb." Pilate said, "Go, take His body there." Then the Pharisees came and sealed the stone in front of the tomb and posted a guard there so nothing could happen to that body (Matthew 27:57-66).

You see the fulfillment of Isaiah 53 in the life, death and burial of Jesus 700 years later. As our pastor spoke to his Jewish friend about these things, she was persuaded by the Holy Spirit—through the Scriptures—that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, Who came to save His people from their sins. Her eyes were opened to the beauty and power of the gospel of Jesus and she believed in Jesus!

That woman's name is Toni. And the man who shared the gospel with her is Dan Huff. They fell in love, got married, and they've been serving the Lord Jesus Christ—the Risen King—ever since. What

Toni and millions like her have seen in Isaiah 53 is the power of the Cross—the meaning and eternal saving significance of the death of Jesus.

Not everyone sees that. Many look at the cross of Jesus—the events of Good Friday and Easter—and they're blind to the significance of it. They see it perhaps as the tragic story of a helpless victim, the pathetic defeat of an idealistic prophet, or a sentimental symbol of the virtues of sacrificial love. But they don't see power, beauty, life or victory in the cross of Jesus.

We know from our own experience, things are not always as they appear. Events often are more significant than they appear on the surface. For instance, legend has it that on a certain day King George III of Great Britain wrote in his journal at night: “Nothing of importance happened today.” He dated his journal entry July 4, 1776. Things are not always as they appear.

On the day of our Savior's death, there were many in Jerusalem who went home to their Passover meals completely unaware that the Lamb of God had just taken away the sins of the world in their own backyard. They were completely unaware that a spiritual revolution had begun that would turn the world upside down and turn the calendar on its hinges. Jesus Christ died and bore the sins of many. Had they written in their journals that first Good Friday evening, many would have said, “Nothing of importance happened today.”

That's not what God says about the death of His Son. Think of Isaiah 53 as God's journal entry about His Son's death saying, “Look. Something of vast significance and enormous impact happened today when My Son died on the cross.” In fact, the beginning of this journal entry begins in Isaiah 52:13. Look at how God opens this exposition of His Son's death by saying:

*Behold, my servant shall act wisely; [Or, He shall 'prosper.']
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted...*

God wrote these things in advance so when they happened, we would know without a doubt that He thought the death of His Son on the cross was eternally significant. Then God did something else to demonstrate to the world how enormously significant His Son's death was: God raised Him from the dead! As if to say to us, “If you think nothing of importance happened on that cross, think again. I raised Him from the dead.”

If we are reading Isaiah 53 carefully and attentively, we will see the resurrection right here in this passage as the grand finale of this great exposition of our Savior's sufferings. The last stanza contains not a hint of degradation or humiliation. The Suffering Servant is no longer suffering, despised, rejected, oppressed and afflicted. All we see is the dignity, majesty, glory and triumph of the Cross of Christ;

Who—though He died—now lives and reigns forever at God’s right hand to execute God’s will, bringing salvation to multitudes!

As we read Isaiah 53:10-12, listen for four earth-shattering implications about the power of the cross. I’m not going to take time to expound them all at length, but listen for:

1. God the Father is glorified through His Son’s death.
2. Christ the Savior is satisfied with what He accomplished on the cross.
3. Satan, the Adversary of God and His people, is terrified by what Jesus accomplished on the Cross.
4. Sinners can be justified through what Christ accomplished on the cross.

Listen for these glorious triumphs of the power of Christ’s cross as I read verses 10-12. This is the grand finale!

*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.*

1. God the Father is Glorified through His Son’s Death

Verse ten is sobering. God is not sitting in the bleachers cheering on His Son as He lays down His life on the cross. God the Father was actually the first cause of His Son’s death on that cross. Do you see what it says? *“It was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief.”* The New American Standard Bible says, *“The Lord was pleased to crush him, putting him to grief.”*

We know out of all those responsible for the death of Christ, surely Judas was responsible. His greed led him to betray his Master. There was the Sanhedrin, whose jealousy filled them with hatred for Christ. There was the Roman Governor Pilate, whose fear of man led him to hand over a Man he knew was innocent to suffer a cruel death. If we read the Bible carefully, we see that all of us are responsible for the death of God’s Son. Had we not sinned, He would not have suffered.

But in Isaiah 53:10, God takes us behind the scenes of the drama and shows us the script, written in His Own hand. He takes ultimate responsibility for what happened on that cross. It pleased the Lord

to crush His Son. We can learn a lot about a person by knowing what brings him pleasure. God was pleased to put His Son to death on that cross. What is that telling us about God? It is not telling us that God takes pleasure in the pain and suffering of His Son, nor that He ever stopped loving His Son. Even when Jesus died on the cross, God's intense love was upon Him. What it tells us is this: God so loved the world that He sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:16-17). It tells us that God is Love. He conspired with the Son of His love to save a world of sinners. On the cross:

Heaven's peace and perfect justice
kissed a guilty world in love.

(From Here is Love by William Rees)

When we see the suffering of our Savior, we should see behind it the boundless love of a Holy Father Whose mercy and compassion for sinners was so great that He did not spare His Own Son, but gave Him up for us all so we might be reconciled to Him, brought into His family and saved through His death. Because the Father's will to save us was perfectly executed through the death of His Son, God raised Him from the dead and vindicated Him for all to see! Jesus glorified the Father in His love, wisdom, justice, mercy and all His attributes in the work He did on that cross to save us. God the Father was glorified.

2. **Jesus, God the Son, is Satisfied with what He Accomplished on the Cross**

This last stanza is all about what Jesus experiences after His sufferings and death. He now lives and reigns! What an amazing reversal of fortunes belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ. Look in Isaiah 53 as I summarize how things changed for Jesus after His death:

- He Who had no descendants (verse eight) "*will see his offspring*" (verse ten).
- He Who was "*cut off*" in the midst of life (verse eight) will now "*prolong his days*" (verse ten). There will be no limit to His days.
- He Who was "*stricken*" (verse eight) will now "*prosper*" (verse ten).
- He Who was dead (verse nine) will come alive (verse 11).
- He Who was unjustly condemned (verse nine) will be "*satisfied*" (verse 11).
- He Who was "*despised and rejected*" (verse three) will become the center of a great throng of admirers and followers (verses 11-12).
- He Who was a helpless victim (verse seven) will become a triumphant victor (verse 12).

Derek Tidball—a commentator looking at this passage—says, "What an amazing reversal of fortunes is Jesus'."

Here's what we need to know: Jesus is alive today, and He sees the accomplishments of His sufferings. He looks out and sees—His children who have been won to Him through His death, and does not for one minute regret the price He paid to save us. Jesus never looks at the accomplishments of His death and says, “Why did it have to cost Me so much?” Instead, it says in verse 11, “*Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied...*” The word ‘anguish’ is used of a woman in childbirth. Jesus was laboring on the cross to give birth to a family from every tribe, language, people and nation. What shall He see? He shall see redeemed people who trust in Him and whose sins have been washed away because of His blood that was shed for them. He is a satisfied, pleased and smiling Savior with no regrets for the price He paid to save us. Jesus is satisfied.

3. Satan is Terrified by what Christ Accomplished on the Cross

Verse 12 pictures Jesus as a victorious General returning from battle. God says:

*Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong...*

As the spoils of His victory, Jesus is getting many faithful followers—loyal disciples. They are the reward for His triumph. He shares the rewards of His victory with us. There's not a hint of any opposition standing in the way. He is the victorious, conquering King.

I wonder, did Satan ever read Isaiah 53? Did he understand what it was talking about? Did he know that on that cross, Jesus would “*disarm the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him [His cross]*” (Colossians 2:15)? Did Satan know that Christ would return from the grave victorious and be crowned as King of Kings and Lord of Lords? I don't think so.

Back in the fourth century, John Chrysostom described the terrors of hell at the resurrection of Jesus:

Hell was in turmoil having been eclipsed.
Hell was in turmoil having been mocked.
Hell was in turmoil having been destroyed.
Hell was in turmoil having been abolished.
Hell was in turmoil having been made captive.

Hell grasped a corpse, and met God.
Hell seized earth, and encountered heaven.
Hell took what it saw, and was overcome by what it could not see.
O death, where is your sting?
O hell, where is your victory?

Christ is risen, and you are cast down!
Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!

Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!
Christ is risen, and we are set free!

(Taken from the "Easter Homily" of St. John Chrysostom)

Praise the Lord! Satan was terrified by what Christ accomplished on that cross. He received a fatal head wound on the day Jesus died and it is growing. He is going to be destroyed forever because of Christ's death.

4. Sinners can be Justified through what Jesus Accomplished on the Cross

Sinners like us who have broken God's law, rebelled against Him, shaken our fists in the face of our Creator and gone astray like lost sheep are justified—declared righteous in the sight of God. As if we had never sinned and always obeyed, we are declared righteous in the sight of a Holy God when we place our trust in what Jesus accomplished on that cross and put our hope in Him.

Look at what it says He did for us in verse ten: "...*his soul makes an offering for our guilt...*" We could have never paid for our sins but Jesus made a perfect offering. In the fourth line of verse 11 it says, "...*he shall bear their iniquities.*" He took them far away to be forgotten and never brought up against us because He—the perfect Lamb of God—bore them away. In verse 12 it says, "...*he bore the sin of many...*" By the cross of Jesus, sinners who trust in Him are justified. He paid for our sins. He paid it all and exchanged our unrighteousness for His perfect righteousness. Verse 11 says that through His death, we who trust in Him are "*accounted righteous*" before God. Not guilty before God. There is no condemnation, rather we are at peace with God, reconciled, adopted into His family, a home being prepared for us in Heaven, and a Savior is at God's right hand Who stands as our Advocate and makes intercession for us even now. That's what the Resurrection tells us about what Christ accomplished on the cross—something of eternal significance happened on Good Friday.

But what does it mean to you? It says, "...*he bore the sin of many...*" (verse 12), but not everyone receives the benefits of what Christ has done. There are many who do not grasp its meaning or personally receive its benefits. Oswald Chambers made an incisive observation when he said, "All heaven is interested in the Cross of Christ, all hell terribly afraid of it, while men are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning." I plead with you not to ignore the meaning of the cross. Consider these three questions:

a. **If you ignore the meaning of the Cross of Christ, how will you ever make sense out of your own suffering and the ultimate death that awaits you?**

At the cross we see a God Who is not distant from our suffering, but embraces it fully, and in so doing conquers death completely. Where else are you going to find a God like that Who is with you in your sufferings and turns them ultimately into a means of glory? Only in Jesus Christ do we find such a God. When we put our trust in Him, we discover that our sufferings are not a punishment for our sins but actually a prelude to everlasting life. Thomas Oden said, “The despair of all past history is reversed by the resurrection and the hope of all future history is enabled by it.” Where will you find hope in this world of despair if you ignore the cross of Jesus?

b. **If you ignore the meaning of the Cross of Christ, what will you do with your loneliness and alienation?**

This world is a lonely place. We long for lasting love, community and family. But even at their very best, family relationships and friendships are temporary and broken by sin and death. In Isaiah 53 we see that Jesus died to win some offspring. He labored on the cross to give birth to a holy, happy, lasting and eternal family. Nothing would make heaven happier than for you to put your trust in Jesus—in what He accomplished to save you—and become a part of that family. It says in Luke 15:10: “The angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner comes home to the Father.” Heaven would rejoice today to have you become part of this family. Apart from that family, this world is full of loneliness.

c. **If you ignore the Cross of Christ, how will you get rid of your guilt and shame?**

There is only one thing worse than going to bed with a guilty conscience: waking up in the morning with one. Having to face a whole day with shame and guilt weighing on you. Even if you can manage to pacify your conscience until your dying bed (which very few people manage to do), what will you do when you wake up at the Judgment? You will see a Holy God and become profoundly aware of the fact that you have rebelled, sinned and wandered from Him, and now you must face a Holy God. There is a way to wake up on Judgment Day with a clean conscience. Trust in the Savior Who suffered to bear your sins away and to present you faultless, with great joy, at the right hand of the Father at the throne of grace. Put your trust in Him. “*He was delivered up for our trespasses, and he was raised for our justification*” (Romans 4:25) so that sinners can be accounted righteous in the sight of a Holy God.

I ask you to join me in prayer. As I pray, I'm going to give you the opportunity, personally, to put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's go to the Father.

Father, we thank You for the truth that our Redeemer lives.

He lives to silence all my fears,
He lives to wipe away my tears
He lives to calm my troubled heart,
He lives all blessings to impart.

([I Know that My Redeemer Lives](#) by Samuel Medley, 1775)

Lord, we know you are a God Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). We pray that You would bring people who were dead in sin newness of life in Christ. God, you say You are able to do above what we could ask or imagine. We pray that You would not do less than this, but do even more than we could imagine. Send Your Word and Spirit to give peace to those whose consciences are guilty. Give them peace as they trust in the blood of Your Son Jesus on the cross. We ask in His name. Amen.

Now if you recognize you are a sinner and need a Savior and you've heard how a Savior, Jesus, died for you and rose from the dead so that your loneliness could be removed, you can be brought into the Father's family and have your sins forgiven. I invite you now to pray from the depths of your heart this simple prayer: "Holy Father. God, my Creator. I have sinned against You in thought, words and actions. I'm like a sheep that has gone astray. Thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to find me, rescue me and make me right with You. I believe, Father, that Your Son died for my sins and I believe You raised Him from the dead to give me everlasting life. I receive Him now as my Savior and Lord, asking that You would teach me to love Him and live for Him the rest of my days until I am joined with You in glory. Thank You, Lord for Your gift of love to me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

If you have called on the name of the Lord from the depths of your heart, He has heard you. He is alive to save you today.

New Covenant Bible Church

[4N780 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60175](#)

(630) 584-2611 ♦ www.newcbc.org

All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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