

Armagh Baptist Church – The Lord’s Table
Sunday 5th January 2020 – 6:30pm
‘The Successful, Satisfied Servant’
Isaiah 52:13-53:12 (Part 2)

Introduction

On the First Sunday night in December, and now again tonight on the First Sunday night of a New Year, I have taken you to an Old Testament passage, Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12, to get you to focus on the Death, Burial and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This passage contains the last and greatest Servant Song of Isaiah.

There are 5 stanzas to this Servant Song. Each stanza is 3 verses in length. We looked at 3 of those stanzas last time as we concentrated on Isaiah 53:1-9:

1. **The Sorrow of the Servant (53:1-3)** – *‘A Man of Sorrows’* (v.3)
2. **The Smiting of the Servant (53:4-6)** – *‘Smitten by God’* (v.4)
3. **The Silence of the Servant (53:7-9)** – *‘He opened not his mouth’*

So it’s the first & last stanzas we’ll be looking at tonight:
His Success (52:12-15) & His Satisfaction (53:10-12)

We have New Testament authority for applying Isaiah 53 to Jesus Christ. Next Sunday night I’ll be preaching from Acts 8:30-35 at another Baptismal Service in Keady - the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch’s encounter with Philip. The Ethiopian Eunuch was on his way home from Jerusalem sitting in his chariot reading this very passage of Scripture when Philip drew alongside him.

The Eunuch asked Philip a question in v.34:

‘Tell me please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?’
And...

*‘Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him **the good news about Jesus!**’* (v.35) – And as a result he got saved and was baptised!

So Isaiah’s Suffering Servant *is* Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is the Messiah.

I explained on the first Sunday night in December as we gathered around the Lord’s Table that this Servant Song took the form of a **parabola**. It starts high at the beginning, it comes down to the lowest point in the middle, and then it goes back up to the highest place at the end again.

Same as Philippians 2:5-11

Notice Isaiah 52:13, and 53:12, so v.5 is the low-point.

So tonight we’re going to look at the two high points of this Servant Song:

1. The Success of the Servant (52:13-15)

2. The Satisfaction of the Servant (53:10-12)

Yes Jesus was a Man of Sorrows, Yes he was smitten by God and afflicted as he hung there on that cross, and Yes he remained Silent through it all, refusing to open his mouth in protest at all the injustice being done to Him.

But the Success of his Mission was so certain, right from the beginning, that that’s how this Song begins. It begins with a note of confidence:

1. The Success of the Servant (52:13-15)

God the Father says, right from the outset of His Son’s Rescue Mission:

***‘Behold, My Servant shall act wisely;
He shall be high (raised - NIV) and lifted up and shall be exalted.’***

That’s what we celebrate at Easter time, isn’t it?
We rejoice in the reality of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!

But just look at those 3 phrases in v.13:

‘He shall be raised!’ – Jesus was raised from the dead! (Matthew 28:1-7)
The women went to the tomb early on the Sunday morning, worrying their heads off, how they were going to roll the stone back, how they were going to get into the tomb, so they could anoint Jesus’ dead body with oils and spices. But they needn’t have worried. Because when they got there they discovered that the stone had already been rolled away! And an angel was sitting on it! He said:
*‘I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.
He is not here, He is risen, just as he said.’*

So the angel was reminding the women of what Jesus had said while he was still alive, before he had been arrested and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

On at least 3 occasions in Matthew’s Gospel Jesus predicted his death, burial and resurrection, but they just didn’t take it in! The first of these was in Matt 16:21-23. He had told them beforehand that he would see them again in John 16:16ff:

*‘In a little while you will see me no more,
and then after a little while you will see me.’*

So His Resurrection was so certain, that He had told them all this beforehand. But they hadn’t taken it in.

Isaiah had said this beforehand too, but the Jews hadn’t taken it in for 700 years before it happened! (Isaiah 52:13 – ***‘He shall be raised!’***)

'He shall be lifted up' – this refers to the ascension of our Lord Jesus. After 40 days, during which Jesus appeared to his disciples on various occasions and in different ways, Jesus and his disciples headed out to a mountain-top. It was there that Jesus gave them His Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). And as He was speaking to them, **He was lifted up** from before them: *'He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight'* (Acts 1:9).

So Isaiah's prediction came true: **He was raised, and He was lifted up!** And the last bit is already true as well. He shall be **exalted**. We won't see that until Jesus comes again, and every eye shall see him, as King of kings and Lord of lords. But if we read **Philippians 2:9-11** it takes us to that moment in our minds.

Just like Isaiah said: **'Behold, my servant shall act wisely, He shall be (high) raised, and lifted up and shall be exalted.'** (52:13)

The success of Jesus' mission was never in doubt as far as God was concerned. This was all part of His eternal plan to rescue and save lost men and women, young people and boys and girls, just like us here tonight.

Many people might have been appalled at what happened to Jesus – the cruelty, the brutality of it all – death by crucifixion is an awful death – it's the lowest of the low – it's about as far as you can as far as man's inhumanity to man is concerned, and yet Jesus went there for us. Look at Isaiah 52:14...

But just as Jesus went to the very lowest point for us, He has also gone to the very highest point for us as well.

Now (v.15) *'So shall he sprinkle [people of] many nations'* with his blood.

After the Passover lamb's blood was shed, it had to be sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of their homes, so that the family could shelter beneath it and escape the judgement of the destroying angel as he passed over.

Likewise we have to personally shelter under the blood of the Lord Jesus, if we are to have our sins forgiven, if we are to escape the judgement of God for our sins.

Because here's the deal – either Jesus has taken the punishment of your sin for you, or you will still have to take that punishment for yourself!

Jesus took it all contracted into the space of 3 hours of darkness on the cross, but you will take it for all eternity in hell, if you reject his offer of mercy now.

'And kings shall shut their mouths because of him.' (v.15)

Compare that to Romans 3:19 at the end of Paul's great section showing that **'There is none righteous, no, not one!'**

Every single one of us will have to give an account of ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. **'Every mouth will be stopped.'** We will all be silenced before Him. There is not one of us who will be able to protest our innocence on that day. So either you admit you're a sinner now, and accept what Jesus did on the cross for you, as your only hope of salvation, or else it will be forever too late. Don't think you'll get a chance on that final day to clear your name, because it just won't work – you'll not have a word to say! You'll be speechless! Dumb-founded!

So that's the Success of the Servant, Jesus has died, Jesus was buried, but Jesus has risen again. Everyone of us, one day, will have to answer to Him.

Now let's see the end of this Servant Song. Another high-point:

2. The Satisfaction of the Servant (53:10-12)

A Servant is never satisfied until the work he has been given to do, is done! And **the One** who gave the servant his work to do, will never be satisfied, until the servant has finished the task.

Here as we finish Isaiah 53 we see that both the Father and the Son are satisfied. Throughout Jesus' life on earth, He had talked about **'finishing the work His Father had given him to do.'**

In John 4:34, Jesus said to his disciples in Samaria: **'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.'**

In John 17:4 as he prayed in Gethsemane, just before his arrest, he said: **'I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.'**

In John 19:30 in his final breath from the cross he could cry out: **'It is finished!'**

There is nothing like the satisfaction of a job well done. Completing the task we've set ourselves. Or finishing the work someone else has given us to do.

Look at Isaiah 53:10 – Three times 'the LORD' is mentioned in this verse. The LORD, as you know, is the O.T. name for God, Yahweh. This verse makes clear that the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, was all God's Will, it was all part of God's eternal plan. There was no other way that our sin could be dealt with: (v.10)

*'Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief;'
'And 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.'*

In other words, death would not be the end for the Lord Jesus, the Suffering Servant. After his life was made a guilt offering for our sins, He would see His offspring and prolong His days.

Jesus died without offspring or descendants – he had never married. And yet after his death and resurrection – he would ‘*see his offspring.*’ He would have spiritual offspring – spiritual sons and daughters – people like you and me trusting in him as our Lord and Saviour, and in that moment we would become the children of God! **‘We are his offspring!’** (Acts 17:28-29).

And the LORD would prolong his days – in other words He is not just alive from the dead – He will live forever! The LORD (Yahweh) will prolong His days – forever! Jesus is alive forevermore!

And the will of the LORD will prosper in His Hand – All authority has been given into the hands of Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords! (Matthew 28:18).

And here’s the key phrase in this stanza – it’s at the beginning of v.11

**‘After the suffering of his soul, He will see the light [of life],
and be satisfied.’ (NIV)**

or

‘Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied’ (ESV)

Whichever is the right translation the meaning is clear. It’s the idea of satisfaction after a job well done. Following the suffering of his soul, He sees the light of life, and He is satisfied. The Risen Lord Jesus is satisfied with a job well done, but more than that God the Father, who sent Him on his Rescue Mission to earth, is satisfied with all that His Son has accomplished, otherwise He would not have raised him back to life again!

The Resurrection is proof that the Cross worked!

It’s proof that God the Father is satisfied with the Sacrificial work of His Son.

So the Cross and the Resurrection are the central facts of history. A man called Jesus of Nazareth was actually born, and lived a holy life, A man called Jesus of Nazareth actually died a sacrificial death for us at Calvary, A man called Jesus of Nazareth actually rose again from the dead. Because He had defeated sin, and death, and the devil.

But how do the benefits of all that He accomplished, become ours? That’s the key question now, 2000 years later. How do we benefit from all this?

Well the rest of v.11 tells us:

‘By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.’

Let me put it another way, because I want you to get the sense of this here:

By coming to know Him, Jesus, God’s righteous servant, personally, He will justify many. He will declare us righteous. He will bear their iniquities.

That’s what Jesus meant, again in his prayer in Gethsemane, in John 17:3, when he said these words:

‘Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.’

Let me ask you: Do you know Jesus? Do you know Him personally as your Lord and Saviour? Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus in your life day by day? Do you have this eternal life that He’s talking about?

If you don’t, then Christmas means nothing to you, and neither does Easter!

The Cross, the burial, the resurrection of Jesus, means nothing to you.

Unless you have come to know Jesus in a living and personal way.

At some moment in your life you’ve got to meet him, you’ve got to believe in him, you’ve got to trust him as your Saviour. Has that ever happened to you?

If you have come to know Jesus in this living and personal way, by faith, then He has borne your iniquities, all your sin, He has taken it upon himself on that cross. And if He has done that for you, and you’re now trusting in Him, then He has justified you. He has declared you *‘Not Guilty!’* You’re forgiven! You’re free!

That’s why God has exalted Jesus to the highest place that heaven affords (v.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.’*

That’s why Jesus is now seated at God’s right hand in heaven. He has done it all. He has been given the place of absolute authority.

And he has the right to give salvation, to give eternal life, to anyone who asks Him.

Put your **faith** in the Lord Jesus Christ tonight.

Know what it is to be **justified, declared ‘Not Guilty’** in the sight of a Holy God.

Know Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour from this day forward. Amen.