

WARM-UP

- Name one character from a movie or novel whose acts of heroism amazed you. What about him or her did you like the most?
- What is one thing about you that surprises other people when they hear of it?
- What does “serving” mean to you?

WORD *⁴Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But 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.*

ISAIAH 53:4-5

(Read also **ISAIAH 52:13-53:12.**)

There are many prophecies in the book of Isaiah, most of which talk about the coming Messiah. The Israelites were expecting a mighty King who would wield His sword and deliver them from their enemies. So when Isaiah wrote this passage, it probably did not occur to them that the righteous, mighty King who would rescue them was also the Suffering Servant who would die for them and save them. Jesus, the embodiment of both of these prophecies, would come to bring ultimate redemption and renewal. Let's look at how Isaiah described the Suffering Servant.

1 | The Suffering Servant chose to become the lowest of the low.

²For 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. ³He 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. ISAIAH 53:2-3

Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth and was described as lowly, despised, without beauty, and rejected. Taking on human form was already difficult and a far cry from being a deity. But to become acquainted with grief and identify with the lowest of the low speaks of the great compassion and love that Christ had for us, that He would go so low to save us from our sins and heal us. What does Philippians 2:3-8 say about how Christ's demonstration and example of humility affect our view and treatment of others?

2 | The Suffering Servant experienced oppression and injustice.

⁷He 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. . . . ¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief. . . . ISAIAH 53:7,10

The Suffering Servant described by Isaiah was pitiful. He was made to endure rejection, affliction, and persecution, even though *he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth* (Isaiah 53:9). Jesus endured all this because it was the *will of the LORD* for Him to serve and save humanity. There is no one who has suffered like Jesus, yet His compassion and grace are still available for us. What does Hebrews 4:15

say about how Jesus, the Suffering Servant, related to us as human beings?

3 | The Suffering Servant is the victorious King.

*¹⁰Yet 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. ¹¹Out 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. ¹²Therefore 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 53:10-12***

Even though Jesus suffered greatly, the good news is He is victorious and His suffering has a purpose. Isaiah declared that *the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand*. Through Jesus' suffering and sacrifice, the will of the Lord came to pass. Those who put their faith in Jesus have been given His righteousness. Jesus is not a mere victim, but a victor! He triumphed over sin and death so that we could live the way God designed us to—in harmonious relationship with Him and His creation. Jesus called us the salt and light of the earth (Matthew 5:13-14), and His people can make a difference on earth in the way they live. How does knowing that Jesus is victorious give you hope and help you share this hope with others?

APPLICATION

- How does learning that Jesus is the Suffering Servant change the way you relate with Him? What is something you can do differently in light of this truth?
- To whom can you extend God's compassion and love for you this week? Commit to serve him or her this week the way Jesus served us. Pray that you would be salt and light to them.
- Think of three people who need to know that God can sympathize with them and that His compassion and victory are available for them. Ask God for the right words to say to encourage them.

PRAYER

- Thank God for sending Jesus as the sacrifice that would save us from the penalty of sin, which is death. Thank Him for His love so great that He won the victory for us and will unite us with Himself at the resurrection.
- Ask God to increase your compassion for those who are suffering around you, whether it's obvious or not. Pray that you will be able to extend the grace He showed you to others.
- Pray for the boldness to preach the gospel and victory of Jesus Christ to your friends and family today. Pray that God will soften their hearts to receive Him.



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