

His Story, Our Glory / “MAN OF SORROWS”

Today we begin a series that will carry us through Easter. Each week we'll be drawing from concepts in the prophecy of the coming Messiah found in **Isaiah 53**. Open your Bibles there, beginning with the first verse. In this lesson I'm calling “**Christ, Man of Sorrows**”_ listen closely for indications of why this chapter is often entitled “*The Suffering Servant*.”

¹ Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?² He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him.³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.⁴ Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted.⁵ But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to His own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.⁸ By oppression and judgment He was taken away. And who can speak of His descendants? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people He was stricken.⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the LORD makes His life a guilt offering, He will see His offspring and prolong His days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in His hand.¹¹ After the suffering of His soul, He will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by His knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities.¹² Therefore I will give Him a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong, because He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Despised, rejected, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering_ stricken, smitten, afflicted, pierced, crushed, punished, wounded, oppressed, led to be slaughtered, subjected to judgment, pouring out His life unto death. In case you had never heard, this precise prediction was written nearly **750** years before Christ was born_ and it highlights what He would experience while living on this earth. So, if you ever thought Jesus had an easy time of it, think again.

Jesus felt **physical discomfort** like cold and heat, deep hunger, and intense thirst. His muscles ached after a long day's work or after walking a long way_ or climbing a steep hill. He knew what it felt like to be tired, even physically exhausted. He knew what it felt like to stub a toe or hit his thumb with a hammer. And yes, in time, He had felt the sting of a whip across His back and the pain of thorns stuck into His brow. He knew the excruciating torture of nails piercing his flesh, and the searing pain of a spear thrust into His side. Jesus suffered anguish and agony. God in the flesh knew more than mere discomfort, He knew misery and torment and torture_

The Gospel accounts of Jesus' life tell us that He also experienced **real heartache**. He knew the deep hurt of ridicule and rejection. He was accused of being a lunatic_ and a liar. He knew what it felt like to have someone spit in His face, to mock Him and call Him names_ and to attack His character.

He knew the despair of betrayal and abandonment. Jesus knew the heartbreak one feels when friends and family don't believe in you, let alone support you. He knew loneliness.

The same historical records say that Jesus also knew what it was like to experience *intense grief*. At some point during his young adult life, the only man He's known as a father passed away. He later mourned the cruel beheading of his cousin John. He wept at the wake of his friend Lazarus. He also grieved over the suffering of others. He cried over the fate of Jerusalem. He felt deep sympathy for throngs of people who were harassed and confused. His soul was afflicted, even angered over the mistreatment of children_ and saddened by the plight of widows and orphans. Jesus most definitely knew something of sorrow and suffering.

So what? You and I have no choice in the matter. Since the fall, sorrow and suffering have been part of the human condition. It is an inescapable reality. Jesus, however, chose to experience pain and heartache. Why? I believe that the *Hebrew writer* makes the primary reason quite clear.

2:14 "Since the children have flesh and blood, He (Jesus) too shared in our humanity... " / 4:15 "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one (Jesus) who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet was without sin."

According to this inspired text, *God became flesh* in order to identify with mankind_ and to allow men and women to better identify with Him in the process. He did it so He could empathize with our suffering_ and so we would know that He could.

Imagine that someone very dear to you knows that you have a dreadful disease which causes you great pain and sickness. The treatment is almost worse than the disease_ for it makes you weak and violently ill. Your friend or relative assures you that they will not allow for you to go through it alone, that they will be there by your side every step of the way. That's huge.

Now, to your surprise, they tell you that they have had the same virus injected into them. They intend to be more than someone who holds your hand while you go through it _ they are literally going to go through it with you. Why would anyone do that? They must have a deep love and affection for you. They must care more for you than they do themselves. **That's Jesus.**

He also did it to show us how to handle life's struggles. Consider **1st Peter 2:20-23: "If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly."** Want to know how to handle whatever life throws at you? Look to Jesus. Want to know how to respond to negativity and opposition? Look to Jesus.

That's what **Hebrews 12:2-3** says, ² **"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."** Dr. Frederick Farrar says it's not easy to express the thought suggested in the Greek verb. It implies *"looking away (from other things) to Jesus_ concentrating a wandering gaze into a single direction."* Jesus empathizes. Jesus inspires. Jesus shows us how to cope. Jesus gives us hope. **Look to Him who suffered for our sake_** and you will know that His sorrow was not in vain.