

## HIS STORY, OUR GLORY / “Christ, Our Healer & Reconciliation”

Today we pick up where we left off in our series entitled HIS STORY, OUR GLORY\_ drawing from concepts found in Isaiah 53. Open your Bibles there. (pg 1445)

<sup>1</sup> Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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.

In previous weeks, we've considered *Christ's identification* with us as “A Man of Sorrows” and His *justification* for us as “Our Sin Bearer.” Today, we'll focus on yet another aspect of what Jesus did for us on the cross in this lesson I'm calling “Christ, Our Healer and Reconciliation.” Pay close attention to verses 4-5 of our text. <sup>4</sup> Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> 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. In this country, we don't often use the word found in verse 4, but when I lived in Scotland I became pretty well acquainted with the concept of “*infirmities*” \_ especially serving as a chaplain for the Perth Royal Infirmary.

An **infirmary is a hospital**. *Infirmities are sicknesses and injuries, physical or mental weaknesses and disorders, illnesses or maladies; ailments or diseases; afflictions or frailties; disabilities, and impairments.* It's said “old age and infirmity come to men and women alike.” Once again, since the fall, they are part of the human condition. Our text insists that Jesus took these things upon Himself. Now, though I have no problem believing that Jesus may have had a cold or a skinned knee, there is no record whatsoever that Jesus had any physical deformities or that He was ever seriously sick\_ or that, up until His arrest, brutal beatings, and agonizing crucifixion, that He ever sustained a severe physical injury. So, what does “He took up our infirmities” mean?

As in most instances, there are extreme views\_ such as held by a group known as “*Christian Scientists*” whom John MacArthur compares to “*Grape Nuts*.” Open a box and look. You won’t find any grapes or nuts. Similarly, take a close look at “*Christian Scientists*.” They’re neither Christians nor scientists. This cult teaches that sickness and disease are only figments of the imagination. **Supposedly when a boy reported** his dad was sick, he was told his father only thought he was sick. When the boy insisted the next week that his dad’s condition had worsened and he’d been admitted to the hospital, he was told his dad was obviously confused, because there’s no such thing as sickness. The next week, the leader of the group sarcastically asked, “*I suppose your father still think he’s sick?*” The boy replied, “*No. Now he thinks he’s dead.*” Infirmities are still a reality and Christ followers aren’t immune to all sickness or injury.

In **Matthew 8:17** we learn the healing Jesus did on earth was foretold in **Isaiah 53:5**. Though He didn’t literally take sicknesses and diseases upon Himself, He did take infirmities away from those He healed. These healings were a precursor to the cross which would take place a few years later. They identified Him as the Christ who was to come and eventually bring the greatest healing gift of all. Yet, to think Christ’s sacrifice offers no power at all over physical illness in the now is just not true.

**Consider this analogy.** Suppose a Haitian child who’s sickly, malnourished, and living in filth and poverty is adopted by an American and brought back to the states. It doesn’t mean he’ll never get sick or be injured, but it does mean he has opportunity for a healthier life. Through Christ, we’ve been adopted and brought into a kingdom where the Royal Physician gives special care to God’s children. **James 5:13-15** tells us the prayers of those in a right relationship with God have His ear\_ and when we call out in faith, He sends healing. If I didn’t believe that, I wouldn’t pray for Him to do so.

But, does the expression “**By His wounds, we are healed**” mean Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross gives us complete and everlasting health? Eventually all those who followed Jesus died. Some of the most devout suffered from sickness while they lived. Take note that **Isaiah 53** speaks in both past and present tense of what would not begin to be realized for **750** years. God saw what was “*not yet*” as if it was “*already done*.” Looking at the context, the fact Jesus “**took up our infirmities**” is the same idea as He “**carried our sorrows**.” No credible scholar suggests believers no longer experience grief\_ but rather that our sorrow is lessened by the knowledge that it’s only temporary. By the same standard our illnesses and injuries are more tolerable because we know the day is coming when Jesus will wipe every tear from our eyes. **Revelation 21:4** tells us, “**There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order (of things) has passed away.**” No wonder in **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:16-17** the Apostle Paul writes “**Therefore we don’t lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.**” The time is coming when **His story** will be **our glory**. We’ll be forever well.

Still, the primary emphasis in **Isaiah 53** is on spiritual, not physical, healing. In **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:24-25** Peter says this very thing. “**Jesus (Himself) bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**” Obviously, reconciliation with God was in view. Peter wrote his letter on this side of the cross. By virtue of Jesus’ sacrifice the wounded relationship between mankind and their Creator had been dealt with. The ugly scars of sin were removed. And still today, those of us who put our faith in the blood of Jesus are forever made whole. “**By His wounds, we are healed.**”