

**Main Idea: In the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4-6, we see three reasons why we ought to give thanks for the cross.**

- I. Reason #1: Jesus took our pain (4).
  - A. Here’s how He did it.
    1. He took our infirmities.
    2. He carried our sorrows.
  - B. Here’s how we responded.
    1. We misunderstood Him.
    2. We thought God was judging Him for His own sins.
- II. Reason #2: Jesus took our punishment (5).
  - A. Here’s how He did it.
    1. He died a vicarious death.
    2. He died as a sin-bearer.
    3. He died as a guilty man.
    4. He died as an atoning sacrifice.
  - B. Here’s why He did it.
    1. It was for our peace.
    2. It was for our healing.
- III. Reason #3: Jesus took our place (6).
  - A. Here’s our fundamental problem.
    1. We’re like lost sheep.
    2. We’ve gone our own way.
  - B. Here’s what God did about it.
    1. God removed our sin from us.
    2. God put our sin on the Messiah.

Response: Here are the options...

1. You can pay for your own sins.
2. You can accept the One who died as a substitute.

Thursday is Thanksgiving Day. We have much for which to be thankful...

But there’s one thing that exceeds all others as cause for thanksgiving. It’s the cross. I’d like to take us to the scene of the cross this morning in order that we might give thanks. To help us we will call upon Isaiah the prophet who painted a picture of the cross using words. After looking at the picture together we will participate in Communion together.

In the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4-6, we see three reasons why we ought to give thanks for the cross.

I. Reason #1: Jesus took our pain (4).

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.”

You’ll notice that Isaiah speaks of this event, though yet future to him in the eighth century B.C., as if it had already occurred. The verbs in this section are all past tense.

*Surely*, Isaiah begins. Let there be no doubt about this. Though yet future, Isaiah says this event will occur. We can know this for sure, the prophet says, and *why*.

To us, the event is past tense. Two thousand years ago, The Servant came right on schedule. And what did He do? First of all, He took our pain.

**A. Here’s how He did it.** Isaiah mentions two accomplishments of The Servant.

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\*\*Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

1. *He took our infirmities.* Notice the first person, plural pronoun—He took *our* infirmities, *our* sorrows, *our* transgressions, *our* iniquities, and so on. Who does Isaiah mean by *our*? Obviously, he’s including himself, but who else? The Israelites? Perhaps, but it seems broader. Isaiah just mentioned the “nations” in 52:15. Whoever the “our” is, Isaiah’s intent is to make this personal. When The Servant comes He will take *our* infirmities.

And so The Servant did. There’s more...

2. *He carried our sorrows.* Some translations use the word “diseases.” The Hebrew term indicates pain, both physical and mental. According to verse 3, The Servant will be a “man of sorrows” and one who is “familiar with suffering.”

Question. How do you “take” someone’s infirmities and “carry” someone’s sorrows? The first verb means “to lift, carry, or take.” The second verb means “to bear a heavy load.” That’s what the Messiah did. He “hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,” as the KJV puts it.

The truth is, we are sinners, and we live in a sin-cursed world. But when The Servant came, He didn’t come with an insulated bubble or shield around Him. No. He identified with us. He came as a man and experienced our infirmities and our sorrows. He *took* them upon Himself. He *carried* them.

It’s interesting that Matthew quotes this statement in Matthew 8:17, following Jesus’ healing of Peter’s mother-in-law and others, and says, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.”

Think of the implications. We have a Messiah who knows us intimately. He sees our sorrow. Indeed, when Jesus came He *carried* our sorrow. This speaks of His identification with His people, of His great love and compassion.

I can barely fathom this. Perhaps you mothers can appreciate the significance more fully. A father knows about his children’s sorrow, and he certainly cares. But a mother goes further. A mother has the God-given capacity to *carry* her children’s sorrows. She feels the weight of the sorrow. She takes it upon her heart.

That’s what The Servant did. He *took our pain*.

If someone would do such a kind thing in our behalf, surely we would appreciate it, wouldn’t we? But we didn’t, not according to Isaiah.

**B. Here’s how we responded.** “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows [that’s what He did, but how did we respond?], *yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*” Simply put, the world responded to the Messiah’s suffering in two ways.

1. *We misunderstood Him.* We “esteemed him stricken.” The world didn’t expect the Messiah to be lowly and meek. They anticipated a sword-flashing conqueror. So when He came as a lowly servant, and when He took our infirmities and sorrows upon Himself, we misunderstood Him. Furthermore...

2. *We thought God was judging Him for His own sins.* When the first-century crowd watched Jesus carry His cross through the streets of Jerusalem, and when they heard the piercing sound of the Roman spikes penetrating His wrists, the people came to this conclusion. “Oh, how He loves us! He’s dying for our sins!” Is that what they thought? No. Just the opposite. God is *striking* Him. God is *smiting* Him. God is *afflicting* Him. God is judging Him for His *own* sins.

It's amazing how two people can look at the same evidence and come to such conflicting opinions. It happened with Jesus. It still happens with Jesus. There is no greater demonstration of love than what Jesus did for us, yet many reject His love. They refuse to acknowledge the fact that Jesus *took our pain*.

## II. Reason #2: Jesus took our punishment (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.”

According to Isaiah, the Messiah would fulfill a very specific plan. First, He would take our pain—that's verse 4. Then He would take our punishment—that's verse 5.

**A. Here's how He did it.** You'll notice four clauses in verse 5. With these four clauses Isaiah reveals four characteristics of Messiah's death.

1. *He died a vicarious death.* “But he was pierced [‘wounded’ in the KJV] for our transgressions.” He was pierced, a term which can mean to “bore” or “wound.” That's what they did to Jesus, didn't they? Spikes pierced His hands and feet. A sword pierced His side.

And why was He pierced? Isaiah says it happened “for our transgressions.” Again, notice—not for His own, but for *ours*. His death was a *vicarious* death.

The word “vicarious” simply means “serving in the place of another.” That's what Jesus did at the cross. He died a *vicarious* death. In His death, He took our place.

This is about us, my friend. He was pierced for *our transgressions*.

2. *He died as a sin-bearer.* As Isaiah puts it, “He was crushed [‘bruised’ in the KJV] for our iniquities.” “Crushed” refers to the effect of the great weight the Messiah bore, the weight of our sin. Later in verse 10 we're told, “Yet it was the LORD's will to *crush* him.”

But why would God crush The Servant, the Messiah, indeed, His own Son? Isaiah says He was *crushed*—that God *crushed* Him—“for our iniquities.” While hanging on the Cross, Jesus took upon Himself the load of our sin. He died as a sin-bearer, *our* sin-bearer.

Most of us have heard the words so many times before we struggle to appreciate the significance. Marvel at the depth of those words. *He*—the innocent, perfect King and Son of God. *Was crushed*—He who is the author of life endured the horrid consequences of sin, that is, death itself. *For*—in behalf of, in the stead of, to take care of. *Our*—not His own for He had none, but our. *Iniquities*—our greatest problem since Adam, stains that blemish our lives and make us unfit for God's presence. *Christ died for our sins*.

Yet there's more. Yes, He died a vicarious death. And yes, He died as a sin-bearer.

3. *He died as a guilty man.* What Isaiah says is stunning, “The punishment [‘chastisement’ in the KJV] that brought us peace was upon Him.” The Servant died as a scapegoat. The only perfect person to ever walk on the planet—that's Jesus Christ—died as a guilty man!

4. *He died as an atoning sacrifice.* “By His wounds [‘stripes’ in the KJV] we are healed.”

The necessity of atonement is taught throughout the Old Testament. God says the only way a sinner can enter His presence is to have his sins removed. And the only way sin can be removed is through atonement. There must be a covering for sin, a blood sacrifice. For hundreds of years, lambs were slain and their blood placed on the altar.

And then one day the Lamb of God was slain. When Jesus gave His life on the cross, He died as an atoning sacrifice. He provided what theologians call a “substitutionary atonement.” That means that when He died, the merit of His death was applied to those for whom He died.

The New Testament gives us further insight:

**Matthew 20:28** “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to *give his life as a ransom* for many.”

**Romans 3:25** “God presented him as a *sacrifice of atonement*, through faith in his blood.”

But this brings us to the question, *why?* We’ve seen that The Servant died a vicarious death, as a sin-bearer, as a guilty man, and as an atoning sacrifice. Yet why?

**B. Here’s why He did it.** According to Isaiah, for two reasons.

1. *It was for our peace.* The prophet says, “The punishment that *brought us peace* was upon Him.” Peace. Shalom. Wholeness. Restored relationships with God and man. That’s what Jesus gained for us when He died.

2. *It was for our healing.* “By His wounds we are *healed.*” Because He experienced unimaginable brokenness, we can experience unimaginable wholeness. Does that mean if you know Jesus, you’ll never have to be sick again? No. But when you accept Jesus as your Savior, He gives you a new heart now and the promise of a new body in the life to come! It’s as good as done! Hebrews 10:14 explains, “...*by one sacrifice* he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”

That’s why the Messiah suffered such abuse. He did it for us. Let this sink in, beloved. He did it *for us!* When He died, He took *our punishment.*

There’s more. When The Servant died, He took our pain and our punishment...

### III. Reason #3: Jesus took our place (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.”

**A. Here’s our fundamental problem.** According to Isaiah it’s twofold.

1. *We’re like lost sheep.* Think about that for a moment. How are we like sheep? According to verse 6, we’re like sheep because we wander off so easily. We stray from the Shepherd to our own harm. Like sheep, he says, we’ve *gone astray.*

Now answer this. Where did we go when we got lost? According to Isaiah...

2. *We’ve gone our own way.* “Each of us has turned to his own way.” Or as the *New Living Translation* puts it, “We have left God’s paths to follow our own.”<sup>1</sup>

This is a serious problem. Do you want to know why the world is in the mess it’s in? Right here’s the answer. We were created by God to live for God. We were placed on this earth to live *God’s way*, but we’ve gone *our own way.*

If a person engages in sex outside of marriage, that person will experience trouble. Why? The problem isn’t sex. Sex is a good gift from God, but this gift was designed by God to be used in a certain way—within the bounds of a marriage covenant.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 3:10-12 “As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

If a man pours his life into his job, and has no meaningful time left for his church and family, he's in trouble. Why? Because work is bad? No, because God never intended life to revolve around work.

We're in trouble any time we ignore and violate the intent of our Creator. But that's what we all do. From birth, we enter the world with a desire to live life *our way* instead of *His way*. That's our fundamental problem.

**B. Here's what God did about it.** Two things...

1. *God removed our sin from us.* Verse 6 refers to it as our "iniquity." God took our sin from us and did something with it. What?

2. *God put our sin on the Messiah.* "The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." But why would God do that to His Son? Why would He place our iniquity on Him? A. H. Strong explains, "God requires satisfaction because He is holiness, but He makes satisfaction because He is love." To satisfy His holiness, He put our sin on Jesus.

Satan hates the cross. The world believes in a Jesus who was a good man. Satan doesn't mind that. Even a great man, yes, the *greatest of men*. Satan still doesn't mind. Until you mention the cross.

Know this. Without the cross, there is no hope for sinners. There is no salvation apart from the cross.

Oh, dear friend, have you come to grips with what happened on the cross? Not just that Jesus died, but *why* He died and *what* He accomplished.

Let's give thanks for the cross today. As amazing as it sounds to our ears, it is true. In His death, Jesus took our pain. He took our punishment. He took our place.

Of course, that's not the end. Three days later Jesus conquered death. The empty tomb is proof that God accepted Jesus' work as a substitute. The question is, *Have you?*

It's time to make it personal...

Response: Here are the options...

Here's the first.

1. *You can pay for your own sins.* A holy God can't wink at sin. Sin must be paid for. "The wages of sin is *death* (Rom 3:23)." The penalty for your sins is death, eternal separation from God.

So here's one option. You can pay for your own sins. Or...

2. *You can accept the One who died as a substitute.* Jesus' death on the cross is a historical fact. And God's assessment of His death could be no clearer—we've seen it this morning in Isaiah 53. But to benefit from Jesus' death, something must occur. We must *accept* Him.