

Isaiah 53:10-12 "The Pain and Gain of the Cross"^{**[1]}

Main Idea: According to Isaiah 53:10-12, when we think of the Cross of Jesus we should think of two things.

- I. There was pain at the Cross (10a).
 - A. The Lord crushed the Messiah.
 - B. The Lord caused the Messiah to suffer.
 1. He endured physical agony.
 2. He endured spiritual alienation.
- II. There is gain because of the Cross (10b-12).
 - A. There is vindication (10b).
 1. The Messiah will have a people.
 2. The Messiah will have a future.
 3. The Messiah will fulfill God's plan.
 - B. There is justification (11).
 1. The Messiah satisfied God's justice.
 2. The Messiah justified His people.
 - C. There is exaltation (12a).
 1. God will honor the Messiah.
 2. The Messiah will honor His people.
 - D. There is intercession (12b).
 1. We have a sin-bearer.
 2. We have an advocate.

Make It Personal: Because of what the Suffering Servant did...

1. We can experience hope.
2. We can give God what He deserves.

Why do we observe Communion each month? What's the purpose of this repeated activity in the life of the church? I'll give a four word answer...

He took our place. It's beyond imagination, yet true. At the cross, *the Son of God took our place!* A substitution occurred, a spiritual transfer, and we must never forget it.

Yet we're so prone to! That's why Communion exists. *Do this in remembrance of Me*, said our Savior. Before we obey that command and come to the Lord's Table this evening, let's turn our attention to a passage that presents the pain and gain of the cross, the final three verses of Isaiah 53.

We meet the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. The fact is, the nation Israel was supposed to be God's servant in the world. God chose her for that task, but Israel failed. Israel did what we all do. She went her own way. She disobeyed The Master.

So in the eighth century B.C., God announced through Isaiah the prophet that He was going to do two things. One, He was going to judge Israel. And two, He was going to send another servant—*The Servant*. He would not only succeed, but would take care of Israel's failure, and beyond that, the *world's* failure. He would be the Messiah.

When we come to the final section of Isaiah 53, verses 10-12, Isaiah looks at the cross from a different slant. In the previous verses Isaiah emphasized what the cross would mean *for us*. In the final section He highlights what the cross meant *for God*. As Warren Wiersbe observes, "These verses in chapter 53 show us the Godward side of the cross."^[2]

From God's perspective what really happened when the Messiah died on the cross? Perhaps no text anywhere in the Bible answers that question more vividly than this one penned by Isaiah over seven hundred years before the event. According to Isaiah 53:10-12, when we think of the cross of Jesus we should think of two things.

I. There was pain at the Cross (10a).

You say, "That's for sure. Jesus suffered incredibly at the hands of those wicked people who killed Him." Indeed He did, but that's not the only source of the pain He experienced. Who else caused the Savior pain? Hold on to your seats. *God did*. God Himself inflicted pain on His chosen One. In verse 10, Isaiah specifies two divinely initiated actions.

A. The Lord crushed the Messiah. Verse 10—"Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him." Ponder those words.

Why did Jesus die such a horrid death? One might say, "It was because Judas betrayed Him. That's why He died, because of Judas." Granted, Judas was guilty of a great crime, but that's not why He died.

Another might say, "He died because Caiaphas was a self-seeking, power-loving, apostate high priest. If Caiaphas had been a righteous man, the crucifixion wouldn't have occurred." Not so. Oh, yes, Caiaphas was a wicked man, but that's not why Jesus died.

"Pilate was the reason," another might suggest. "If governor Pilate had been more interested in justice than in protecting his position, the cross would have been avoided. It was *Pilate's* fault." No, not ultimately.

Another might say, "It was the soldiers. They drove the spikes into his limbs. Surely, they caused His death." Again, no. They contributed, but they didn't cause it.

You say, "Well, it must be the crowd's fault. After all, the crowd forced Pilate's hand and chose the guilty man, Barabbas, over the innocent Jesus." Once again, no.

"Well then," you ask, "why did it happen? Who caused the Messiah to die?" Here's the answer. Listen to Isaiah, "It was the LORD's will to crush Him." Yes, it's true that Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and the rest committed an unthinkable crime, and they are responsible for it. Correction—we are responsible for it, for

our sins put Him there. But ultimately, it was God Himself who willed it.

Did you realize that according to Revelation 13:8, the Messiah was “slain from the creation of the world”? From eternity past, God designed the event that occurred at the cross. In case your struggling with that thought, listen to Jesus’ own words in

John 6:38-40:

“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Why did Jesus die? It was the Lord’s will [see also John 12:27-33].

But He didn’t just *die*. Isaiah says, “It pleased the LORD to *bruise* Him (KJV).” The NIV uses the verb “crush.” The Hebrew word can be translated “break in pieces.” God willed to *crush* His elect Servant.

The prophet Zechariah spoke of this in Zechariah 13:7 “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares the LORD Almighty. “*Strike* the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.”

Isaiah mentions a second, divinely-initiated activity. “Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him *and cause him to suffer*.” First, the Lord *crushed*. Second...

B. The Lord caused the Messiah to suffer. “He hath put Him to grief,” is how the KJV puts it. What kind of suffering did Messiah experience? Two kinds...

1. *He endured physical agony.* Most people are familiar with this. They’ve heard about the thorny crown on the brow, the whipped flesh, the exposed bones, and the agonies of death by crucifixion. And as bad as the physical agony was, it pales in comparison with a second kind of suffering.

2. *He endured spiritual alienation.* Notice the next phrase in verse 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.*” The Servant died as a what? A guilt offering. Or as the KJV indicates, God made his soul “an offering for sin.”

Know this, beloved, Jesus didn’t die to give us a moral example. He died to make a payment. He died as a *guilt offering*.

You say, “Just what is a *guilt offering*?” You’ll find the answer in Leviticus 5:14-19. There God gave His people a provision for guilt. He said that a guilty person should bring to the priest a ram without blemish. The priest would offer it to make an atonement for the sinner. The ram would be a “guilt offering.”

Know this. Sin has a penalty. It’s death. But God’s provision for the removal of sin is the death of a substitute. A guilt offering is one which the Lord accepts as a substitute for the person offering it. That’s what happened at the cross. God made Jesus, His perfect Son, a guilt offering.

Would you do that? Would you offer your child to die for the crime of another? And if you were that child, would you agree to give your life? That’s exactly what happened at the cross.

Paul marvels at this staggering expression of love in Romans 5:6-8: “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Yes, He died as a *guilt offering*. He died for the *ungodly*. He died for *us*. Worship Him, beloved!

Marvel at His love. God crushed The Servant. God caused His Beloved to suffer. There was pain at the cross. It happened by God's design. So did this...

II. There is gain because of the Cross (10b-12).

You'll notice a shift in the tense of the verbs at the middle of verse 10, from past tense to future tense. The past tense verbs speak of the pain. The future tense verbs speak of the gain. According to Isaiah, the pain would not be the end. The Servant's pain would result in gain.

What kind of gain has resulted from Messiah's pain? Isaiah reveals four benefits.

A. There is vindication (10b). Verse 10 continues, "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."

There's quite a change in tone from the beginning of verse 10 to the end of it. For the Messiah, first came the humiliation, then the vindication. Isaiah says that after God makes His Servant a guilt offering, He will vindicate Him in three ways.

1. *The Messiah will have a people.* Jesus once said (John 12:24) "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

That's what Isaiah predicted. "He will see His offspring ['seed' in the KJV]." He who was alone will have a people! And who are His people? That's us, beloved. We who believe in Him are His seed, His offspring, His people. We're not our own. We are *His*.

2. *The Messiah will have a future.* The Lord will "prolong his days." When He comes, the Messiah is going to die. That's true. But death won't be the end. Isaiah predicts the Messiah's resurrection in verse 10.

David made a similar prophecy in Psalm 16:9-10, "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the grave, *nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*"

The Messiah will die, yes, but He won't decay. To the contrary, He will have a glorious future. Listen to Jesus' declaration in Revelation 1:18, "I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

3. *The Messiah will fulfill God's plan.* Isaiah says, "The will [KJV, 'pleasure'] of the LORD will prosper in his hand." Notice how verse 10 both begins and ends emphasizing the Lord's will. It was the Lord's will to *crush* Messiah, and it will be the Lord's will to *prosper* Him. In other words, God determined to judge His Son, and God also determined to exalt Him. He will vindicate His Son.

In Warren Wiersbe's *Meet Yourself in the Psalms*, he tells about a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon. The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, years before had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience. But the words from the bench silenced his plea: "Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged."

Wiersbe explains, "One day Jesus Christ will say to rebellious sinners, "During that long day of grace, I was the Savior, and I would have forgiven you. But today I am your Judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"^[3]

My friend, if you know not Christ, you are in serious trouble. God will vindicate His Son. As surely as

He crushed Him at Calvary, He will vindicate Him. Because of the cross there is vindication.

B. There is justification (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."

The doctrine of justification is one of the most important truths in Scripture. The doctrine of justification answers the question, "How can a person ever stand in the presence with a holy God?" There are only two options. Either, one, you are perfect. Or two, you are justified. Since none of us are perfect, that leaves only option two. You must be justified. How does that happen? Isaiah tells us in verse 11 by highlighting two accomplishments of the Messiah.

1. *The Messiah satisfied God's justice.* What did Isaiah say would occur after The Servant suffered? Look again at the beginning of verse 11, "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life *and be satisfied.*" Who will be satisfied? Who is the "he" mentioned here? Is Isaiah saying that after the suffering of the cross is over, *the Messiah himself* will be satisfied. Indeed, Jesus was satisfied after He completed His redemptive work, but I don't think the He refers to the Messiah. I believe it refers to God the Father.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be *satisfied,*" is the rendering of the KJV. When God the Father sees the cross, He is satisfied. Why? Because at the cross His Son met the righteous demands of His justice. Sin must be judged. And at the cross, it was.

But that's not all. Isaiah highlights a second accomplishment. At the cross the Messiah satisfied God's justice. In addition...

2. *The Messiah justified His people.* "By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." The term "justify" means "to declare or make righteous." In fact, in the Hebrew text the phrase reads, "My righteous servant will make righteous many."

That's what Jesus did. By dying for sinners, He "justified" them. While on the cross, God imputed the sins of His people to His Son, and imputed the righteousness of His Son to His people. God treated His Son the way we deserve to be treated—because of our sin—and He treats us the way Jesus deserves to be treated—because He is righteous.

This is the good news, beloved. The God of the Bible justifies sinners. This very moment you are either justified or you aren't. This isn't a process. It's a one time event.

You say, "How does it happen? Listen to Paul in Acts 13:38-39, "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is *justified* from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses."

There's the basis of justification. It's *Christ*. It's not our goodness—we have none before a holy God. It's not our works—they are as filthy rags to a perfect God (Isa 64:6). But when a person believes in Jesus Christ and His atoning work, God *justifies* that person. He declares the person to be right with Him on the merit of Christ.

No book explains this more clearly than Romans:

Romans 3:22-26 "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are *justified* freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who *justifies* those who have faith in Jesus." [See also Romans 5:9-11, 18-20]

O dear friend, let this sink in. Because of the cross there is justification. We can be right with God!

William Cowper expresses it this way in his well known hymn:

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.*

*Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more;
Be saved to sin no more;
Be saved to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.*

*E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die;
And shall be till I die;
And shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die.^[4]*

Now a third benefit. Because of the cross, there is vindication, justification, and...

C. There is exaltation (12a). Isaiah speaks for God once again, "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."

There are two aspects to this exaltation ...

1. *God will honor the Messiah.* He says He will "give Him a portion among the great." When the Messiah came the first time, He entered the world in obscurity and experienced rejection. There was no red carpet, only a cross. That's what man gave Him.

But God says, "Because My Servant was willing to endure this shame, I will give Him a portion with the great." And so He did. He raised Jesus from the dead. He gave Him a choice seat at His right hand in heaven. And one day He will exalt Him on the earth—and every knee will bow before Him. Yes, God will honor the Messiah.

2. *The Messiah will honor His people.* Isaiah says, "He will divide the spoils with the strong." In Bible times, when a military leader conquered a foe, it was not uncommon for him to return home and share the fruit of his effort with his subjects. That's what Isaiah predicted the Messiah would do. And He did.

Listen to Ephesians 4:7-8, "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.'" What a

gracious Savior we have! In His exaltation He shares with His people.

Hebrews 2:14-15 also speaks of this sharing, "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil — ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

One more benefit—because of the cross, there is vindication, justification, exaltation, and...

D. There is intercession (12b). "For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

What an amazing conclusion to this section! In it we learn that we have two things that make intercession possible.

1. *We have a sin-bearer.* The word "bore" means "to carry a load on your back." That's what Jesus did. He bore the sin of many. Notice the word is "many." As in verse 11, it's not "all" but "many." He will justify *many* (11). He bore the sin of *many* (12). He did not die merely to make salvation possible for the world in general. He died to justify and save *a people*. When He died He bore the sin of His people. Granted, His atonement is sufficient to save any who will call upon Him, but it's efficient to save His people.

He died as our sin-bearer, beloved. Listen to Peter as he marvels at this truth (and in fact quotes from Isaiah 53), "He 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 (1 Peter 2:24)."

Charles Spurgeon said this in a sermon entitled, "*The Precious Blood of Christ:*" "Christ, therefore, came and was punished in the place and stead of all His people. Then thousand times ten thousand are the souls for whom Jesus shed His blood... I may make sacrifices; I may mortify my body; I may be baptized; I may receive sacraments; I may pray until my knees grow hard with kneeling; I may read devout words until I know them by heart; I may celebrate masses; I may worship in one language or in fifty languages; but I can never be at one with God, except by blood; and that blood, 'the precious blood of Christ.'" [\[5\]](#)

2. *We have an advocate.* Isaiah 53 concludes with these words, "And made intercession for the transgressors." Years before Isaiah penned these words, Moses offered Himself to God for the same purpose. In Exodus 32:32 He *made intercession* for Israel. But Moses had a problem, as we do. He made intercession for his wayward people, yes, but he too was a sinner. He needed—the world needed—someone sinless to make intercession.

And God sent Him.

Romans 8:34 "Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."

Hebrews 7:25 "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."

1 John 2:1 "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."

Because of the cross, we have an advocate.

We began this message with a question: *Why do we observe Communion each month?* Isaiah has helped us see the answer. He's revealed for us the pain and gain of the cross, and we must never forget it. So let's come to the table and *remember!*

**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] This message is revised from another preached at WBC on 11/4/01 as part of a series in Isaiah 53.

[2] Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, (Victor Books: Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament) Wheaton, Illinois.

[3] As told by [Doug Van Essen](#).

[4] Joyful Noise Music Company, *Logos Hymnal*, (Fort Worth, TX: Joyful Noise Music Company) 1994.

[5] Charles Spurgeon, *Twelve Sermons on the Passion and Death of Christ*, p. 36.