

Main Idea: In Isaiah 53:4-6, the prophet predicted that the Messiah would die as a substitute. In His death, He would experience three things that we should experience.

- I. The Messiah 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. The Messiah 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. The Messiah 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 His Son.

Take Inventory: We have three options.

1. We can pay for our own sins.
2. We can accept the One who died as a substitute.
3. We can be sure there is no other option.

When I was a young person I heard the story of Jesus, like many of you. I knew the pieces, that He lived, died, rose again. But I missed the significance. I thought that if I lived a good life, kept the golden rule like Jesus taught, then I was a Christian.

Then the Lord brought a pastor into my life who shared, not just the pieces, but the reason for the events, which is the gospel. The gospel is good news. It’s not just that Christ died, was buried, and rose again, but includes *why* He did those things. For our sins.

This is what our Gospel Panorama series and wood project is all about. We’re using this visual and sermon series to help us see and savor what Christ accomplished through His death, burial, resurrection, and appearances.

Every family has received, or will receive today, one of these Gospel Panoramas. We’re encouraging you to consider inviting your neighbors and friends to your home on Good Friday, and giving them one as a gift, assembling and staining the gift, and encouraging them to consider the love of the One who accomplished what the panorama portrays.

On Sundays, I’m preaching on the various components of this panorama, and we’re discussing the implications together in our community groups. Last week was our second message, *According to the Scriptures*, and we pondered how we can Christ in the Old

^{**}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 For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC in 2011.

Testament. The Old Testament says, He will be a lamb on Mount Moriah, a son of David on Mount Zion, and a King who will stand on the Mount of Olives.

This morning, we zero in on Paul's important statement in 1 Corinthians 15:3, "*Christ died for our sins.*" This sentence is the most announcement in the world, indeed, the key to eternal life. This death, he says, was *according to the Scriptures*. Last week, we surveyed the entire Old Testament, but this week we'll put our focus on one Old Testament text, and marvel at its wonders.

Which text? The one Arthur Walton talks about in a story from his childhood:² "When I was a student in public school, each school day began with opening exercises. They had three parts: the pledge to the flag by the students; the reading of a portion of the Bible by the teacher; and the recitation of the Lord's prayer by the students. In one community that contained a large Jewish population, the Jews objected to the reading of the New Testament. The school administrators and the parents agreed that since the Old Testament is common ground to both Jews and Christians, all Scripture readings would come from the Old Testament. All went well until the day that one of the Jewish children reported to his parents that the teacher had read about the crucifixion of Jesus from the New Testament. When the parents looked into this violation of the agreement, they learned that their child was only partially correct. The Scripture passage was indeed about Jesus' crucifixion, but it did not violate the agreement, for the text came from the Old Testament. The teacher had read Isaiah 53."

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53

Christ died for our sins, says Paul. It happened *according to the Scriptures*, says Paul. And Isaiah 53 is certainly one of those Scriptures. Over seven centuries before Jesus was nailed to a Roman cross, God recorded the prophetic portrait of that event in Isaiah 53.

"See, my servant will act wisely," God declared in Isaiah 52:13. "He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted." So Isaiah makes it clear that when Messiah comes He will experience *honor*. He will be a King, one before whom all kings will "shut their mouths (52:15)."

But before the honor, He will experience something else. *Humiliation*. Before He rules, says Isaiah, the Messiah will *suffer*. Many will be "appalled" at him, says Isaiah, at his "disfigured" and "marred" appearance (52:14). He will have "no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him (53:2)." This Servant is going to be "despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering (53:3)."

Yet why? Why would God subject His chosen One to such abuse and suffering? It's that question that God Himself answers through Isaiah in the passage we'll consider today, Isaiah 53:4-6. In this text, we're told that it was God's purpose for the Messiah to suffer and ultimately die as a *substitute*.

The Messiah die as a substitute? What does that mean? When a teacher gets sick, the principal makes a phone call and lines up a *substitute*. When a ballplayer gets hurt in a game, the coach looks at his bench and sends in a *substitute*. A substitute is someone who takes the place of another, right?

According to Isaiah's prophecy, that's what the Messiah will do. He will come into the world assuming the role of a substitute, yet not just to *live* as a substitute, but to *die* as one.

² Arthur Walton, *Portraits of Christ in Isaiah*, p. 81.

This is such good news, my friend, for this is what God did. God provided a substitute for sinners like us. Isaiah gives us three prophecies in verses 4-6. He describes this future event in the past tense, and says that when God's chosen servant died, He took upon Himself three experiences.

I. He took our pain (4).

"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted."³

You'll notice that Isaiah speaks of this event, though yet future to him in the eighth century BC, 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 know *why*.

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

1. *He took our infirmities.* That's the language in the NIV. The ESV says, "He has borne our griefs." The term means "illnesses, infirmities, sicknesses, sufferings" from a verb that means "to grow weak, tired, to fall sick."

Notice the first person plural pronoun (there are about ten of them in verses 4-6, depending on the translation). He took *our* griefs, *our* sorrows, *our* transgressions, *our* iniquities, and so on.

Who does Isaiah mean when he says *our*? Apparently, he's including himself, but not just himself. He's thinking of the Israelites, too. But not just Israelites, for he just mentioned the "nations" in 52:15. So "our" includes a people from both Jewish and non-Jewish heritage. And "our" indicates that this is very personal. When The Servant comes, He will take up *our* infirmities.

And that's exactly what He did. What's more...

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

Which raises a question. How do you "bear" someone's griefs 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 God's Servant came to earth, He didn't come with an insulated bubble around Him. Rather He identified with the suffering people He came to save. 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. Right after Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law and others, Matthew 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. You and I have a Messiah who knows what we feel. He sees our sorrow. Indeed, He came and *carried* our sorrow. This speaks of His identification with His people, and His great love and compassion for them.

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

³ The NIV says, "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted."

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*. Now, if someone would do such a kind thing in our behalf, surely we would appreciate it, wouldn't we? Indeed, we should. But we didn't, not according to Isaiah. Instead...

B. Here's how we responded. "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows [that's what He did, but how did we respond?]; *yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.*" This is precisely how the world responded, how we responded to 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 concluded. "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 sins.

It's amazing how two people can look at the same evidence and come to such conflicting conclusions. It happened with Jesus. It still happens with Jesus. The facts are clear. Jesus died on a cross, a terrible death. Some are amazed by His incredible display of love. Others have no place for Him, and conclude that He got what was coming to Him. What is your conclusion?

So this is the first prophecy, and Messiah's first experience. He took our pain.

II. He took our punishment (5).

"But 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 predicts that the Messiah will fulfill a very specific plan. First, He will take our pain (verse 4). Then He will take our punishment (verse 5). But how? How will He do it?

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." Isaiah uses a verb, here translated "pierced" which means "to bore" or "to wound." That's what is going to happen to Him, says Isaiah. And of course, it did. Spikes pierced the hands and feet of Jesus. A sword pierced His side.

And why was He pierced? Isaiah says it happened "for our transgressions." A transgression, from the Hebrew *pe-sa*, means "crime, trespass, offence, rebellion". It comes from a verb meaning "to break with or away from."

This is describing our resume. This is what we, all human beings, have done. We have defied the good laws of our Creator and broken away from Him, committed crimes against Him, and trespassed in His world. And what do we deserve for such crimes? Death. The wages of sin is death. This is what we deserve, and there is no escape.

But wait. Isaiah makes this staggering announcement. The coming Christ will be pierced for transgressions, not for His own, but for *ours*. What?! How can that be?

There's a word for this in the English language. It's the word "vicarious," and it simply means "taking the place of another." That's what Messiah will do, says Isaiah. And that's precisely what Jesus did. On the cross, He died a *vicarious* death, and in so doing, He took our place.



In 1653 Rembrandt created *The Three Crosses*, using etching and drypoint. When you look at it, your attention is drawn first to the center cross on which Jesus died. Then your gaze moves to the crowd gathered around the cross, and you're impressed by the various facial expressions and actions of the people involved in the crime. But if you keep looking, your eyes drift to the edge of the painting and catch sight of another figure, almost hidden in the shadows. There is debate about this, but some say this is a representation of Rembrandt himself, acknowledging that by his sins he helped nail Jesus to the cross.⁴

Whether Rembrandt is in the painting or not, I don't know. But this I know. We were there. Not in person. But our sins were there. He was pierced for *our transgressions*.

Listen to the New Testament writers describing the vicarious death of our Savior:

Galatians 3:13 "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law *by becoming a curse for us*, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'"

Hebrews 9:27-28 "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so *Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people*; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."

1 Peter 2:24 "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 3:18 "For Christ died for sins once for all, *the righteous for the unrighteous*, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit."

Yes, we were the cause of His death. When the Messiah died, He died a *vicarious* death. But there's more, according to Isaiah.

2. *He died as a sin-bearer.* As Isaiah puts it, "He was crushed ['bruised' in the KJV] for our iniquities." We know what *crushed* means. If you're in the self-help line at the grocery, you don't put your canned goods in the same bag with your bread. Why not? Because the cans will crush the soft bread.

Isaiah uses the term "crushed" to refer to the effect of the great weight the Messiah bore. What weight? The weight of our *iniquities*. This term comes from the verb meaning, "to do wrong." It refers to "guilt caused by sin, misdeed, punishment." This too Jesus took upon Himself, and it crushed Him. Later in verse 10 we're told, "Yet it was the LORD's will to *crush* him."

But why? Why would God crush the Messiah, His own beloved Son? The answer has to do with our iniquities. Where were they? Yes, we committed them, but where

⁴ Source unknown

were they? When He was on the cross, they were on Him. He became a sin-bearer. God chose to treat His own Son the way the individuals who committed the iniquities He bore deserve to be treated. They deserve to be crushed, but God chose to crush His Son.

Most of us have heard this so many times that we struggle to appreciate the significance. So hear it again, beloved, as if for the first time. Ponder what really happened at the cross. In the words of 1 Corinthians 15:3, “*Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures.”

Marvel at the subject of that sentence. *Christ*—the innocent, perfect King and Son of God. Marvel at the verb. Christ *died*—He who is the author of life endured the horrid consequences of sin, that is, death itself. Christ died *for*—in behalf of, in the stead of, to take care of. Christ died for *our*—not His own for He had none, but our. Our *sins*—our greatest problem since Adam, stains that blemish our lives and make us unfit for God’s presence. *Christ died for our sins*.

He took upon Himself the load of our sin, dying as a sin-bearer, *our* sin-bearer. Yet there’s more. Yes, He died a vicarious death, and yes, as a sin-bearer.

3. *He died as a guilty man*. What Isaiah says next is stunning. In the NIV, “The punishment [‘chastisement’ in the KJV] that brought us peace was upon Him.” He took the punishment we deserve.

There’s a biblical word for this. It’s the word scapegoat. Once a year on the day of Atonement, the high priest would take two goats and set them before the Lord in front of the tabernacle (see Leviticus 16:8ff). He would cast lots, and one would be sacrificed to the Lord. Then he would take the other, and do the following, described in Leviticus 16:21–22. “And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness...The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself...”

This was the goat that goes away, the scapegoat. And it all pointed to Jesus.

I’m not sure there is a more staggering announcement in the Scriptures than the one we read in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made him who had no sin *to be sin for us*.” The only perfect person who ever walked on the planet—that’s Jesus Christ—died as a guilty man. And why? The verse concludes, “So that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Yet Isaiah tells us more.

4. *He died as an atoning sacrifice*. “And with His wounds [‘stripes’ in the KJV] we are healed.” Notice the connection between *wounds* (and specifically, wounds that result in death) and *healing*. Another word for this connection is atonement, and we see it all over the place in the Old Testament.

God says the only way a sinner can enter His presence is to have his or her sins removed, and the only way sin can be removed is through atonement. There must be a covering for sin, a blood covering. And so, for centuries, innocent lambs were slain and their blood placed on the altar, and wounds resulted in healing.

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

Again, we turn to the New Testament for further explanation:

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

Ephesians 5:2b “Christ loved us and gave himself up for us *as a fragrant offering and sacrifice* to God.”

1 John 2:1-2 “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. ² *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins*, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”⁵

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

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

1. *It was for our peace.* The prophet says, “The chastisement that *brought us peace* was upon Him.” Peace. The Hebrew is *shalom*. Wholeness. Restored relationships with God and man. That’s what the Messiah gained for us when He died.

According to Hebrews 9:15, “For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has *died as a ransom to set them free from the sins* committed under the first covenant.”

There’s why He died. As a ransom, to set us free. It was *for our peace*. And...

2. *It was for our healing.* “With 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? Yes, *eventually*. When you accept Jesus as your Savior, He gives you a new heart at that moment and the promise of a new body in the life to come! Will there be suffering to endure now? Yes, but the certainty of the ultimate healing is yours now.

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*.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon pondered this in a sermon he preached over a century ago entitled, “*Christ Made a Curse For Us*.”

It was an anguish never to be measured, an agony never to be comprehended. It is to God, and God alone that His griefs were fully known... See, beloved, here is Christ bearing the curse instead of His people. Here He is coming under the load of their sin, and God does not spare Him but smites him, as He must have smitten us, lays His full vengeance on Him, launches all His thunderbolts against Him, bids the curse wreak itself upon Him, and Christ suffers all, sustains all.⁶

Yet there’s more. When Christ died, He take our pain, and our punishment.

III. He took our place (6).

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

This has been quite a week. A terrible shooting in Nashville. A costly war continues in Ukraine. Why is there such evil in this world?

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

⁵ Jesus Himself said in 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.”

⁶ Charles Spurgeon, *Twelve Sermons on the Passion and Death of Christ*, p. 64.

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*.

The psalmist confessed in Psalm 119:176, "I have strayed like a lost sheep." We all have. Isaiah says, "We *all*, like sheep, have gone astray." The whole human race would have perished had it not been for The Servant.

And 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 (NIV)." Or as the *New Living Translation* puts it, "We have left God's paths to follow our own."⁷

This is a serious problem, and this is the answer as to why the world is in the mess it's in. We were created *by God* to live *for God* and were placed on this earth to live *God's way*. But we have gone *our own way*.

A hammer is a great tool. But it's only a great tool when you use it for the purpose for which it was made. If I use a hammer to cut a board, I'll have a mess on my hands. It wasn't designed to cut things.

If a person engages in sex outside of marriage, there will be disastrous results. Why? The problem isn't sex. Sex is a good gift from God, but He intended we enjoy this gift in a certain way, within the boundaries of a marriage covenant. When we leave God's way and start living our own way, we always end up with a mess on our hands.

If a man pours his life into his job and puts God on the sidelines, with no meaningful time left for his family and his church, he's in trouble and will soon have a mess on his hands. Why? Because work is bad? No, because God never intended life to revolve around work.

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

But I have good news for you, if you're in Christ.

B. Here's what God did about it. He took action in two ways.

1. *God removed our sin from us.* Verse 6 refers to it as our "iniquity," which as we've just seen is "our guilt caused by sin, misdeed, punishment." God took that from us, and put it somewhere else. Where? Isaiah says, "The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

2. *God put our sin on His Son.* This raises the question, *why?* Why would God place our iniquity on His dear Son? The answer is related to two of His attributes, His holiness, and His love.

Theologian A. H. Strong explains, "God requires satisfaction because He is holiness, but He makes satisfaction because He is love." There's the answer. Because God is holy, our sin must be judged. Because He is love, He takes the judgment Himself.

So did God make His Son pay? Is this Cosmic child abuse, as some suggest? No. This was a loving plan that the Son embraced wholeheartedly.

Jesus offers this insight into the heart of God in Matthew 18:12-14, "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹³ And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine

⁷ Romans 3:10-12 "As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

that did not wander off. ¹⁴ In the same way *your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.*⁸

At this point, in view of such incredible love, words fail me. And so I depend on the words of others, like the hymn-writer, Charles Gabriel.

*I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean.*

*He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them His very own;
He bore the burden to Calvary,
And suffered and died alone.*

*O how marvelous! O how wonderful!
And my song shall ever be:
O how marvelous! O how wonderful!
Is my Savior's love for me!*

During the Middle Ages there was a popular story which circulated about Martin of Tours, the saint for whom Martin Luther was named. It was said that Satan once appeared to St. Martin in the guise of the Savior himself. St. Martin was ready to fall to his feet and worship this resplendent being of glory and light. Then, suddenly, he looked up into the palms of his hands and asked, "Where are the nail prints?" Whereupon the apparition vanished.⁹

Friends, the world is full of people who believe in a Jesus who was merely a good man. Satan doesn't mind that at all. Even a great man, yes, the *greatest of men*. Satan still doesn't mind. Until you mention the cross, which he hates.

Do you know why? Because without the cross, there is no hope for sinners. A sinner who does a million good deeds is still under the condemnation of God for his sins. A sinner cannot save himself by his own efforts. There is no salvation apart from the cross.

Oh, dear friend, have you come to grips with what took place on the cross? Have you grasped, not just that Jesus died, millions know that, but *why* He died, and *what* He accomplished in His death?

He took our pain. He took our punishment. He took our place.

Take Inventory: We have three options.

1. *We can pay for our own sins.* A holy God will not tolerate sin. Justice demands that sin be punished. Every sin must be paid for. "The wages of sin is *death* (Rom 3:23)." The penalty for your sins and mine is death, eternal death.

This is the first option. We can pay that penalty ourselves. We can pay for our own sins by spending eternity cut off from God in a place where the fire never dies. Or...

2. *We 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

⁸ Peter says, "For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1 Peter 2:25)."

⁹ Source unknown

this morning in Isaiah 53. But to benefit from Jesus' death, something must occur. The sinner must *accept* Him.

"The life of Christianity consists of possessive pronouns," said Martin Luther. "It is one thing to say, 'Christ is a Savior.' It is quite another thing to say, 'He is my Savior and my Lord.' The devil can say the first; the true Christian alone can say the second."¹⁰

Can you say it? Have you by grace accepted the One God sent to die as a substitute? Is He *your* Savior and Lord?

My friend, these are the options, indeed, the *only* options. You can pay for your own sins, and do so forever and ever and ever, *or* you can accept the One who one day nearly two thousand years ago died as a substitute. Which will it be? What will you do with Jesus Christ?

One more thing must be said.

3. *We can be sure there is no other option.* Jesus Christ did not endure what we've considered this morning to be simply one option on the shelf. *I am the way*, He said. *No one comes to the Father but by Me.*

Closing Song: #185 "*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*" (all four verses)

Communion

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning we continued our series, "*The Gospel Panorama*," and pondered the significant sentence in 1 Corinthians 15:3, "Christ died for our sins." Take time as a group to read again today's prophetic text, Isaiah 53. What effect does the reading of this passage have on you personally?
2. The prophecy of Isaiah 53 says that the Messiah will endure various types of painful agony. What are some of them?
3. Verse 7 says the Messiah will respond to His suffering "like a lamb being led to the slaughter". What does this image signify? How did Jesus exemplify this in the gospel accounts?
4. Why did Christ die, according to verse 5? Theologians use the terms *substitutionary* and *vicarious* to describe Messiah's death. What do those two words communicate?
5. Why reason does verse 6 give as to why the Messiah had to die? What do we learn about our problem as human beings from the phrase, "All we like sheep have gone astray"? What is the remedy for our problem, according to the end of verse 6?
6. What effect should the words, "Christ died for our sins," have on us? Why do they often *not* have this effect on us? What is something you plan to do this week in light of what we have considered today?

¹⁰ *Resource*, July/August, 1990.