

## “The Suffering Servant”

Isaiah 53:1-12 - Part 2

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**Jeff:** Our gracious God in heaven, we are thankful and we're joyful people. We're thankful because You have made us to be by bringing to our awareness all that You've done for us in Christ. And we're joyful for the same reason. And that joy inhabits our lives despite our circumstances. Father, we live in times that are difficult. There's a sense in which life has always been difficult. As we sow and try to reap we realize that thorns and thistles get in the way. The curse weighs us down. And yet that joy continues to be an ever-pervasive presence in our lives. And that joy is because of what the Lord Jesus has done on our behalf.

And so whether there are thorns and thistles in this life we look to Him. And we know that there is a joy set before us like there was for Him, and so we persevere. And we seek to lay hold of the upward prize of God that You have given to us in Christ, that for which You've lain hold of us.

And yet, Father, we are also fully aware that we have families who are growing up in our wake—children or grandchildren—and life is difficult for them as well. And it's our prayer that they would come to know the Lord Jesus as Savior and Lord. It's our great desire that they would walk strong in the faith. And Father, we pray that You would indeed change the whole tenor of our country.

Father, we're thankful for an attempt like we heard about that is happening in July, to change the tenor of the country by praying to You. And yet, Lord, let us be prayerful day by day. And let us come together on that day and seek Your face. And Lord, we ask that You'll change the direction. Lord, we ask that You'll grant people repentance and faith. We pray that Your hand would be upon us for good.

Lord, we also pray for Bruce Bickel. We ask that Your hand would be upon him even as his strength fades. We pray, Father, that You would be with Bishop. And Father, if he is in the hospital we pray that You'd be caring for him. And even if he's not, Lord, we ask that You'll give him strength and encouragement of heart.

Father, we certainly give you thanks that Don's brother Gregg and his wife Karen are well after the accident. We pray that they would continue to heal. Father, there are many other concerns that are among us. We think of our brother Kevin. We think of others and ask that You would make Yourself known in their lives so that despite circumstances, despite difficult providences, You will give a sense of Your presence. But we also pray for healing, and ask that You would do that for Your glory and their good.

So Father, as we turn to Your word we ask that You'll bless us and strengthen us by Your grace. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** All right. So today we're going to continue to think about Isaiah. And I want us to continue to think about Isaiah 53. And so let's turn to Isaiah 53 and read that together, starting at verse 1 this time.

*“Who has believed what he has heard from us?*

*And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

*For He grew up before Him like a young plant,*

## **“The Suffering Servant”**

*And like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no form or majesty  
That we should look at Him,  
And no beauty that we should desire Him.  
He was despised and rejected by men,  
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.  
And as One from whom men hid their faces  
He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.  
Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God and afflicted.  
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.  
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.  
He was oppressed and He was afflicted,  
Yet He opened not His mouth.  
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,  
And like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
So He opened not His mouth.  
By oppression and judgment He was taken away.  
And as for His generation,  
Who considered that He was cut off  
Out of the land of the living,  
Stricken for the transgression of My people?  
And they made His grave with the wicked,  
And with a rich man in His death—  
Although He had done no violence,  
And there was no deceit in His mouth.  
Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush Him;  
He has put Him to grief.  
When His soul makes an offering for guilt  
He shall see His offspring,  
He shall prolong His days;  
The will of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.  
Out of the anguish of His soul  
He shall see and be satisfied.  
By His knowledge shall the Righteous One, My Servant,  
Make many to be accounted righteous,  
And He shall bear their iniquities.  
Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the many,*

## “The Suffering Servant”

*And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
Because He poured out His soul to death,  
And was numbered with the transgressors.  
Yet He bore the sin of many,  
And makes intercession for the transgressors.”*

So I want us to think now this morning a little bit about the humiliation that we observe in this text. And one of the things that I want us to think about is how we're introduced to this humiliation of Christ. But really there's no cause given at this point. There's a lot of description; there's a lot of detail. And yet there is really no cause listed. Why is that? Well, that comes later. And we're going to be told why it is that He suffers. But at this point there's just a description.

Remember, the description is that of a Servant. He's a Servant to the nations, as it were. But the interesting thing is that this Servant in His humiliation is described as a tender root and as a shoot.

Now that's kind of interesting when you think about it, because when you think about a root and a shoot you just think about it beginning growth. You don't think about sort of the idea of it being cut off. You think about the root and it grows up. But the interesting thing about this root and shoot is that it grows up out of a parched ground.

Now that's interesting in and of itself, because what's the ground that it grows up out of? Well, I think the ground is Israel. So here's the Messiah growing up out of Israel.

And the interesting thing is that if you go back to Isaiah chapter 7, there you find a prophecy given to the prophet Isaiah. And we're told there that the Messiah is going to come in the desolation of His people.

And when you go to Luke's Gospel that's exactly what you find. You find that Jesus is born into the desolation of His people. And so we find that He's born into poverty. So in Luke chapter 2 His mother and father have to bring the offering of the poor in order for the purification rites of Mary to be done.

So here's this root that grows up out of His own people, out of His own land, and it's a desolate one. It's not a very promising one. And the question is how do we understand this? And I think the answer to this to how we understand this is that He grows up aligned with His people. In other words, He entered into the humiliation of His people.

And the interesting thing is that Scripture gives us a variety of ways to understand this. When you look at John chapter 1, in 1:1-18 you find that Jesus is described as having been with God. Jesus was the Word and was with God. And the way in which we're given that He was with God is in the imperfect tense, which means that there is no beginning. Jesus dwelt in all eternity.

In verse 3 of the same chapter we learn that *“all things were made through Him.”* And that's put in a tense that tells us there was a point of departure; there was a beginning. So John knows how to help us to understand that there's an eternality to the Son, and a point of beginning to creation.

Now what does this have to do with our text? Well, if you go a little further in verse 14 it talks about that He *“became flesh, and dwelt among us.”* And the word that's used for “became” is interesting because it's the same word used of creation in verse 3. In other words, His body had a point of departure. He took on flesh.

## “The Suffering Servant”

Something else that’s interesting about that is that when you think about that word that’s used in verse 14 of John 1, you think about voices. You think about voices in the Greek. And there’s the active voice, and that is when the subject does the action. And there’s a passive voice, and that’s when something happens to the subject. But then there’s the middle voice. And this is the person doing something to himself; the subject is acting upon himself.

Now the interesting thing is that when it says in verse 14 that He “*became flesh*,” it’s in the middle voice, that is, Jesus did this to Himself. Why? So that in verse 18 He could make the Father known.

**Transcriber’s Note:** John 1:18, ESV. “*No one has ever seen God. The only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known.*”

So when you think about why the humiliation, the answer is because Jesus enters into the humiliation of His people. He willingly does this by taking upon Himself flesh, that He might reveal the Father and the plan of redemption to us. And so the Bible everywhere has this idea that Jesus enters into the humiliation of His people.

For instance, you find it in Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 10. Jesus is basically saying to His disciples, “If I suffer you’re going to suffer along with Me, because you are a part of My household. And as a part of My household you won’t be treated better than the ruler of the house.” That’s the way in which He describes it. He describes Himself not only as the Teacher, but the Ruler of the house, a house to which they belong. And they will be humiliated as He is humiliated. Why? Because He has entered into their humiliation.

Now I want you to think about that for just a couple of minutes with me. When we think about Jesus entering into our humiliation, why is it that we think that we ought to be better than Jesus? I mean, this is really a practical point to ponder, because oftentimes we are very much like Peter.

Remember Peter. If you look at just a few chapters in Mark’s Gospel—chapters 8, 9 and 10—we find that Jesus is saying that “*the first will be last, and the last will be first.*” And He continually drives this home to the disciples who are saying to one another, “Who is greater?” Right? “We’re greater than you are!” And Jesus keeps reminding them that the first will be last and the last will be first.

And one of the things that you’ve got to keep in mind is that Jesus is continually trying to remind them that they are to follow Him in His humiliation. And so here’s Peter. And here’s Peter; he’s up on the mountain. Now he has just heard Jesus teach about His death and His resurrection. But he doesn’t say anything. And then he gets up on the mountain and he sees Jesus transfigured before him.

And he says, “I don’t know about all that death and resurrection stuff. But I sure know about this, and I like this a whole lot. So Lord, how about I make booths for all of you—booths all around? How about we just stay here on top of the mountain in all of this glory? I love it!”

And then they descend the mountain. You remember that they descend the mountain. And immediately there is a discussion among the disciples, and it is about who is the greatest. And you can imagine that the three on top of the mountain and the nine remaining at the bottom of the mountain who could not drive the demon out of the child at the bottom of the mountain are saying, “Well, if we had been here I’m sure we would

## “The Suffering Servant”

have been able to drive out the demon, because we’re the inner circle; Jesus loves us. You should have seen what we saw up on top of the mountain!”—that idea.

And so glory and exaltation are always a part of the contrast, right? And we’re always reaching for that which we don’t yet have. It’s no wonder that Peter in 1 Peter says, “*Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you at the proper time.*”

Humiliation is for us now; exaltation is for God to do to us later. And exaltation will come as we stand in Christ. But it’s for us to follow the Master now. And we’re no better than the Master. And if the Master was treated this way, then we’ll be treated this way.

Now here’s what I don’t want to do. What I don’t want to do is to give you the impression that in a text like Isaiah 53 we do anything for our salvation; we don’t. All I’m saying is that Jesus is the example in this text, and we follow our Lord. And we do that because He has told us that that’s what we do.

Now I don’t know about you, but as I lay this out to you it helps me. And it helps me because I sometimes want the exaltation now. Why is it, for instance, that the church is continually finding itself on the short end of the stick? Why is it that we’re continuing to see legislation that continually narrowly defines things for Christian schools so that they find it harder and harder to exist in our culture? Why, for instance, is it, for instance, that what were they?—The Little Nuns?

**Brave Man:** The Little Sisters of the Poor.

**Jeff:** They had to carry coverage that would cover the cost of abortion? Remember that case here? So why is it continually the case that anyone with religious convictions is always hedged out of this thing? And the answer is—and I’m not saying that every religious conviction is a true one,—but what I am saying is that for the Christian we should not be surprised by this kind of treatment. This is the kind of treatment that we’re going to receive at the hands of the world. So it should never surprise us.

I don’t know if that helps you or not. I don’t know if you want to interact about that or not. But I just find that to be an exceedingly practical thing. But it’s sort of like having a child or a grandchild, right? They come over to your house. And we don’t give them any kind of guidance about our expectations. And they go through and they tear the house up, right?

Or they come over and you give them guidance. “These are some expectations Grandpa has. And so if you stay on the rails then you’ll have a great time. If you don’t, well I’m going to tell your dad and he’s going to punish you.” You know, that sort of thing. Yes, Don?

**Don Maurer:** I think that we in America are Johnny-come-lately's with this sort of thing. I mean, it surprises us when we see this legislation not going our way. And yet people in Russia, people in China, people in the Middle East have been going through this for decades if not centuries, let alone the early church.

**Jeff:** Yeah; I totally agree. In fact I think I’ve said this to you guys before. I had a friend from Belarus. Some of us pastors were sitting around talking. We were talking about the direction of our country. He was quiet and I asked him. I said, “What are you thinking?”

And he said, “I’m thinking that you guys are in the throes of losing your influence in this country, and you don’t know how to handle it.” And he said, “We’ve already lost our

## “The Suffering Servant”

influence.” And he said, “You know, we’re basically nothing.” And he’s in an illegal church that has been raided by the KGB. His father who was once the pastor of the church was thrown into prison. He understands what’s happening. In fact, at the uprisings that were going on in Belarus recently, his son was arrested twice.

And I can tell you something interesting about him. His son was arrested twice. Because his son was under age when they arrested him his parents had to be there in court with him. And his father was obviously glad to be there. But my friend took the opportunity, when he had to stand up and answer on behalf of his son, to give the gospel to those who were listening to his son’s case. And I said, “How did they respond to that?”

And he said, “They were left speechless.” He said that they had no idea. He said, “They were left speechless because my son admitted guilt; he didn’t lie. He didn’t say, ‘I wasn’t there.’” He said that everybody lies. “But my son said, ‘Yes, I was there.’ And then I gave this gospel message about how they could be saved.” He said that they had no idea how to respond.

I said, “What did they do with your son?”

He said, “They released him to our care.” And then he was arrested again. Anyway, I agree with you; it’s hard to fathom what it would be like to live in that setting.

**David Miller:** You know, in Isaiah 53:10 it says that it was the will of God. And when Jesus was on the cross He wasn’t thinking about Himself. He was doing the will of God more than anything else. When we are in those situations we tend to think more about ourselves when we should be thinking about the will of God; that’s most important.

**Jeff:** Yeah. I don’t know if you guys remember this. In one of the previous talks on Isaiah I mentioned that Jesus had a body created for Him. And this is picked up in Hebrews chapter 10. He has a body created for Him. Why? To do the will of God. And that’s what you’re saying. He carried out the will of God on the cross and throughout His whole life.

But the idea is that the pattern is there for us, right? If Jesus took upon Himself human flesh that He might fulfill God’s will, and we are in Christ serving Him, then we ought to look at our own lives as a way that we might serve Him and carry out His will.

All right. Let me go on. And then we notice that there’s the suffering that was left unexplained. What we were just told about the humiliation is now explained. And this is a bit harder, and not just because it’s theologically harder. But it’s a bit harder because here we’re going to delve into some things that I think are just hard for us to hear. And what Isaiah is going to explain to us is that what Jesus experienced is substitutionary in nature. He’s a vicarious Substitute for His people. And that simply means that He was substituted for us.

Now I want you to listen to a portion of this. It starts in verse 4. And what I want you to listen for is the way in which Isaiah is teaching us that Jesus substituted Himself for us, that He stands in our stead; as Calvin says, “*He stands in our room.*” Just listen. And what I want you to listen for are the pronouns and how they communicate this, starting in verse 4.

*“Surely our griefs He Himself bore,  
And our sorrows He carried.  
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten of God and afflicted.*”

## “The Suffering Servant”

*But He was pierced through for our transgressions;  
He was crushed for our iniquities;  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed.  
All of us like sheep have gone astray;  
Each of us has turned to his own way.  
But the LORD has caused  
The iniquity of us to fall upon Him.”*

**Transcriber’s Note:** Another translation.

**Jeff:** Now the pronouns in verses 11 and 12 are the same. Now let me read those—verses 11 and 12.

*“Out of the anguish of His soul  
He shall see and be satisfied.  
By His knowledge shall the Righteous One, My Servant,  
Make many to be accounted righteous,  
And He shall bear their iniquities,”*  
And so on. And then the last part of verse 12:  
*“Yet He bore the sins of many,  
And makes intercession for the transgressors.”*

And so Isaiah 53 is one of those beautiful passages where we find that Christ is suffering in our stead. Now I want you to see how this comes out. It comes out really very rich in the Hebrew.

For instance, there’s the preposition *nin*, which is translated “for” in verse 5. Just take a look at this. Verse 5: *“But He was pierced for”*—there’s the preposition *nin*—*He was pierced for our transgressions.”*

Now the implication is that He was pierced for or because of our transgressions. Now I want you to think about that for just a minute. Some people of a more liberal bent say well, that doesn’t mean that He suffered in our stead. In fact the meaning of that Hebrew preposition can mean something entirely different.

For instance they might say this, and they would say this. They would say, “Did the Jewish people suffer because of Hitler?” And of course the answer is yes. And they say, well, if that’s the case, then I want you to think about the use of that preposition. It doesn’t mean “instead of,” or “in the room of,” or “as a vicarious substitute.” It could mean something entirely different. So you can’t just take that as a way of understanding this preposition “because” or “for.”

But I want you to think about something. I don’t think that negates the argument. For instance, think about a bonfire. You’re sitting around the bonfire and a mom is sitting there, and a little child is playing. And the little child happens to fall into the fire playing near the fire. And Mom jumps up and scoops the child, pushing the child away. But she herself is the one who falls into the fire.

And the question then is: Does she suffer because of that child’s carelessness? And the answer is yes; there’s a sense in which she suffers for that child or because of that child; in that child’s stead she suffers. Wherein that child was going to fall into the fire, she pushes the child away. So that is communicated by the preposition here in Hebrew. And I

## “The Suffering Servant”

think that’s the sense that approximates what’s going on here that’s communicated by all these prepositional changes.

I think that when the liberal brings up Hitler and the Jew, I think he’s throwing out a red herring. I think what you grab here is the idea that there’s a substitution going on. And that substitution is pictured in this way and in this preposition.

Now here’s the thing. One of the things that you realize is, it’s fuller and richer than that. Isaiah doesn’t just leave this all hanging on one preposition. For instance in verse 5 the preposition *bet* is there. And it’s translated “in,” “by” or “with.”

So again, look at verse 5. You look at verse 5 and it says, “*He was pierced for*”—or *nin*—“*our transgressions*;

*He was crushed for our iniquities.*

*Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace.”*

And here it is: “*And with*” (or *bet*), “*His wounds we are healed.*” And the idea is “*with His wounds,*” or by His wounds we receive the healing.

And so in the beginning of the verse He suffers because of. He’s like the mom who pushes the child out of the way; she takes the burn instead. But here in this preposition we learn that the healing comes by the actual burns themselves. And so Isaiah is communicating in a very poignant way that not only is He in our stead, but His suffering is for us, and that comes powerfully. In His wounds we are healed.

And remember what I said to you when we were looking at Isaiah 50. Our wounds are healed in this One. And yet Isaiah 50 told us that He did no wrong. Remember this? Go back to Isaiah 50 for just a minute. In Isaiah chapter 50 he says in verse 4:

*“He awakens My ear to hear*

*As those who are taught.”*

And then in verse 5:

*“The LORD God has opened My ear,*

*And I was not rebellious;*

*I turned not backward.”*

And so here we find that the Servant describes Himself as somebody who is not rebellious, who has not turned away from the word of God. In fact He hears as a disciple. And He does what He hears.

And so here we find this Servant again—this innocent Servant—now treated as if He Himself were a sinner. And the question that one has to ask is, why? Why is it that He who had done no violence (verse 9) bore our iniquities (verse 11), and bears our sin (verse 12?) Now why is that?

Well, I want you to go with me to the New Testament. And you can see this; it’s in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, and it’s in verse 21. Listen to these words. And they sound very much like what we’ve been looking at in Isaiah. “*For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*”

Now that’s what we call *double imputation*. We call it double imputation: Christ taking upon Himself our sin. He takes our sin and He gives us His righteousness. That’s the double imputation there. He who knew no sin—He who was righteous, blameless, who was not rebellious,—takes sin upon Himself that we might have His righteousness.

And you see that in the text of Isaiah. Notice Isaiah 53; this is in verse 11.

*“Out of the anguish of His soul*



## “The Suffering Servant”

*He shall see and be satisfied.*

*By His knowledge shall the Righteous One, My servant,*

(there He is described as righteous; listen.)

*Make many to be accounted righteous.”*

In other words, you are a sinner. But you are accounted righteous in Him. And He was righteous. But for us He was reckoned a sinner. That’s the idea; that’s what’s called the great exchange. And it really is the gospel. The great exchange is at the heart of the gospel. If you deny that, you’ve denied the gospel; it’s that simple.

And if you deny that I’ll tell you what else you deny. If you deny that what you deny is, you deny the sinfulness of sin.

Anselm wrote a book called *Why the God-Man?*, or “Why Did God Need to Become Man?” It’s called *Cur Deus Homo?*

And in that book Anselm has an imaginary interlocutor. He’s sort of battling it out with this imaginary figure. And he names the imaginary figure Boso. It’s probably where we get the idea of a bozo today.. But Anselm says this to Boso at one point. He says, “Can you make satisfaction for sin?” That’s what he asks.

And here’s what Boso says. He says, “Yes.”

And Anselm replies back to him. “You have not yet considered the greatness of the weight of sin.” In other words, if you think that you can atone for sin, you’ve not yet considered the weight of sin.

Now we sit here and say, “Wait a minute! I could never atone for sin!” But I want to tell you something. We know people, or maybe even we ourselves do this sort of thing.

What do I mean by that? Well, once I had a guy in my living room—he and his wife—and he was telling me about having gone to a nudie bar. And I said to him, “You know, I thought you made a profession of faith.”

And he said to me, “I did.”

And I said, “How do you reconcile going to a strip bar with your Christian faith? How do you do that?”

And he said, “Well, I just come home and I just read the Bible the amount of time that I was in the strip bar.” (*Laughter*)

I thought to myself, now here’s a man who does not know what atonement is. He actually thinks that he can expunge his sin by what he does. You know what I mean?

But I want to tell you something. That’s so on the fringe when you think about it, right? What in the world? That’s crazy! But we do that same thing, don’t we?

I mean, for instance, think about it. Let’s say that we miss church on Sunday, and it’s not for a good reason. We miss church, and what do we immediately begin to do? We immediately begin to justify in our own heads why it’s okay that we didn’t go today. “Well, I went to men’s group,” or “I was at the work day at the church.”

Do you see what we’re doing? We’re immediately beginning to shuffle around so that we can atone for ourselves. Our minds are built that way. We will always and forever try to be our own substitute. We will always try to make ourselves righteous before God, even Christians like us who know better, because we have too much of Adam in us yet.

I want you to think about romans chapter 7. Romans chapter 7 says basically that we’re married to the law as long as the law lives. But when the law is put to death, then

## “The Suffering Servant”

we’re free to remarry, right? The whole idea is that in Adam we were married. And when Adam died we were free to remarry. And we married the second Adam, Christ, right? That’s the whole picture for us.

Think about it this way. Think about a woman who has been married to an abusive husband, okay? And she’s abused, and she lives in the light of that fear, and he dies. She’s free; she marries someone else. And he is a good man, and treats her with respect and kindness and love, and so on.

And let’s say, for instance, that her old husband used to demand things of her. The carpet was swept the wrong way; he had her do it when he got home. And if that wasn’t the case, he came unglued on her.

And so when the new husband comes home he knows this. When the new husband comes home he sees the carpet all in this pattern. And he realizes what’s happening. She’s still living as if she’s married to the first husband, right? And he has to sit her down and he has to say, “Hey, you’re not married to Adam the First anymore; you’re married to Adam the Second. You’re married to a different man.”

And the point is, that’s the way we sometimes live even though we’re in union with Christ. Christ is our Substitute. And yet we often think that we can substitute for ourselves. And that’s something that has to be expunged from our thinking. We have to be completely and wholly dependent upon Christ.

And that’s not a theoretical issue; that’s a very practical issue. Why? Well, think about it. If I believe that I can atone for my own sins I’ll continue to sin, because I’ll believe that I can make up for them. And I want you to think about that in a really practical way. Do you have any thoughts about that? Yes?

**Don:** This really speaks to me about the severity of the breach between Rome and the Bible. Rome for all intents and purposes denies the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us. And you really can’t have one without the other. You can’t have Christ becoming sin for us without at the same time having Christ’s righteousness imputed to us—the double exchange. I think that’s crucial.

Also, how do liberals get around all of the passages that point to Christ as the Substitute, like the Passover and what happened in the Garden of Eden—Adam and Eve being clothed with skins, and that kind of thing? Do they just dismiss it altogether, or what?

**Jeff:** Well, there are two words that describe atonement—expiation and propitiation. And expiation and propitiation are words I think that the liberals like to manipulate. And I’ll pull the Roman Catholic scheme in here in just a minute.

But expiation means fixing the problem. Propitiation has to do with the anger as a result of the problem.

So for instance, let’s say you’re out on the ball field and you hit a ball, and it goes into old man Jenkins’ window. And old man Jenkins comes out and he’s blistering mad that you broke his window. Now you’ve got a problem. And so you say, “Don’t worry, Old Man Jenkins! I will fix your window.”

He says, “You better believe you will! Instead of playing ball next Saturday you’re going to be over here installing a window!” That’s expiation—fixing the problem.

## “The Suffering Servant”

Propitiation is this. The second Saturday after the window is fixed, old man Jenkins is standing out on his property yelling obscenities at the boy even as he bats, right? Why? Because he’s still angry about the problem.

And so when the Scripture talks about expiation, it means that Christ went to the cross and atoned for sin, fixed the problem. But what the liberals don’t want to talk about is the anger of God that was poured out upon the Son at that moment, so that the Son propitiates or atones for the Father’s anger.

And so what they say is that propitiation is just expiation. Some translations of the Bible, such as the older ASV, doesn’t use propitiation with regard to the work of Christ. So the idea is that God is not angry with us.

And how do you justify that? I don’t know, because there are places in the Scriptures that are very clear about God being angry with the sinner. And how does one justify that? I just don’t know. I think you have to ignore those passages entirely, and so focus on language like this and say that propitiation actually means expiation. And Christ took care of the problem, but God was never angry with us. He always was a loving God, and so on.

It is true that God is love. But it is true that God was angry with sin and dealt with sin in His Son.

The interesting thing is that this actually comes through with regard to the Roman Catholic system. Actually a Roman Catholic once explained it to me. I gave him an example and he said to me, “You have to understand, Jeff, that in Christ the problem is fixed. But God is still angry. And so, for instance, that’s why I have to do penance in this life. And that’s why I have to go to purgatory in the next, because I’m still satisfying God’s anger. Christ took care of the problem, but I’m taking care of the anger.”

And I thought to myself: Yikes! That’s not the God that I know in the Scripture.

**Bob Busted:** But here’s the question. How do you ignore certain passages entirely if the Bible is all God-breathed?

**Jeff:** Yeah; that’s a great question. But some people successfully do that. (*Laughter*) I don’t know.

**Don:** Because they don’t believe it’s God-breathed.

**Bob:** But you just said it. And so I’m wondering how you justify it.

**Jeff:** Oh, how I do? Oh no, I try not to ignore passages; I’m sorry. When the liberals ignore—

**Bob:** Oh, I’m sorry.

**Jeff:** The liberals will ignore a passage that clearly says God is angry. And yet I think what they do is that they deal with just a word. No, I hope I don’t ignore it. (*Laughter*)

**David:** Speaking of self-justification, Jesus said, (*Unclear*) And that includes the cross. Anyone who tries to self-justify is trying to use the flesh instead of the cross, and that doesn’t work.

**Jeff:** No. Let me just leave you with this. I think one of the things that is really helpful in seeing the substitutionary element is the two cups in the Old Testament. In Psalm 75 you see the cup of God’s wrath, “*and the wicked will drink it to the dregs.*” And then in the New Covenant you see the cup of the New Covenant in Communion—the forgiveness of sins. And when you think about those two cups you think about Jesus having taken the cup of God’s wrath, and He drank it to the dregs for us. He took the cup

## “The Suffering Servant”

meant for us, the sinners, and He drank it on our behalf, that we might have the cup of forgiveness that He offers to us at the Communion table.

That in my mind is another way of picturing substitution—what Christ did for us that we might have His benefits. And in that case I actually want you to see this. This is in Isaiah 53 again. But notice this. It says at the end of verse 11 that He will account many righteous. There’s the imputation of righteousness.

But notice this. *“And He shall bear their iniquities.”* He bears the iniquities of us in order to grant us forgiveness. And so there is the twofold aspect that one cannot lose in the atoning work of Christ—that I am forgiven, that I am accounted or reckoned righteous in Him. And I’m not just forgiven and put back in a position like Adam was in the garden to start over. No, I’m forgiven and I’m reckoned righteous. I am righteous in God’s sight as a result. And so we need to walk in that light.

Well, that’s all we have time for today. And so we’ll take up the last Servant song the next time we’re together. Yes, Mike?

**Mike Davis:** Just kind of a final thought, maybe.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Mike:** It’s as we grasp this for our own lives. It’s easy to talk about others and us as individuals, thinking about that individual level for a little while. We could easily go in that direction. But as I think about this, that freedom that we have because He has borne our iniquities, that freedom because He has substituted, if we begin to realize that for ourselves, as you just talked about, it gives us the ability to freely follow Christ as our brother talked about here. We can freely follow Christ and walk in that victory that is ours in Christ.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Mike:** Without having to try and make up different things for our own flesh or whatever—to walk freely and to have an impact in the Kingdom.

**Jeff:** Yeah. And let me say this to you. And this is actually picking up and going in a little bit of a different direction. But I think it’s relevant for the moment.

Think about the idea of freedom. You know, we’re hearing a lot about that kind of talk. I love freedom and I don’t want you to misunderstand me on any point. I want all the freedom I can get.

However, I want you to think about the freedom that we have in Christ. The freedom that we have in Christ is not freedom unrestrained.

For instance, even in things that are indifferent, let’s say alcohol consumption. Let’s say that you believe that you can consume alcohol and it’s not a sin. But your brother believes that consuming alcohol is sin. If you say in the presence of your brother, “Brother, I don’t really care about you; my freedom cannot be impinged by you. I’m going to exercise my freedom despite your presence, and despite how offended you are by it,” then we are not free. We think we’re free.

Why? Because if we can’t restrain from imbibing in something that we see as indifferent for the sake of our brother, then maybe we’re more bound to that which we consider indifferent than we think we are. In other words, maybe we’re enslaved to that thing that we think is indifferent, rather than free to it. And that’s the first thing I would say to you.

## “The Suffering Servant”

The second thing I would say to you is that kind of freedom is in the largeness of mind in regard to the things of God. In other words, I want as much extra freedom as I can get. But the more I understand actual freedom in Christ, the more free I am no matter my providential circumstances. I mean, I want you to think about it. The Christian who is perhaps in a prisoner-of-war camp, who is hemmed in on all sides every day of his life, is sometimes more free than somebody who has the ability to roam about, because he understands freedom in Christ more so than the person who has external abilities to wander, because the person who has external abilities to wander is hemmed in in his own mind.

I think freedom is really important to understand. We as Christians can turn external freedom into an idol. And that idea of freedom can transplant freedom in Christ. Or at least one can put an = sign in between freedom in Christ and freedom that we hear so much about in our culture. And when we do that, when we supplant the one with the other so we put an = sign between them, we do a great injustice to what the Bible actually says about freedom.

So there's a very practical sense in which we need to work through Christian concepts in order to have right thinking about what's going on out in the world, and to be able to possess ourselves in the midst of trying times, because frankly, if we don't have that kind of mindset it's easy. But you do have that kind of mindset not to be able to possess yourself and be upset with what's going on, and so on. Bob?

**Bob:** Yes. I thought as you were talking about that, we're restrained in many ways. We don't have freedom of speech. There are many situations we can describe where we'd like to say something, right? We'd like to say it the way it is, but we can't. Either my wife says, "Don't say that," or my grandkids, or whoever. *(Laughter)* There's one example, okay? In a sense we're restrained almost every day.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bob:** But I will say, you know the mouth can be dangerous. But there are times when we should say something; we'd like to say something. We'd like to put things on the right course. But we're restrained and we can't. There's the wrong person to talk to and the wrong group to talk to., and so we have to be restrained.

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely. Every time Bob talks I wish I had Bob's voice. *(Laughter)*

**Sig Tragard:** He and Mike don't need microphones. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Yeah, I know. Well, let me pray with you.

Father, thank You for this day and for the time You've given us. And Father, we're thankful for the reminder of the truths of Your word, especially about the Lord Jesus. And Father, we pray that You would continually teach us about His substitutionary work, not only cognitively. But we pray, Father, that these things will sink deep into our hearts and that we'll love these things more, and that they'll come out in the way that we live. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*