

Sermon on **Isaiah 53:10-12** for the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost
St. Paul's Lutheran – New Ulm, MN – Pastor N. Scharf - 10.24.21

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After he has suffered, 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. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, ⁿ and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (NIV 2011).

Because he lives, we live now and eternally. Because he served us, we serve.

There were few more terrifying words to me as a child than when I pushed my mother's patience and will to the point where she uttered, "You'll have to wait till your Father gets home." As a Father, now I start to understand how deflating that can be when you as a parent come home looking forward to seeing your family, to having dinner, unwinding, and you open the door to find a frazzled spouse, everything frozen in time from when the incident occurred and the look on your spouse's face telling you there is some transgressor or sin needing to be dealt with. If there are siblings of the transgressor, they let you know immediately who transgressed, and all that happened, and what the decided punishment must be, and you must play executioner.

The deed was done and appropriate discipline/punishment is needed. As a parent you realize that you must discipline or the children will try to call the shots, disregard boundaries in the home and in society. And having been on both sides of the equation, no one can stand in for the offender. Not that my brothers or sisters were willing to, but the parent must punish the transgressor.

That's why what God planned from eternity puzzles us and is unbelievable to our sensibilities. That's why what Jesus did is unlike any of us would behave. As our Father in heaven, God doesn't sweep things under the rug. He rules over all things. He is just. He punishes the evil doer. And, to be honest, we wouldn't have it any other way. When we see the evil in society, ours and others, we long for justice, especially if we've been offended, hurt, and cheated. Even as sinful human beings, we have court systems, laws, and punishments. We like justice. We need justice.

That is why we know our sin deserves judgment, and more than just a time out or a spanking. How many laws of God have you broken this week, whether defiantly running against them or simply chipping away at them little by little – those pet sins that we just can't seem to put aside? Think of his commandments. Or the sins that the devil tells you are no big deal, but then when you commit them, or realize you're knee deep in them, he takes the blinders off and shows you the carnage, the stain of sin that covers you, and he loads on the guilt and shame, and we feel the weight and we fear the judgment of God. And we know God is just to punish us.

No doubt the children of Israel realized their sins of idolatry, fornication, adultery, pride, and greed weighed heavy as they trudged their way to Babylon. They felt the weight of their sins come back on their heads as they had ignored God's commands and his prophets' pleas to return. And they knew they deserved to be left in Babylon, never to return. But God decreed that he would send a ruler who would send them back after 70 years were completed, even though they didn't deserve it. The only thing they had merited was punishment, but God gives them mercy and grace. And he does something far greater.

God tells them of not just deliverance from Babylon, but the deliverance of their souls eternally. He shows them not just an earthly ruler, but a Suffering Servant who could do what no mortal could - the one who would take the weight of their sins off them and bear the punishment and judgement of God which they had coming. Instead of eternal death, they would have life. This is *the LORD's Suffering Servant*. He served us by suffering. **Because Jesus lived, died, and rose for us and lives, we live now and eternally. Because he served us, we serve him.** Listen to God's plan.

“Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.” God reveals his grace and mercy to people terrified of punishment. Not only is he our God Almighty, Creator, Preserver of all people, but he reveals himself as the *LORD* – the God of free and faithful love (Ex.34). The *LORD* is just, and in his mercy he also planned your redemption. It was *his will/his pleasure to crush Jesus, to cause him to suffer*. He made Jesus’ life an offering for sin. You had wronged the Lord, the Almighty God, with your sin and sinfulness, but Jesus stepped in as the sacrifice valuable enough to set things right with God, to pay for what was lost. He paid the penalty of your sin with his holy precious blood. The sinless Son of God was crushed in your place on the cross. He took your punishment. You are at peace with God.

“He will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.” Jesus rose from the grave. By his glorious grace he makes us his offspring. As Jesus said in John 12, *“Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, 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.”* You are the seeds that he has produced. He lives and reigns. He is with us always, even to the end of the age as he has promised. You are his possession, and it gets better.

“After he has suffered, 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.” 700 years before it happens the *LORD* has Isaiah tell us about it, so we know that what Jesus did counts for us. Jesus suffered, died, and rose. He sees the light of life. He is satisfied. His work of redemption is accomplished on the cross and now his Gospel message justifies us. *“To Justify”* is to have someone declare you *“not guilty.”* The Gospel of Jesus Christ shares with you the verdict that God has declared for sinners because Jesus has *borne their iniquities*. Our consciences convict us, but Jesus took the guilt and put it on his conscience. He cried out, *“My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?”* And he cried out, *“It is finished.”* That means your sin is forgiven. The guilt offering has been made and accepted. Through the Gospel message being proclaimed to you, the Holy Spirit has worked faith in your hearts to see what God has declared about you, *“Not Guilty.”* He offered his hands to have nails pounded through so that God’s gavel could pound down and say to you, *“Not Guilty!”*

“Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus earned this. It is only by his merit, his works, not your works or effort. Jesus taught his disciples. He shared with them the peace he had won. He told them to go and share it, *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”* (Matthew 28). He shares with us the blessings of forgiveness, justification – *“being declared not guilty,”* and heaven. He was our substitute in life and death so that we have life now and eternally. In love he cast his lot with us. Now we serve him in peace and joy.

He divides the spoils with the strong. He has a portion among the great, or the many. Jesus has divided the spoils with us, the wonderful things he has earned by becoming our substitute. If you ever doubt your forgiveness, just look to these passages. The offering for your guilt has been made, not by you, but by your Savior Jesus. Jesus Christ was the price paid for you. Have peace in your soul. And thank him every day with your life.

We can say it because Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

When our heavenly Father comes home, it won’t be for him to punish us. It will be to welcome us home forever because of Jesus. Serve him with humility. Put him first and live a life of thanks because Jesus gives you life now and eternally. Amen.