

The Sufferings of Christ

Matthew 20:17-19

2346

We return again, this morning, to our gospel of Matthew which we've been studying for many years now with great blessing. And we're not quite finished. We're looking at the twentieth chapter of Matthew. Three verses set in the middle of this great twentieth chapter, and I want to read them to you, verses 17, 18 and 19.

And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside along the way and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes and they shall condemn Him to death and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He shall rise again.

That is very clear. There is no question about what He means. The words are simple. The thoughts are simple. The terms are precise. It's very clear exactly what He said. And that's exactly the way He intends it. This is the third and last prediction of our Lord regarding His death and resurrection. The first one He gave to the disciples in chapter 16, verse 21. The second one He gave them in chapter 17, verses 22 and 23. And this is the third and final prediction. The second adds detail to the first and the third adds detail to the second. This is a fuller prediction than any of the others.

Now it is obvious to anyone who knows anything about the Christian faith that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the center of biblical revelation. That it is the most important Christian truth. And so we are dealing with very crucial material here. The theme of this particular announcement, however, takes us beyond the earlier two which simply talked about Him dying and rising and this one seems to stress the nature of His suffering and the details of it. He doesn't just say He will die and rise. He doesn't just say He will be crucified and rise. But rather He explains detail by detail that He will be betrayed, He will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn Him to death, then hand Him over to the pagans where He will be mocked, scourged and finally crucified. And following that, He will rise from the dead. Tremendous amount of detail is given.

Now the theme of this particular prediction by our Lord is His sufferings. And He details them out. Some rejectors of the truth have tried to put Jesus Christ into a totally human category. Some of them have been more generous than others and said He was a well-meaning, loving, gentle, peaceful kind of individual who somehow got caught in a very hostile world and accidentally wound up getting crucified. Others have been less than generous to Him and said He was a self-styled, would-be conqueror who tried to pull off a coup of sorts only somewhere took a wrong turn and He wound up being a victim of His own revolution.

And then there are all of those possibilities in the middle that are generous or not generous to one degree or another. The fact is, however, that all of them are wrong. The sufferings of Jesus Christ

were no accident. The sufferings of Jesus Christ were no miscalculation. They were no surprise to Him. They were no shock at all, but rather He gives here detail by detail precisely and exactly what is going to happen to Him. In fact, the first recorded words we have spoken out of the mouth of Jesus were, "I must be about My Father's business," and the last words before His death, "It is finished." It's very clear that He knew what He was about and He knew when He had finished it. And He finished it in His death.

He knew why He was on the earth. He knew every detail of it. And the fact that He knew every single detail of His sufferings indicates to me that He must have suffered through them a thousand times before He actually got there in the omniscience of being able to conceive all that that suffering would be.

Now I believe He wanted the disciples to understand this. They were so honed in on the glory of the Kingdom, they were so in tune with the glories of the Messiah, those prophecies they seemed well to understand. It was the suffering Messiah they didn't understand. And we don't want to be too hard on them because Jews today with all that they know still don't understand that. You see, the disciples were looking for a lion, they didn't know they needed a lamb. But Jesus knew that. And so our Lord calls them aside for the third time and tells them this.

Now I want us to look at the passage and just to consider several elements of what He said. First, the plan of suffering, the plan. "Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside along the way and said to them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem." You can stop there.

You get the feeling by His terms here that He knows what He's doing. Behold indicates a certain amount of surprise. It's an exclamation. It may seem startling to you, it may seem shocking to you, it may seem surprising to you, you may not understand it but we are going to Jerusalem. There's a resolution in His statement. There's a conviction.

It takes us back to Luke 9:51 where the text says, "And He set His face to go to Jerusalem." He was resolute in that commitment. He had while in the northern area of Galilee, finished His Galilean ministry, crossed the Jordan at a northern point, come to the east of the Jordan known as the Beyond called Peraea and He had been in Peraea coming south down the backside of the Jordan. Chapter 19 in the early part of 20 give us incidents in that ministry. Now He crosses the Jordan again, coming toward Jerusalem. He will go through Jericho. Chapter 20 verse 29 has Him departing from Jericho. So He crosses about Jericho, comes to Jericho and starts the long ascent to Jerusalem. It's only a matter of days really now until He faces the passion, the death and the resurrection.

And you'll notice it says, "going up to Jerusalem." They must have been already in motion that way. Already on the move. And when you go up, you really go up. Jericho is about a thousand feet below sea level, Jerusalem is over 5,000 above and as the crow flies, they're fifteen miles apart. So that's a very steep ascent. That's why the Bible says they were going up.

And you can imagine that they weren't alone, not Jesus and the disciples, because the Peraean ministry had no doubt congregated around them a mass of people. Chapter 20 again verse 29 says there was a great multitude that followed Him. And as this multitude is moving, it's Passover time, they're attracted because they would normally be on this journey anyway and as well they have now

found themselves in the company of this wonder working Jesus, this astounding teacher and healer. And so as typically in the Galilean ministry, so here we find Him surrounded by these people. And He's moving toward Jerusalem.

And on the way He again feels the need to communicate what's going on to His disciples. And so He pulls them aside along the road. Get's them off somewhere away from the crowd and speaks to them. And what He says to them is "we go up to Jerusalem." It may sound shocking, it may sound strange, but that is exactly where we're going.

Now Mark 10:32 gives us the parallel account to this. And Mark says the disciples were--and he uses two words--amazed and afraid. They were amazed and afraid. And the reason for this is because they knew the hostility of the Jerusalem aristocracy. They knew that both the chief priests and the scribes were definitely enemies of Christ. They had enough experience to know that. They had already run into conflict with these people, the Pharisees namely, on several occasions. And they really couldn't see any point in going right into Jerusalem. They also knew that that's where the Roman seat was. Maybe they felt that if you're going to pull off a revolution, it ought to start up in Galilee and become sort of an ascending sort of accumulative grass roots revolution. You don't just walk a motley group of thirteen people into the city of Jerusalem and take over. And so they were somewhat confused. And I think really, in the negative side, they had...many of them had sort of given up on the Kingdom concept in its immediacy, at least emotionally if not intellectually. And all they could see was we're going to go right in there and die. In fact, in John 11:16, when Jesus said we're going to go to Jerusalem or to Bethany which is right in that proximity, Thomas who is called Didymus said, "We'll all go with You and die, too." Very pessimistic.

So, they are, says Mark, amazed and afraid. And then Mark tells us that Jesus walked in front of them. And they were in the back. He's like a commander who's leading his troupes into battle and he puts himself in the most dangerous and vulnerable position. There are few pictures, really, in the gospels that are more interesting than that, more moving, more striking than that. Jesus faced steadfast, moving toward His own death on behalf of these disciples and they're afraid and amazed, cowering in the back, dragging behind Him, mingling both the anticipation of the hope of the Kingdom with the fear of death and not really knowing what to expect.

The word "amazed" by the way in Mark 10:32 is thambeo. It's a very rare word, only used by Mark three times and once in the book of Acts chapter 9 verse 6, it's used of Paul on the road to Damascus. And based on those four usages and the queries that come out of each time its used, it seems to me the best way to translate that word is "to be confused," or "to be baffled." To be unable to understand the situation. So it is that kind of amazement, it isn't the amazement of seeing something wonderful and awesome, it is the confusion and the chaos of the mind that comes when you can't make sense out of what's happening. And it's exactly what Paul was experiencing when he went blind on the road to Damascus and was confronted by the resurrected Christ. And that's how Mark uses it, I think, as well.

So, they are because of their confusion afraid and the word Mark uses is phobos from which we get phobia. They are having some real anxiety because of the confusion of wondering why in the world Jesus would be going to Jerusalem when He knows the people there hate Him and want to take His life. But He is so resolute. And the reason is because this is the plan, and that's what I want to get at. This is the plan, we go to Jerusalem. It has to be, folks. It has to be.

In fact, that's not all He said, that's just all the part that Matthew records. Luke in the parallel passage in Luke 18:31 says, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished." So He says we have to go because it's the prophetic plan.

So, Jesus going to suffer is no accident. It is not a bad turn in a nice revolution. It is no shock. This was foretold by myriads of prophets. And people who accuse Jesus of being some misguided patriot or some well-meaning peacemaker whose revolution went array, not only not understand...do they not understand Jesus but they don't understand the Old Testament either. And all they do is demonstrate their ignorance. This is the culmination of the redemptive plan of God. And you can go back into the Old Testament and you will find passage upon passage upon passage predicting all of the factors of Jesus Christ's life.

Zechariah 9:9 says that He would enter into Jerusalem. Psalm 2, that He would know the fury and rage of His enemies. Zechariah 13:7, that He would be deserted by His friends. Zechariah 11:12, that His betrayal would be for 30 pieces of silver. Psalm 22:16, that He would be pierced on the cross. Exodus 12:46, that none of His bones would be broken, also Psalm 34:20. Psalm 22:18 says that His garments will be parted by casting of lots. Psalm 69:21 says He'll be given vinegar to drink. Psalm 22:1, He will cry out in the pain of distress. Psalm 22:31 that He will cry out the victory cry, "It is finished." Zechariah 12:10 says they'll pierce Him with a sphere. And Psalm 16:10, that He will rise from the dead. Psalm 1..10:1 even says He'll ascend into heaven.

All of those things are part of the Old Testament prophets. And you want a piece by piece detailed description of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in minute detail, you read Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 and Zechariah's prophecy and you'll have there explicitly a description of all the details of our Lord's death on the cross. So when He's going to Jerusalem, He is on schedule, on target, on plan, no deviation at all.

But as you go to the Old Testament, you know, it's interesting, there are not only...and I want to just talk about this for a moment...there are not only very explicit verbal predictions about Christ, but the whole sweep of the Old Testament, the whole flow of the Old Testament in its types and symbols and pictures demands that the Messiah die for the sins of the world. It demands that. Not only verbal predictions but the whole picture, the graphic of the Old Testament demands that.

Let me show you what I mean. The death of Jesus Christ is the primary event in history and also the primary event in the Bible. And as someone has said, it is the scarlet thread woven through the whole Scripture. And I think it really comes into focus, first of all, in the third chapter of Genesis. Because in Genesis chapter 3 you have Adam and Eve's sin. And immediately when they sin, they feel cut off from God. So the first thing they do is they hide themselves. They're estranged from God. There's a separation.

The second thing that occurs is that they immediately become aware that they're what? They're naked. And God comes and clothes them. And in order to clothe them with the skin of animals, there has to be death. And so some animals are slain to make clothes for them. Now that's a very important thought because if you listen very carefully to that account, you can hear the first soft sounds of what becomes an Old Testament symphony, that guilt and shame and separation are covered by sacrifice. It's a very important truth. And that's where that truth is introduced. Sacrifice is the only way to deal with guilt and separation from God. We find that not a verbal prediction of Jesus

Christ but a setting in motion of truth that demands the ultimate Passover lamb.

Now as you follow along a little further in the writings of Moses and you come to Genesis 22, you find a second great and profound element of sacrificial truth is taught. God gave Abraham a son by the name of Isaac in whom all his hopes resided. He was to be the seed out of whose loins would come a generation of people who would number as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven. An Abrahamic promise was bound up in Isaac.

And as God comes to Abraham and says, "I want you to kill your son," you can see the slaying of all of his hopes and dreams and all of the things that God had promised and planned. And yet Abraham is truly faithful and committed to do what God says so he packs a bunch of wood on Isaac's back and they start for the hill of sacrifice known as Mount Meriah. They get up there and Isaac puts the sticks down and then Abraham puts Isaac down on top of the altar that's been prepared and lifts the knife to drive it into the heart of his own beloved son. And at that moment, God stops his arm and he hears a ram in the thicket and he goes over, takes the ram and sacrifices the ram and God spares his son.

And the thing that sustained Abraham, Hebrews 11 says, and made him come to the point where he was willing to do that is that he believed God would raise Isaac from the dead. So committed was he to God keeping His promise that he figured in his mind if God says kill him, then God's going to have to raise him from the dead to fulfill His own word. And he believed God was a God of His word so he was willing to take his son's life so that God could raise him from the dead. But God held his hand and provided a ram. That is the second profound truth of redemption taught in the book of Genesis and that is substitution. God will provide a substitute.

And it says in Genesis 22:14 that Abraham named that place "The Lord will Provide." The Lord will provide. In the Mount of the Lord, it says, it will be provided. So then, we learn that sin can..and shame and guilt can only be dealt with by sacrifice and God will provide a sacrifice.

Now as you move a little further in the story of God's unfolding redemptive plan, you come to the twelfth chapter of Exodus and you get the third great principle in relation to redemptive sacrifice. God says I'm going to send the angel of death through Egypt and He's going to slay the first born of every house. If you want to be protected, you have to sacrifice a lamb that is unblemished, without spot, a pure lamb. Put the blood on the doorposts and the lintel, the angel of death seeing that will pass by you. In other words, you will be delivered from judgment by making a blood sacrifice.

Now that repeats what we learned in Genesis 3, that sin has to be dealt with by sacrifice. It also repeats what we learned in Genesis 22, that a sacrifice can be substituted for the guilty person. But then it adds a third and very important dimension to redemptive truth and that is this, that the sacrifice must be unblemished, must be pure.

Now we go from there to the wanderings of Israel and we get into the wilderness at Sinai. And God draws all the people together. Moses goes up the mount. God gives the law. And then God begins to unfold through Moses all of the intricate complex elements of the sacrificial system so that sacrifice for those people became a way of living. Every day, every national feast, every act of worship, every approach to God, every day of every year was based on sacrifice. So sacrifice became a way of life. They were giving bloody sacrifices day in, day out, year in and year out.

Now you bring all these pictures together. From Adam and Eve we learn that sacrifice covers the guilt of sin. From Abraham we learn that that sacrifice can be a substitute which God will provide. From the Passover, we learn that that sacrifice must be unblemished, without spot. And finally, from the centrality of sacrifice in the law, we learn the importance of sacrifice in a worshiping life. There will be no worship of God without sacrifice, none. And that is why the first of the five offerings was the burnt offering and the burnt offering was all offered to God. God needs to be offered the fullness of sacrifice in any act of worship.

So, God had to provide then a sacrifice to cover sin, who was a substitute, who was unblemished, who could redeem His people and provide the kind of sacrifice that could open up the way of worship forever. And that's why, you see, when Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple was rent and the sacrificial system was over because He was the one final sacrifice that created an openness to God from which we could worship from then on without ever having to offer another sacrifice.

So, you see, if you look at the Old Testament, it isn't just verbal prediction. The whole flow of it, the whole sweep of it, the whole concept of it is that there is the need for a sacrifice. That's what the Old Testament was saying. And so, our Lord says we go to Jerusalem. The disciples figure we're going there for the Passover, what they didn't know was that they were going there with the Passover lamb. You see, they were looking lion, but He was thinking lamb. They were thinking Kingdom, He was thinking sacrifice. They were thinking glory, and He was thinking suffering and then glory. I mean, on the mount of transfiguration in chapter 17, I'm sure they thought this was it, Peter, James and John. And then He went down the mountain and now He's going to Jerusalem and they are confused about that and they are afraid.

But He's on schedule. He says, particularly in the gospel of John and several places, I think at least six or seven different places, that I will do the will of My Father. And even after His resurrection when He met those disciples on the road to Emmaus, it says in Luke 24, "Ought not Christ who have suffered these things and enter into His glory?" He started at Moses, the prophets and I think He probably took them through a better lesson than I just gave you, but a similar one. Maybe He went all the way to Genesis 3 and said why do you think God took a lamb there? And Genesis 22, why do you think God provided a sacrificial offering there? Maybe He took them to the Passover and maybe He just took them through the whole flow of Moses and then the prophets, gave them the verbal predictions. Maybe they went to Isaiah 53, maybe they went to Zechariah. And then in all the holy writings, maybe He took them to the Psalms and showed them 22 and others. And said it's all there. And later on in that twenty-fourth chapter, it says in verse 46, "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer."

See, they just couldn't get that through that He had to suffer. But He was on schedule. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 says that He died, was buried and rose again according to the..what? Scriptures. And as 1 Peter 1:11 says, you know, they were...the prophets were looking at what they wrote and they saw two things, they saw the sufferings and the glory that should follow. And if you don't see both of those, you miss it. That's why Jews even today have missed Jesus as their Messiah cause all they can see is the glory, they don't understand the suffering. They don't know what in the world to do with Psalm 22, they haven't got a clue what to do with Isaiah 53 and they're lost in Zechariah also. Because if you don't see the suffering, you can't understand Christ.

But, you know, it wasn't anything new. When that little child was taken to the temple by his mother and there they met that man of God who was devout, waiting for the conciliation of Israel, the coming

of the Messiah by the name of Simeon. And had asked the Lord that he would not die till he saw that Messiah. You remember that child was brought in, he picked Him up in his arms and blessed Him and talked about how He would be for the falling and the rising of many, and all of this. And then he said to Mary, "And your heart will be pierced through as with a sword." In other words, it will not be without pain and it will not be without suffering. And only a mother's heart could know the suffering that Mary knew.

And so, from the very beginning it was that way. And when He arrived and John the Baptist saw Him in John 1:29, the way he introduced His ministry, "Behold the...what?...the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." And when Revelation exalts Him, it says, "He was a lamb as though it had been slain and then He is the lion of the tribe of Judah." So He's going to Jerusalem because it's on plan. He's not going to have His plans go bad, I mean, He's on target.

Now let me talk about a second point. First the plan of His suffering; secondly, the predictions of His sufferings. He adds to what the Old Testament prophets say, His own prophecies. We go to Jerusalem. The Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and the scribes. Look at the detail. They shall condemn Him to death, shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, to scourge, to crucify, a third day He'll rise again. I mean, He's predicting these things. And only God knows that. Only God can tell the story before it happens, right? Only God can make history before it even occurs. This is God in human flesh, who else knows all of that? I mean, who else can give all these incredible details: betrayal, handing over to chief priests, scribes, condemned to death, handed over to the pagans where He will be mocked, Matthew and Luke add He will be spit on, He says I'll be spit on. How did He know all of that? And then I will be scourged and then crucified and then rise again.

Well, how does He know all of that? I'll tell you, there's only one who knows that and that's God and that's who He is. This is no ordinary man. He knew how many husbands a strange woman he'd never met had and the one she was living with wasn't her husband. And He knew a conversation before a conversation occurred. He told His disciples to go get the colt, the foal of an ass and He told them the conversation that would happen when they asked the guy for the animal, before the guy even was asked. He forecast the fall of Jerusalem in Matthew 21. I mean, this is God. He calls Himself the Son of Man, that was His favorite term, He used it 80 times, or it's used 80 times, I should say, in the gospels. It's a term of His humiliation, but it also incorporates His exaltation out of that humility.

But He says the Son of Man, first of all, shall be betrayed. Now the verb betrayed is not here, it's simply the verb "to be handed over." But it was obvious that it implied the betrayal and that's why the translators put it in here because it was Judas who turned Him over. It was a betrayal.

And He was turned over the chief priests. The chief priests among the priests, and there were thousands of them, the chief priests were the upper echelon ones. There were the Levites, they were at the bottom of the priestly totem pole. Then there were the normal course of priests. And there was the guy who was the head of the daily course, the guy who's ahead of the weekly course, and then there was the sort of the captain of the temple, and then there was the high priest. And the guys at the top of the ladder were known as the chief priests. And so, these chief priests were the hereditary aristocracy. They were in the priestly line, they got their rank by heredity.

They were also accompanied by the scribes who got their rank not by heredity but by knowledge. They attained to knowledge by studying the law. They were the lawyers and nobody could interpret

anything without them. Very much like today, if you want to interpret any kind of law, you get into any kind of legal situation, you have to have a lawyer. Well it was that way then. In trying to interpret the Mosaic economy, they had to have lawyers, quote/unquote, who really were the scribes who could come along side and explain the meaning of the law, interpret the law and so forth.

So, you had the hereditary aristocracy and you had the knowledge aristocracy and they made this body of people who ultimately condemned Jesus Christ to death because He so threatened the security of their system. Well, Jesus sees Himself being betrayed to them, to this executive body of the temple priesthood, being handed over. And indeed that's what happened. Judas betrayed Him. The priests were simply Christ rejectors who were in a position to pull off a fake and mockery trial and condemn Him to death. And that's what He saw happening and that is exactly what happened. This is not a surprise. This is exactly the way it was planned and He predicts the details.

Now obviously they couldn't kill Him because the Romans had removed their right to do that. And so they had to give Him over to the Gentiles, verse 19. After the condemn Him to death in a false trial, said He should die for what He's done, trumped up charges against Him, ultimately the charge was that He speaks against Caesar and so forth cause they knew that the Romans wouldn't like that. They delivered Him over to the pagans because the pagans, the Romans, had the right of execution and they alone could take His life. And you remember the story, Pilate couldn't find anything wrong with Him. But finally succumbed to crucifying Him because of blackmail. They said they'd tell Caesar and he already had two strikes against him in his relations with the Jews and Caesar probably would have taken him out of there and maybe taken his life with one other mistake. And so he succumbed.

But in the meantime, you read the story of what happened when they took Him down into the fort Antoninus. They mocked Him. Remember they put a reed in His hand, crammed a crown of thorns on His head. Spit all over Him. And they jeered at Him. And all of that kind of mockery He describes. Then they scourged Him. They lacerated His back with leather thongs in which there were bits of bone and metal in the end. And they did all of this because they were laughing to scorn at Him. And ultimately they crucified Him. And all the details are there and, of course, He rose from the dead.

So, you have the plan of the sufferings and you have the prediction of His sufferings. Now that takes me to the heart of this passage which I'd like to call "the proportion of sufferings." I don't know that I've ever really thought this through to the extent that I did in looking at this passage, but the thing that hit me as I read over and over this little section of three verses was how in detail He talked about His suffering. It seemed more detailed than any other time that Jesus ever spoke about this and I began to think about His sufferings and tried to look through the Word of God and see what I could learn.

The first thing I found out was that when referring to sufferings, using that word, it appears in the plural. For example, in 2 Corinthians 1:5 it means "the sufferings of Christ." In Philippians 3:10, the fellowship of His sufferings. First Peter 1:11, the sufferings. First Peter 4:13, the sufferings. Luke 24:26, suffered many things. Hebrews 2:10, the salvation was made perfect through sufferings.

In other words, I got the idea that it wasn't just one dimensional suffering. That the proportion of His suffering was beyond anything I'd ever thought about. I mean, I don't know how you've looked at it, but kind of growing up in the church, you sort of think of the suffering of Christ having to do with the nails, or the sphere, or the crown of thorns. The body has a way to deal with that kind of thing. That is a suffering, there's little question about it.

But Josephus writes in one particular account of three men that were crucified. They were left there until such a time as they should have been dead and taken down. Two of them lived, one died. Which is to say that crucifixion in and of itself didn't necessarily kill everybody. In fact there's a record even beyond those three of many who lived through crucifixion. That is why they scourge those that they especially wanted to die because the tremendous loss of blood, exposure of the internal organs and all the pain involved in that would speed up and make secure the death reality in crucifixion.

But there was much more to the suffering of Christ than just the nails on the cross. I mean, the body shock system has a way to deal with that kind of trauma. And so I began to think about all of the facets of His suffering. And with that in mind, I want you to look at Isaiah 53 for just a brief moment and see if I can't show you how clearly this is revealed and yet perhaps you have not thought of it in these terms.

The proportion or the dimensions of Christ's suffering. Isaiah 53 obviously describes the suffering of Christ. And it starts out in verse 2, for our benefit, that He has no form or comeliness and when we see Him there's no beauty that we should desire Him. And you have the suffering of being ugly. The suffering of being rejected. The suffering of no form, no comeliness. People turning away. It says in verse 3, "We hid-- as it were--our faces from Him." So ugly. There's a rejection kind of suffering. And that's what's pointed out in verse 3, He is despised. That's hated...rejected, filled with sorrow. The suffering of sorrow, the suffering of grief, the despising, the lack of esteem or regard or dignity or respect. So He was suffering the internal pain of knowing you're ugly and having people gaping at you in your ugliness. The suffering of being despised, rejected, filled with sorrow and grief and getting no esteem and no respect. And remember who this is. This is not one whose ever known this until the incarnation and one who never was worthy of it.

And then you have the suffering in verse 4 of bearing others griefs, of carrying others sorrow. Sometimes we suffer as much when we carry the pain of someone else as we do with our own. And then the suffering of being stricken, smitten and afflicted by God Himself, having God smash His fist of wrath against you. Blows from God where you find Him crying out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

And then you have the suffering of being wounded and begin bruised. And here it's more physical. And having stripes against the body, the suffering of physical pain as well as inherent in that the wound of transgression, the bruise of iniquity and feeling the chastening of God to accomplish peace for someone else.

And then in verse 6 you have that lonely, lonely statement, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we've turned everyone to his own way and the Lord's laid on Him the iniquity of all of us." Here He is all alone, bearing all the sins of all the world, a cosmic kind of divine loneliness. And then in verse 7 you have the tremendous suffering of oppression, affliction and silence. He can't even speak. He can't even defend Himself. He can't push them away and say "Stop, I'm the Son of God. I will not have this." He has to suffer in absolute silence. He has to keep His mouth closed. The suffering of knowing you're right, knowing you're just and holy and pure and good and not being able to say it.

And then there's the suffering of prison, the suffering of a false judgment in verse 8, the suffering of death. That's what it means to be cut off from the land of the living. The suffering of being stricken by

God to bear sin, the suffering of burial and being counted as a common criminal. And then the suffering of knowing that you hadn't done anything and you didn't deserve any of this, no violence, no deceit. And then the suffering of knowing it pleased God to do this to you, to put you to grief. And then the suffering of verse 11, the pain of the soul. And then in verse 12, the pouring out of the soul to death, being numbered or counted with transgressors, bearing the sins of many, and so forth. I mean, if you look at that that way, it's just overwhelming to conceive of the proportion of the suffering of our Lord. And I think that's what's in His heart this day as He goes up the hill to Jerusalem. I think this is what's in His heart, I really do.

Let me show you what He says here. First of all, I believe that when He talks about being handed over to the chief priests, He is suffering the pain of disloyalty. Now remember this, He suffered all of this in anticipation. Because He knew it was going to happen, He could suffer the pain even now. And the first pain I see here, the first area of suffering is the suffering of disloyalty. What the psalmist said in Psalm 41:9, "Mine own familiar friend has lifted up his heel against me, the one who ate bread with me." Here was one He loved, one that He walked with and talked with, one who affirmed to Him love and intimacy and care and trust and all of that and He was betrayed by Judas. And He was not only betrayed, He was betrayed with a kiss. The suffering of betrayal, the overwhelming suffering when someone close to you violates that intimacy and seeks to destroy you, the ugly sin, the deep pain of being betrayed by a friend.

And then I believe He suffered the suffering of rejection. He was turned over to the chief priests and the scribes and they condemned Him to death. John put it very simply. "He came unto His own and His own...what?...received Him not." And He sat over the city of Jerusalem, the Bible says, and He wept. He said, "How often I would have gathered thee as a hen gathers her brood and you would not." They just rejected Him. Isaiah said, you remember we just read it, He was despised and rejected of men. He was the stone the builders rejected. They didn't want a thing to do with Him.

And so, those He loved, His own people, those that He worked with and healed and taught, they rejected Him. The heartbreak is enough to crush you. Here He's been betrayed by a friend and rejected by His own people. And I believe in all of this He suffered a broken heart and that's why when the spear went in, out came a combination of blood and water. I think the anxiety had already crushed Him, burst Him. And then to add to that, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," not only is He rejected by men, He's rejected by God...rejected by God. It says in Matthew 26:56 that all the disciples forsook Him and fled. He didn't have anybody...rejected by the people, rejected by the disciples, rejected by God. So disloyalty and rejection...

Thirdly, there was the suffering of humiliation...the suffering of humiliation. Notice it says they mocked Him. Once He got into the hands of the pagans, they mocked Him. They pulled at His beard, they crammed a crown of thorns on His head. They stuck a reed in His hand, put a robe on Him, said you're a king, you know. They'd spit on His face. They mocked Him. They scorned Him. They ridiculed Him. And then they nailed Him naked before the whole world. You see, that's emotional pain, that's pain for the soul not the body. The lovely, glorious, beautiful sinless Son of God is humiliated who should be exalted. He's embarrassed. He's ridiculed. And Peter says in 1 Peter 2:23, He never retaliated, took it in silence. I just can't imagine what it would have been like for Him to be spit on, but that's what they did. And so there's the pain of humiliation.

Then a fourth kind of pain that I see in this text, they scourged Him and crucified Him. But the reason they did that was because they had condemned Him. And I would call this the pain of unjust guilt, the

pain of being held responsible for something you're not guilty of. I mean, you know, if we had been accused of something for which there was a severe penalty and weren't guilty, we'd be screaming all over the place. But in silence He had to accept the responsibility for sin that He never committed. And all the guilt of all the people that ever lived was put on Him. I can't imagine any pain or suffering more terrible than to be accused of a crime with a death penalty and you knew you didn't do it. And then they have been...put all the guilt, all the guilt put on you, just incredible.

Now you take those four things alone, the pain of betrayal and rejection and humiliation and unjust guilt, and that alone, if you never got nailed to anything, would be enough to kill you. And that's what I think was going on in the garden. I believe in the garden of Gethsamane that the suffering and anxiety of His soul over these things almost killed Him. And His body literally began to come apart at the seams and leak great drops of blood. The nails are not a big deal. It's the pain of bearing all the sins of all the people who ever lived when you're the spotless lamb of God. It's the pain of humiliation when you deserve exaltation. It's the pain of rejection, it's the pain of betrayal.

Well, you could add two more. There's the pain of injury and I think that's here, He points it up, the scourge. And there He's referring to the fact that He will suffer physically and scourging was a horrible thing. We'll see more about it future, but forty lashes was the Jewish thing and forty lashes basically the Romans. The Jews always stopped one short because they didn't want to break the law so they hit 39 and then stopped. The traditional way, the Romans did it with metal and bone in the end of these three leather thongs was 13 lashes across the chest and then 13 on each of the two shoulders. It usually took two men to do it because one wasn't strong enough to continue the whipping at the pace they wanted it. They would tie the hands to a post so the body slumped and they'd turn it around, take care of the chest, turn it around and take care of the back. And the organs would be exposed, the bleeding would be profuse and many people would die. And He suffered tremendous physical pain.

Finally, the proportion of His suffering extended to death, He died. You say, "How'd He die?" I don't think He died by the nails in His hands. He didn't die by the spear, it didn't go in till He was already dead. I don't think the thorn...the crown of thorns killed Him. It's possible that the suffocating of His organs is the physiological reason that He died, but I think it was the cumulative grief, anxiety, pain and suffering that all of that stuff brought upon Him that killed Him. And the greatest suffering is not physical, the greatest suffering is the suffering of the soul. And the proportions of Christ's suffering as I think Isaiah 53 is trying to tell us by almost to a point of being criticized from the literary standpoint, repeating over and over and over and over and over different words to say the same thing is an act on Isaiah's part by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to give us a little bit of an understanding of how wide and broad and vast the degree of His suffering was.

He's telling them this. And these blockheads...it goes right on by. And in the next breath they're asking which of them can sit on the right and the left hand in His Kingdom. So utterly insensitive...and that's, if you want to add one more, the suffering of unsympathetic friends. The suffering that comes when you need somebody and they aren't there...when you need somebody and they're not responsive, when they could care less about your pain because they're so involved in their own glory.

Well, we've seen the plan, the prediction, the proportion and we're right where I want to be, I want you to see the power of sufferings at the end of verse 19. "The third day He shall rise again." Suffering's not the end. Listen, those people that say Jesus' whole revolution ended in a grave are

wrong. He rose out of that grave three days later. And as it said in Psalm 16:10, God would never leave His soul in the grave, He would never let His holy one see corruption, Jesus burst out of that grave and is alive to this very day and that is the power over His sufferings. Bless God for that. What a promise. He would conquer death.

How could they miss that? I mean, how could they miss...how could they not want to ask about that? I mean, they must have thought about death. They must have thought about dying and the future. Well, what would keep them from asking about that? He told them He had the power over His sufferings.

A last point, the perception of sufferings. What was their reaction? How did they perceive this? They're off on the side of the road, He's giving them this. How did they react?

"Then came to Him," verse 20, "the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshiping Him, desiring a certain thing of Him and He said unto her, What wilt thou? She said unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on Thy right hand and the other on the left in Thy Kingdom. And Jesus answered and said, You don't even know what you're asking." That's how they reacted. They didn't come and say, "Lord, tell us more about the suffering, tell us more about the redemption, tell us more about the ransom, tell us more about the fact that You're the lamb, tell us about Your resurrection, tell us what..." No, they come with their mother. "Hey, we want to be on the right and we want to be on the left." And they didn't even get the message. They wanted a king, they kept missing the fact they needed a savior.

And they're no more thick than people today. They don't mind Jesus...I always think of that at Christmas. They don't mind Him a little baby in a manger. They don't mind Him a nice little guy with little children around His lap. They don't even mind Him too much as a king, it's the savior they can't handle. And Israel today is in the same situation...the same situation. It's the suffering that they won't accept.

Well, the good news is good news but it's got bad news in it and that's that there's a suffering Messiah. But if you understand 1 Peter 3:18, He suffered...why?...the just to the unjust that He might bring us to God. We couldn't get there any other way, you see. Why? Back to Genesis. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were separated. What reconciled them? Sacrifice. And when God ordained the elaborate sacrificial system in the Israel He was saying you don't come to Me unless you come by means of a sacrifice. And so, Jesus had to be offered, the just-- that's Him, for the unjust--that's us, that He might bring us to God.

Well, the dawn of all of this came like thunder on the Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and finally unscrambled the minds of those disciples and Peter stood up and preached a tremendous sermon on the meaning of the death of Christ and His resurrection. I'm glad they finally got the message. I hope you do too. Let's bow in prayer.

The effort this morning to teach you the Word of God is not as an end in itself, not for the purpose of having you have information about Christ, but that you might know Him and the salvation He offers, that you might in your heart understand the sufferings of Christ for you and the glory which is to follow, that you may enter into both by faith in Him. His death is your death. His life is your life. If

you'd like to commit your life to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin, the promise of eternal life, you can do that in your heart right now the best way you can, as far as you understand it. You seek the Lord in that matter.

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