**Grace to You** :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

**The Silent Servant, Part 1**
Scripture: Isaiah 53:7-9
Code: 90-441

Open your Bible, if you will, to Isaiah chapter 53. For those of you who are with us this weekend because of the special graduations and maybe Mother's Day, I apologize for the fact that you are going to be jumping in in the middle of this journey. And in some ways this is a series of sermons that link together very tightly and you're going to be missing a whole lot of the earlier links, but we hope that it will still be an encouragement to you.

I always feel like I need to do a little bit to sort of get you up to speed. We have come into a study of the Old Testament, after spending forty-some years studying the New Testament here at Grace Church. We are greatly challenged in this study and, I think, profoundly blessed. We are looking for Christ in the Old Testament everywhere we can find Him, and we start where He is most marvelously and most completely revealed, and that is in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

Actually this revelation of our Lord starts in chapter 52, verse 13, and runs down to 53, verse 12. There are five stanzas in this servant song, we might call it. It is a song. It has a certain lyric to it. It has a certain rhythm to it as it is read in the original Hebrew language. It is a servant song. It is the fourth servant song written by Isaiah. In the second half of Isaiah's prophecy, from chapter 40 to the end in chapter 66, he focuses on salvation. And salvation is dependent upon the Savior, and so Isaiah introduces us in this section to the Savior.

There are other places in his prophecy where he refers to the Savior. Back in chapter 7, he makes reference to the virgin birth of the Savior. Back in chapter 9 he identifies the Savior in a number of wonderful ways. The mighty God, the Prince of peace, the Father of eternity, the Son who is born to us, upon whose shoulders final and everlasting government will rest. So there's much that he says about the Messiah. But in particular in the second half of his great prophecy, there are four servant songs. One in chapter 42, one in chapter 49, another in chapter 50 and then this epic treatment of the Messiah in chapter 53. And in each of these four chapters Isaiah tells us things about the Messiah.

Now remember, these are written 700 years before the Messiah comes. Seven hundred years before Jesus, Isaiah is giving us prophecy. They are not vague prophecies about Him; they are very specific, particularly in chapter 53. In chapter 42, the Messiah is introduced under the title "The Servant of Jehovah, the Servant of the Lord, or the Slave of the Lord." *Ebed* is the Hebrew word which means "slave."

This Servant, this Messiah, this One who is to come, according to chapter 42, will be chosen by God. He will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. He will bring justice, or righteousness, to the world. He will bring salvation to the world. He will deliver blind prisoners from their dark dungeons of sin. That's the way He is described in chapter 42.

In chapter 49 we learn a little bit more. He will be human; He will be a man. And there's even a reference there to Him being born of a virgin. He will again save Israel and bring salvation to the nations of the world and, finally, be glorified. Chapter 50 tells us a little more. He will be humiliated; chapter 50 introduces that component. He will suffer humiliation through which He will learn obedience and, ultimately and finally, be vindicated. But when we get to chapter 50, the details are more complete and more astonishing than in those earlier prophecies.

As we come into chapter 52, verse 13 through 53, verse 12, we begin to focus on the coming Messiah in the kind of precision that can only be known to God, 700 years before the reality. We come to see here that we not only have a Messiah chosen, Spirit-empowered who brings justice and salvation to the world, a man, virgin born, a man who learns obedience through humiliation, through suffering, as chapter 50 indicated, but we have a Messiah who dies as a sacrifice for sin. That is what we find uniquely in chapter 53. Here in this chapter, the Jews are told 700 years before Messiah arrives, that He will be God's sacrificial Lamb.

The notable statement is made in verse 7. He was oppressed and He was afflicted yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb that is led to slaughter and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. He is a lamb led to slaughter. Here, in no uncertain terms, no terms that are vague, not a symbol, but in a direct statement, we are told that the Messiah will be slaughtered like a lamb and in that slaughter He will be silent as a lamb is silent.

The imagery is inescapable for the Jews who are hearing this prophecy, or reading it. They lived in ancient times in an agrarian society, a society made up of crops, grain in the flat places, and vineyards on the hillsides. And they were very familiar with animal husbandry and particularly with sheep. Sheep were a staple part of their life. For the sake of wool, they were vital, and for the sake of food, they were vital. They were not only sheared but they were eaten. They were sheared and they were slaughtered. And that was a very familiar part of life in ancient times in the land of Israel. They killed sheep to eat them. They sheared sheep to make their clothes.

Here they are introduced to their Messiah as a lamb who is to be slaughtered. The slaughter part is reality; the lamb is analogy. It is telling us here, in verse 7, that the Messiah will be oppressed, afflicted, silent, and slaughtered. And He will be quiet and silent when He is being slaughtered, the way a sheep is silent when it is being slaughtered and silent even when it is being sheared. Twice in verse 7 we read that He did not open His mouth.

Now remember, though this chapter looks forward to the death of Christ, it also looks backward from the conversion of Israel at the end of human history, and that is why the verbs are in the past tense. He *was* oppressed. He *was* afflicted. He *did not* open His mouth. It is past-tense perspective because all that is said here about the death of Jesus Christ is said not looking forward from Isaiah's viewpoint but looking backward from the future conversion of Israel when they look on the One whom they have pierced, as Zechariah 12 says, and mourn for Him as an only Son.

It is the perspective of the future redeemed nation of Israel, yet to happen in human history when they look back and realize that He was oppressed and afflicted, He was led as a lamb to slaughter, He was silent, and He did it all for their transgressions, as verse 8 puts it. So you have a most marvelous perspective in this chapter. While it is a prophecy of the cross, it is only secondly a prophecy of the cross. Primarily it is a prophecy of the future conversion of Israel, and this is what they will say when they make a true confession and repent of their rejection of Jesus Christ and affirm their faith in Him as their Savior and Redeemer.

This is what they will say. These words in Isaiah53 are their confession. So it is an amazing prophecy that looks beyond the cross and then back to the cross, describing not only the future confession of Israel, the future salvation of Israel and the very words they will say, but secondarily, giving us details about the cross which they will confess and which for all of us who are believers we have already come to confess. That which Israel will one day affirm as a true perspective on Christ, we who are believers in this generation, both Jew and Gentile, have already affirmed.

We are saved because we believe He was pierced for our transgressions, verse 5. We are saved because we believe He was crushed for our iniquities, that the punishment that came on Him was for our well-being and that by His scourging, we are healed. We are saved because in verse 6 we believe the Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. We are saved because of verse 8. We believe He was cut off for our transgressions. We believe, verse 10, that the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief so that He would become a guilt offering for our sins. We believe, in verse 11, that He justified many by bearing their iniquities. At the end of verse 12, we believe that He bore the sins of many and interceded for the transgressors.

To become a Christian, one must believe in the vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on our behalf on the cross. But some day the whole nation of Israel will believe. Zechariah tells us that there will be two-thirds of the nation purged in unbelief, judged by God, and a remaining one-third of Israel will have a national conversion by a sovereign act of God. If we take the current number of about fifteen million Jews in the world, five million Jews in one moment of time will come to faith in Jesus Christ under the sovereign power of God.

And by the way, no matter what's going on on the world scene, no matter how much nuclear power the Middle East generates, no matter how many bombs the Iranians can devise and how many they can aim at Israel, they will not destroy Israel. They will not destroy Israel because God has a future salvation for Israel written in detail in the Scripture. Their salvation is promised in Jeremiah 31; it is promised in Ezekiel 36, as we have seen; it is promised in Zechariah 12 and 13; and it is promised right here in Isaiah 53 as to the very words of their confession. And Paul reiterates that in Romans and says, "So all Israel will be saved."

So whatever may happen in immediate history in the Middle East, God will preserve His people for their final salvation. There may be attacks on that land. There may be devastating attacks on that land, but there will be a remaining Israel to put their faith in Christ in the future. Here they find out by prophecy that their Messiah will be slaughtered. That is not what they expected. They expected Him to come as a king, but before He ever comes as a king the second time, He has to come the first time as a lamb. Before He comes to live and reign, He must come to die.

All through history the Jews were very familiar with sacrificial animals. All through their history from Leviticus on, when they were instructed in the book of Leviticus that God wanted them to offer blood sacrifice, which was not new, not at all. That goes all the way back to Abel offering to God a blood sacrifice, and all the way back to Abraham, where Abraham is told to offer his son on the altar. And as Abraham lifts the knife to plunge it into Isaac's heart, his hand is stopped, and God provides a sacrifice. They had been instructed that sin causes death, that the soul that sins, it shall die, as the prophet said. And that there must be a penalty paid for sin. Someone must die. And the demonstration of that is in every sacrificial animal that was ever slaughtered through the history of Israel.

It wasn't that salvation came by the death of the animal; it was that the animal symbolized the fact that sin required death and that God was willing to provide an innocent substitute who would die the death for the penitent sinner. No forgiveness of sin would be granted by God apart from an acceptable, substitutionary sacrifice of an innocent victim. They had known from Abraham, Genesis 22, that God would provide a sacrifice. Even that early, as early as Abraham, they could look forward to who that sacrifice would finally be.

The animals were never the satisfactory sacrifice. They were slain by the tens of thousands at every Passover from Exodus 12 on, till the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. by the Romans. There were animals sacrificed in the temple and in the tabernacle every single day in the morning sacrifice and the evening sacrifice. And then there were personal sacrifices, according to Leviticus 5. People had to bring their own sacrifices. They were slaughtering lambs at all times all through the history of Israel. There was really a way to view the priests, and that is to see them as butchers. That's essentially what they were. When they went to do their priestly duty in the temple, they butchered animals for the duration of their time there. They were ankle deep in blood day after day, after day, after day, and

God was presenting the symbol to them that your sin requires death.

And for the faithful Jews with true hearts who were repentant, they would come and they would understand that and they would offer their sacrifice, and by that sacrifice they were saying, “I know my sin requires death. I know I am not righteous. I repent and I ask You to forgive me on the basis of this obedience in offering a sacrifice.” They were not saved by the ritual. They were not saved by the sacrifice. They were saved by repentance and trust in God to be merciful to them through a sacrifice that would come and satisfy Him, that was pointed to by those animals.

They knew there was no forgiveness in the animal. They knew there was no satisfaction in the animal. How did they know that? Because no sooner did they offer one sacrifice, then they had to offer another one. Every single day of the calendar year, and then elevated sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, and more and more sacrifices on Passover, and personal sacrifices. And they knew that it never, ever, ever ended. So they knew the satisfactory sacrifice had not come. But a truehearted Jew, a real Israelite, an Israelite who knew and worshiped God in a true way, understood that he was unrighteous, he was wretched, he was sinful, he deserved death. And he came in penitence and obedience doing what God told him to do and asking God for mercy and grace, and waiting for God to provide the sacrifice.

Well, never would they have expected that the final and acceptable sacrifice would have been none other than the Messiah, who, by the way, is introduced as the Servant back in chapter 52, verse 13. And He will prosper and be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. And according to verse 15, He will startle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths on account of Him. This is going to be a staggering, stunning, powerful, influential, highly exalted individual. At the end of chapter 53, He will receive a portion with the great, divide the booty with the strong. They had that view of their Messiah as an exalted ruler and king, the great King, the King of all kings.

But now they find out that before He ever is installed as a king, He’s going to be slaughtered. Messiah slaughtered? Like a lamb. If you’ve had any experience with that, you know that when sheep go to be slaughtered, they go quietly. Interestingly enough, I had this experience down in New Zealand and Australia. There is one sheep called the Judas sheep. That’s the name of that sheep who leads all of them to slaughter. And they all follow the Judas sheep through a certain corridor of wood or metal to their death, and it is an utterly silent scene, totally silent as they go to have their throats slit one by one by one. They’re as silent in slaughter as they are in being sheared, and I have sat for hours and watched the amazing shearing of sheep and the silence of those sheep.

The picture here is of the Messiah being slaughtered and being as silent as a sheep is silent. That’s the imagery. The reality is that the Messiah will be led to slaughter. The analogy is, like a sheep He will be silent in that slaughter. None of the sacrifices prior to the death of Messiah satisfied God. But once Jesus was slaughtered, the veil in the temple was ripped from top to bottom, and all sacrifices

after that were canceled. And God destroyed the temple using the Romans soon after. The whole system ended because the sacrifice that God chose had been offered. So here we read, in verse 7, that He is quiet, silent. We could call this message the slaughtered Servant, or the silent Servant, or the silent, slaughtered Servant.

The last Old Testament prophet, John the Baptist, amazing man; he was an isolated prophet. There weren't any other prophets but him, and he came 400 years after the previous one. He is out of due season. He is an anomaly. He shouldn't have even lived because his mother and father were barren, Zechariah the priest and Elizabeth. They were in their old age, long past the capability to bear children, and God had miraculously allowed them to have this son named John, who is called the Baptist, but perhaps better would be identified as John the Baptizer, because that's where he drew his name. From the time that he was in his mother's womb, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, so God had something very special for him and eventually he became, as you know, the forerunner of the Messiah.

Jesus said he was the greatest human being that ever lived up until his time. Not because he was smarter than the rest, not because he was more noble than the rest, more moral, or more spiritual, or more righteous, but because he had the greatest task that any human being had ever had. His greatness was connected to his privileged duty, which was to point to Messiah. He is the one of whom Isaiah writes, in Isaiah 40, verses 3 to5, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, saying, 'Make straight the path for the Lord.'" He is the one of whom Malachi wrote, both in Malachi 3 and 4 where Malachi says that when the Messiah finally comes, there will come one previous to Him to declare His arrival. He is that promised herald, that promised forerunner, the prophet who identifies Messiah.

And when the dramatic moment came, and John the Baptist and Jesus came face-to-face, eye-to-eye in a public place, and Jesus was about to launch His ministry. It was at the Jordan and all Jerusalem and Judea, it says, were going down there to be baptized by John because John was saying the Messiah's here, Messiah's here, prepare your heart, prepare your heart. And he was preaching the Kingdom and righteousness and telling people to get ready, and he was offering this baptism, which was a symbol of their desire to be cleansed, and masses of people were there. And one day Jesus shows up, and how does John introduce Jesus? He doesn't say, "Behold your King." He says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." And that is right out of Isaiah 53.

That's what he said the first time he pointed to Christ, John 1:29. The next day, the day after, again Christ is there and again face-to-face, and John again said, "Behold the Lamb of God." John doesn't explain anything. There was enough in Isaiah 53 to understand that the Messiah will come as a lamb and a sacrifice for sin, one to be slaughtered and to be silent in the slaughter. Israel would have its living, exalted King, but only after He was a dying, rejected Lamb. The imagery here is so prosaic. Verse 6 says, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way." That's

the picture of sinful humanity; we're all sheep gone astray. So the Servant becomes one of us, a lamb, in order to become the sacrificial lamb to save the sheep.

Now we're going to embark upon verses 7 through 9 this morning, not finish it. But it is the next to the last, the fourth stanza in the five stanzas that make up this amazing passage. And the chief emphasis in verses 7 through 9 is silence, or, if you will, submission, willingness, obedience. Here is the suffering Servant of Jehovah, suffering unto death willingly, voluntarily. This is where He lives out "not My will but Yours be done," as He prayed in the garden.

The mouth, you might say, of the Messiah is featured. In verse 7, He doesn't open His mouth; twice it says that. And in verse 9 there's no deceit in His mouth. He is silent in His trial; that's verse 7. He is silent in His death; that's verse 8. And He is silent in His burial; and that's verse 9. Here again, in the future, Israel will look back and realize that His silence was a willingness to be killed, as verse 8 says, for the transgression of My people, My people to whom the stroke was due. They will have a totally different view of His trial and His death and His burial.

Now, I want to say something here in a broader sense. This chapter is so critical for anyone who wants to present a faithful gospel, because the language here is the language of the gospel. And I want to show you what I mean. A lot of people want to talk about Christ, talk about believing in Jesus, talking about accepting Jesus as Savior, talking about letting Christ take over your life; that's all true and fine. But the language of true salvation is the language of Isaiah 53 when the Jews, in a future generation, or when you and I in this generation, look at Jesus Christ; this is how we have to see Him. Not as a teacher, not as sort of a benign, willing savior, although He is a teacher and certainly a savior. But we have to see Christ in the language of sacrifice, okay? That's the operative phrase. We have to see Him in the language of sacrifice.

When you're looking here, you're hearing the confession of the Jews in the future and the confession of any truly converted person in the present. And what is the language? You go back to verse 3: despised, forsaken, man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Verse 4: grief, sorrow, stricken, smitten, afflicted, pierced, crushed, punished, scourged. Verse 7: oppressed, afflicted, slaughtered. Verse 8: oppression, judgment, cut off, meaning killed, struck…the end of verse 8. Verse 10: the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief. He's a guilt offering, verse 11 and 12, bearing iniquity, bearing sin.

What am I saying? The gospel is about sin, and it's about judgment, and it's about atonement, and it's about death, and it's about sacrifice, and it's about blood. The gospel is about oppression, affliction, judgment, execution, being struck. It's about iniquities, transgressions, sins. That's the gospel. That's the way it has to be understood and explained. Of course the current trend is toward an inoffensive message, reductionist, marginal reference to Christ. S. Lewis Johnson said, "Christians reset their theology to every new idea, like resetting your watch every time you find a clock that is different." But

the words of salvation are the words that you find in Isaiah 53. This is how you have to understand the death of Christ. This is how others have to understand it.

Who is being referred to here? Who suffers such a trial as verse 7 describes, such a death as verse 8 describes, and such a burial as verse 9 describes? Who is this? Who is this suffering, submissive Slave of Jehovah? Who is this innocent, sinless, yet patiently, willingly enduring man afflicted with such brutal death? Who is this? There's only one possible answer, and that is the Servant of Jehovah, who is Messiah, who is Jesus. And He is not caught in some web of circumstances that are out of control, but rather He is silently yielding to everything that happens.

Now the Messiah speaks in the forty-second Servant song, the Messiah speaks in the forty-ninth Servant song. The Messiah speaks in the fiftieth chapter of the Servant song. The Messiah says nothing in Isaiah 53, no speech at all. He is the silent, suffering Servant. Says nothing; does nothing, but let's everything happen to Him. This is the voluntary, willing, vicarious, substitutionary death of the Servant.

Now, for this morning, for just a few minutes, let's look at verse 7, the first of these three, and the trial of Jesus is here presented. How do we know that? Verse 7, "He was oppressed." He Himself…literally in the Hebrew, He Himself emphatically was oppressed. This is a word that takes us to brutality, it takes us to enslavement. It is a word that refers to being arrested, to being abused. And it was severe. So severe was His treatment when He was arrested and abused, that verse 14 of chapter 52 says appearance that He had, His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men. He didn't even look human.

By the time they were finished with Him, both in terms of the physical beating that He took on His body, and the abuse that He took on His head and His face from a crown of thorns, and sticks that beat Him in the face, and spit and sweat and blood running down His face, He didn't even look human. After the lashings and the blood bath splattering all over Him, being bent over in the tortured anguish of His own face in the emotion of the moment, this is His abuse. It started with His arrest in the middle of the night in the garden. Then it continued through the mockery of trials, false witnesses, the abuse that came to Him there, the psychological torture that He underwent there, and the outrageous injustice of turning Him over to the Romans, and the way they handled Him and abused Him physically.

From the arrest in the garden through the trial at the house of the high priest, trying to indict Him by false witnesses giving false testimony, His time before Herod, before Pilate, all the mistreatment from the Jews and the Romans. No crime ever validated, no proof ever given, no guilt ever established. According to Luke 23:15, Herod declared His innocence. Three times in Luke 23 Pilate says He's innocent…three times, and he was the governor. So it was a legal verdict, three times innocent. Still the leaders of Israel, the Jewish leaders with consent from the people, pushed Pilate to follow his

triple declaration of the innocence of Jesus with a call for execution. That's what he does in Luke 23:25. Well, that's what's seen here in verse 7; He was oppressed.

And then it says He was afflicted. But it's a passive verb, and it really needs to be looked at a little differently, a little more closely. He allowed Himself to be afflicted. That's the way you would translate a passive verb. Passive means it happens…the action happens to you, not from you. It also comes to mean…and could fairly be translated this way as it is in Exodus 10:3…He humbled Himself, which is another way of saying He allowed Himself to be afflicted. Paul may well have had this very phrase in mind when he wrote Philippians 2, "He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on the cross." That may well be a direct reflection of Isaiah 53:7.

This is not normal for tortured people. This is not normal for innocent people who are being tortured. Normally an oppressed, tortured person who is innocent and knows that this is a gross injustice cries out, cries out about the injustice, and cries out about innocence. But not the Servant of Jehovah. He doesn't say a word. "Yet He didn't open His mouth." In spite of the fact that this was all evil, wicked, wretched injustice against not just an innocent man, but a perfectly holy and righteous man, He didn't open His mouth. Sinners don't suffer silently. We don't. There is the voice of guilt. When we suffer for our sin, we cry out, as David did in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51, right? "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned. Wash me, purge me, make me clean." That's the cry of the guilty sinner.

The cry of the innocent sinner is Job, who repeatedly cries out to God about his innocence. Job 7:1 to 13, the whole thing is saying, "God, why is this happening? I'm an innocent man. I am not guilty of what even my own friends are accusing me of being guilty of." Sinners don't suffer in silence. When we suffer because of guilt, we cry out to God for forgiveness. And when we suffer for innocence, we cry out to God and ask why.

But this is a silent sufferer. He has been hunted down in the middle of the night and found in the Garden of Gethsemane after midnight. They have come to Him, the New Testament writers tell us, with a massive crowd, temple police, religious leaders, Roman soldiers, to arrest Him, hunted like some kind of a nocturnal animal. He is arrested, He is betrayed by Judas. He is taken into custody, ill treated, tortured, tormented, harassed, abused in every way imaginable and unimaginable and then led to execution without any resistance, without any complaint.

When He was brought before the high priest, Matthew 26 tells us that He was silent. In the next chapter, Matthew 27, He was taken before the chief priests and the scribes, elders, and He was silent. In Mark 15 He was taken before Pilate and He was silent. And John 19 records the same thing, His silence before Pilate. In Luke 23 He was taken before the Idumean vassal king under Rome by the name of Herod, and again He was silent. He was silent before the high priest, the Sanhedrin. He was silent before Pilate, He was silent before Herod. He never said a word in defense of Himself and His innocence.

And Isaiah says He was like a lamb. He was led to slaughter and like a sheep that's silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. The issue here is the willingness of the Messiah to die. This is not a good plan gone wrong. Seven hundred years before Jesus showed up, the prophecy is crystal clear that when He comes He will come as a lamb for slaughter. And when He arrived, before He began His ministry, John says, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." And that means that He must be a sacrificial lamb because only in the death of the sacrifice is the sin removed.

When Jesus died at the end of the three years of His ministry, that was not as some have tried to portray it, a good thing gone bad. That was the very reason He came in the first place. There was plenty He could have said before His accusers. Oh my, there were plenty of things He could have said to the high priest, the chief priests that made up the Sanhedrin, plenty He could have said to Pilate and Herod. But He didn't. It was the silence of submission to the will of His Father. But it was also the silence of judgment. You wouldn't listen, and now I have nothing to say to you. When I did speak about life and salvation, when I did speak about forgiveness and the Kingdom of God, you would not listen, and now I have nothing more to say to you.

He is absolutely silent in judgment. And verse 7 ends again by saying, "He did not open His mouth." He not only accepted the unrighteous judgment of men, but He accepted the righteous judgment of God on behalf of unrighteous sinners in order to make them righteous. No sacrifice was ever so perfect; no sacrifice ever so pure. Here is the sinless, spotless Lamb of God, acceptable to God, chosen by God and elect, dying for sinners. It is here, dear friends, that Old Testament soteriology reaches its apex. This is the high point of the Old Testament. The Messiah is the sacrifice, slaughtered by God for us.

He is the Servant of Jehovah; He is the Slave of Jehovah; and His service requires that He die, that He be punished for our well-being, that He be scourged for our healing, that He be crushed for our iniquities, that He be pierced through for our transgressions. And as verse 8 puts it, that He be cut off out of the land of the living for our transgressions to whom the stroke is due. That's the message of the gospel. And it's a message of sin and judgment, and death and sacrifice.

The suffering, silent, submissive, slaughtered, scorned Servant of Jehovah takes on Himself the punishment of God for the enormous moral debt of the elect of all human history and pays the ransom price with His life. Now, that is verse 7. That's the trial that takes us to His death in verse 8. That is for next time. We see Him silent in death and even silent in burial, verse 9. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we can't help but hear the amazing words of Peter who says of Christ, "He committed no sin nor was any deceit found in His mouth," taken right out of verse 9. "But while being reviled, He did not

revile in return, while suffering He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously. And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness for by His wounds, you were healed."

We're in awe of the wonder of this sacrifice of Christ. We're in awe of the fact that You have applied it to us who are totally unworthy. Why it is that You have selected us out of all the world to be the recipients of this mighty accomplishment is beyond our comprehension, but it is behind our worship. It is why we love You, praise You, adore You, worship You.

It is also this great reality that You have called upon us to proclaim to the ends of the earth that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved, Jew or Gentile. This is the day of salvation. This is the acceptable time. Yes, there will be a future time at the end of human history when the nation Israel will be saved; but in the meantime, in the meantime, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to whoever believes, Jew or Gentile.

We ask, Lord, that today, even in this hour, that You would draw some to You, Jew or Gentile, sitting and listening to this. May this be the moment when they come out of darkness into light, out of death into life, out of confusion into clarity, out of ignorance into knowledge, out of death to life. And may they be drawn to Christ, irresistibly by Your blessed Holy Spirit; may this be a day of salvation. Father, do a work in hearts and accomplish that for Your glory, for Your honor, that heaven may rejoice over the homecoming of one lost sinner. We pray that You might be honored in that way, that You might be exalted. In the name of Christ. Amen.

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