

22nd S after Pentecost - 10/20/24 SJ, SM

Isaiah 53:10-12 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, 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. 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.

In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Recently I heard about a 16 year old boy who worked hard for a year, saving his money up to buy a nice used car. Without going into all the details, with his grandfather's help, he buys a car. Due to no fault of the teen, the dealership takes the car from the teen, leaving out of \$10,000 and without a car. The car dealership was also unwilling to help make things right. However, several months later another dealership from the area and decided to give a nice car to the teen in an attempt to make things rights.

That dealership did something very nice, even though they were under no obligation to do so. When we realize full extent of everything that our Savior made for us, that should strike us speechless as well. Jesus has done more for us than anyone else possibly could. Let us listen attentively to the Prophet Isaiah today as he teaches us about:

The Blessings of our Savior's Vicarious Atonement

1. His sacrifice was an offering for sin
2. His life was a victory over death

1. His sacrifice was an offering for sin

It isn't very flattering, but Isaiah compares our Savior to a sheep. Isaiah says: **the LORD makes his life a guilt offering.**

Every Jew knew what a guilt offering was. When you had intentionally violated God's Law, or committed some sin that particularly bothered someone's conscience, you could offer a guilt offering. A male lamb, without defect, could be taken to the priest. It would be killed and some of the blood would be smeared on the person offering the sacrifice to show that they had their sins removed. **The priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.** (Lev 14:14)

The death of a lamb was quick. However, the death that our Savior suffered was not quick or painless. Isaiah **it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer.** To crush someone doesn't mean to hurt them a little bit; it means to hurt them greatly, to smash them flat. The Savior would not only give his life as a guilt offering, but he would also suffer great physical pain before he died.

But the suffering of Jesus was not limited to his body. His soul suffered also. As Isaiah prophesied: **After the suffering of his soul he will see the light *of life* and be satisfied.** The Jews and Romans who crucified Christ couldn't make his soul suffer. They couldn't do anything to Jesus' soul or anyone else's soul. Jesus once warned us not to fear men who can hurt our bodies, but to fear God who can hurt both our bodies and our souls in hell.

The greatest pain that Jesus suffered wasn't the nails in his hands and feet on the cross. It wasn't the wounds from the scourge that left his back a bloody mess. And it wasn't the painful crown of thorns pushed painfully down on top of his head. It wasn't the painful humiliation that came from those who mocked him and laughed at him. No, his deepest and greatest pain was the agony of hell that he suffered for you and for me.

Don't confuse this with what we mean when we say that Jesus descended into hell. No, that happened on Easter morning. Jesus suffered the agony of hell on Good Friday as he was hanging on the cross. The great

punishment of hell is not the fire but the separation from the love and blessings of God. During the time that Jesus was on the cross, his own Heavenly Father separated himself from the Son, not helping him, blessing him, or comforting him in any way. Never once are we told that Jesus cried out from the physical pain of the cross, but the agony of separation from God, the agony of hell, caused Jesus to cry out: *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*, which means **My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?**

We haven't talked directly about what the vicarious atonement (or payment) that Jesus made for us is exactly. Think about what a substitute teacher is: someone who takes the place temporarily of the normal, every day teacher. That's what vicarious means – that Jesus is our substitute, the one who took our place, that all he did – his perfect life, his suffering of body and soul – was because of us and was done for us.

Isaiah, speaking the message that God had given him, says this about the Savior to come: **by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.** When we look at our Savior's suffering, suffering of both body and soul, it horrifies us, yet at the same time we rejoice. It horrifies us because we see the terrible price Jesus needed to pay because of *our* sins. We are saddened when we realize that Jesus, who was without sin, suffered for the sins that we committed, not him. Yet at the same time we rejoice because we know that how much he loved us, and that because of the pain and suffering he endured, we will never experience the pains of hell.

2. His life a victory over death

Isaiah not only foretold the death of Christ, he prophesied that he would rise from the dead. Listen again to what he says: **though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days** and later he adds: **After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied.**

Not once, but twice Isaiah tells us that Christ will die, but then tells us he will live *after* he has died. He will be sacrificed as a guilt offering, but after his death he will still see his descendants. After he suffers the agony of hell, he will see the light of life. Yes, the servant of the Lord would die, but Isaiah tells us that he would live again!

By his Resurrection, Jesus defeated death. Death no longer is the undefeatable force that holds power over all mankind. Though we will all enter the grave and experience death unless our Lord first returns, the grave will not hold us. As Christ's own resurrection shows us, he has power over death. The power of Christ is greater than the power of death. The grave could not hold him. And if it could not hold him, it cannot hold us either. If he could raise himself, he certainly can raise us also.

So Paul described the victory of Christ over death this way: **For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.** (1Co 15:22-23) Christ's resurrection shows us that the power of Christ is greater than the power of death.

Christians need not fear death, because our Savior, the same Savior who saved us through his death, by his return to life on the third day he conquered death and defeated it. And having defeated it once, he can and will defeat it again, one on the Last Day he will defeat its hold on us as he raises our bodies to life. It won't matter if our bodies have crumbled to dust, been lost at sea, or been cremated and the ashes scattered. The same Lord who created our bodies from the dust of the earth and gave our bodies life has promised to give them life again.

Return to your homes today remembering what Isaiah teaches us about our Savior. That according to the will of our Father, he suffered agony of body and soul, including the pains of hell, to win our forgiveness from hell. By his return to life, he has guaranteed our own return to life and our own eternity with God in heaven. Remember that Jesus not only died for you, but he returned to life again for you! Amen.