

Emmanuel Ev. Lutheran Church—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Good Friday

April 15, 2022

Sermon by Pastor Christopher Pflughoeft

The Crucial Hours: Jesus suffered for you

¹³ Look, my servant will succeed. He will rise. He will be lifted up. He will be highly exalted. ¹⁴ Just as many were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured that he did not look like a man, and his form was disfigured more than any other person— ¹⁵ so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him, because they will see something they had never been told before, and they will understand something they had never heard before.

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Who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root from dry ground. He had no attractiveness and no majesty. When we saw him, nothing about his appearance made us desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man who knew grief, who was well acquainted with suffering. Like someone whom people cannot bear to look at, he was despised, and we thought nothing of him. ⁴ Surely, he was taking up our weaknesses, and he was carrying our sufferings. We thought it was because of God that he was stricken, smitten, and afflicted, ⁵ but it was because of our rebellion that he was pierced. He was crushed for the guilt our sins deserved. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all have gone astray like sheep. Each of us has turned to his own way, but the LORD has charged all our guilt to him. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent in front of its shearers, he did not open his mouth. ⁸ He was taken away without a fair trial and without justice, and of his generation, who even cared? So, he was cut off from the land of the living. He was struck because of the rebellion of my people. ⁹ They would have assigned him a grave with the wicked, but he was given a grave with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, and no deceit was in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and to allow him to suffer. Because you made his life a guilt offering, he will see offspring. He will prolong his days, and the LORD's gracious plan will succeed in his hand. ¹¹ After his soul experiences anguish, he will see the light of life. He will provide satisfaction. Through their knowledge of him, my just servant will justify the many, for he himself carried their guilt. ¹² Therefore I will give him an allotment among the great, and with the strong he will share plunder, because he poured out his life to death, and he let himself be counted with rebellious sinners. He himself carried the sin of many, and he intercedes for the rebels.

— Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Tell me, as you hear him groaning, was there ever grief like his, friends through fear his cause disowning, foes insulting his distress? Many hands were raised to wound him, none would intervene to save; but the deepest stroke that pierced him was the stroke that justice gave. (CW 430, stanza 2)

This is the second stanza of the well-known hymn, *Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted*, written by Thomas Kelly. Kelly was the writer of 765 hymns. He was also an Anglican pastor who was defrocked for his evangelical preaching. This hymn is based on the lesson from Isaiah. *Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted* is a favorite Good Friday hymn. This is partially due to the beauty and the poetry. I think even more so because of the text upon which it is based. Regarding this lesson, Martin Luther said that people ought to memorize it because it is the foremost passage about Jesus' death and resurrection. Yes, this passage shows that **Jesus suffered for you**.

Let's now walk through this text, which is called the Fourth Servant Song, to see how it shows that **Jesus suffered for you**. The first question that one may ask while reading this section is, how do we know that this is speaking about Jesus? This was written by Isaiah hundreds of years before Jesus was even born. How do we know that Isaiah is speaking about Jesus in this prophecy?

Well, my response certainly would be, "Read this and consider what you know about Jesus. This so clearly talks about Jesus." Yet, I will demonstrate this from Scripture as well. Luke, inspired by the Holy Spirit, made this clear for us when he shared the interaction of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. The Ethiopian Eunuch was reading this text of Scripture and he was confused. So, Philip made it clear to him. Sharing this interaction, Luke wrote, "*The eunuch said to Philip, 'I ask you, who is the prophet talking about—himself or someone else?' Then Philip began to speak. Starting with that very passage of Scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus.*" (Acts 8:34-35). So, who is the Suffering Servant that Isaiah foretold? The Suffering Servant is Jesus. As this lesson shows, **Jesus suffered for you**.

As we consider the suffering of Jesus, Isaiah puts us in the proper frame of mind as he points us to the fact that Jesus didn't suffer for nothing. Jesus didn't suffer to lose. In Jesus' suffering and death, he had victory. The Lord's servant would succeed. He would rise. He would be lifted up. He would be exalted. Although he would be marred and appalling to many, he would be victorious. He would sprinkle the people, cleansing them with his blood. He would give understanding. As we look to Jesus as the servant on the cross, we see him in his state of humiliation, but Isaiah gives the encouragement that this is Jesus' victory. Jesus would be exalted. Jesus did this to save those for whom he suffered. He would sprinkle them with his blood. He would give them understanding. **Jesus suffered**, but he did not suffer a loss.

In the frame of knowing that in his death, Jesus was victorious, let's reflect on the suffering that was inflicted upon him that day. Jesus faced severe pain and suffering in his passion. He was flogged and beaten. In this, he was disfigured. He did not appear to be a victorious warrior. Instead, he appeared bloodied and battered. **Jesus suffered.**

Jesus was well acquainted with suffering. He knew grief. We see this grief and suffering. Consider the grief of bearing the sins of the world and being forsake by the Father. Because of His suffering, he was despised and rejected by men. In this suffering, he did not appear to have splendor or attractiveness. Because of his great grief and suffering, people could not bear to look at him. **Jesus suffered.**

Jesus was oppressed and afflicted. He suffered on the cross. Yet, in his suffering, he did not open his mouth to complain. He was silent. He willingly went forward to be the sacrificial lamb. **Jesus suffered.**

Jesus was cut off from the land of the living. He was killed. He was assigned a grave with the wicked. He was killed not because of his sins. He was killed not because of his rebellion. No, he was killed because of the rebellion and sins of other people. **Jesus suffered.**

Jesus was stricken, smitten, and afflicted. Jesus bore this punishment. Jesus took the punishment of sin. Sin indeed demanded a punishment. God punishes sin. Yet, Jesus was not punished because he deserved it. Jesus had committed no sins. Instead, Jesus suffered for the sins of others. Jesus took on their punishment. **Jesus suffered.**

This is true. **Jesus suffered.** We see this clearly in our lesson that Jesus suffered. Let us also see the reason for his suffering. Let's look to the function of his death. About this, the prophet wrote, "*The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*" Again, Jesus did not suffer to just suffer. Jesus suffered the punishment for others. Jesus' suffering fulfilled this function. Jesus suffered to bring them peace. Jesus suffered to pay for the sins of the world. Jesus suffered and died for their forgiveness. In Jesus' suffering and death, he gives healing. **Jesus suffered for you.**

In this Servant Song, we close it by seeing Jesus' victory. Isaiah writes, "*After his soul experiences anguish, he will see the light of life. He will provide satisfaction. Through their knowledge of him, my just servant will justify the many, for he himself carried their guilt. ¹²Therefore I will give him an allotment among the great, and with the strong he will share plunder, because he poured out his life to death, and he let himself be counted with rebellious sinners. He himself carried the sin of many, and he intercedes for the rebels.*" **Jesus suffered for you** on the cross. **Jesus suffered for you** as your Savior.

When you look upon the cross, do you see love? When you look upon the cross, do you see victory? When you look upon the cross, do you see salvation? A battered, beaten, and bloodied man upon a cross does not appear to be the victor in the eyes of this world. In another section, Isaiah calls him a warrior. What kind of warrior allows soldiers to beat him and put him to death? Scripture also calls him the judge. Scripture calls him a king. What kind of king takes the death penalty upon a cross between two criminals? We know he is God. What kind of God allows his creation to kill him? God's ways are not your ways. This may not be the victor portrayed in the movies. This may not be the king desired by a country. This may not be the warrior desired by the military. God's ways are not our ways. The world did not see a victor on the cross, but that is exactly who he is. **Jesus suffered for you.**

Jesus suffered for you. What does this mean? Why did Jesus have to suffer for you? Well, it was your sins: your lusts, your greed, your pride. That 'you' is directed at me too. Jesus died for your sins. Why was Jesus stricken? Why was Jesus smitten? Why was Jesus afflicted? Because you sinned! Death is the consequence of sin. That is why he was beaten, battered, and bloodied. **Jesus suffered for you.** He suffered for your sins. He died for your sins.

Yet, 'for you' is comforting too. Jesus faced your punishment willingly. Jesus died on the cross for you. Jesus did this because he loves you. Yes, **Jesus suffered for you!** Jesus took the punishment so that you do not have to. Jesus died to give you life. "*The punishment that brought us peace was on him. By his wounds we are healed.*" By his wounds, you are healed. **Jesus suffered for you!**

This is indeed true!

Here we have a firm foundation, here the refuge of the lost: Christ, the Rock of our salvation, is the name of which we boast; Lamb of God, for sinners wounded, sacrifice to cancel guilt! None shall ever be confounded who on him their hope have built. (CW 430, stanza 4)

Amen.