

Christmas and the Church

Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53:1 – 5

I. Intro

- A. Last week – started messages on Christmas and the church – relationship between this season and people of Christ which make up the church
- B. Reminded that whole reason behind Christmas is birth of Christ, Savior of the world; not parties, presents, shopping, time off from work and school, or not even about spending time with family – it's about Jesus
- C. Last week, the first relationship between Christmas and the church is to prepare the way for the Lord who came first as an infant and someday will come again as King of kings and Lord of lords; looked at How are we to prepare the way – the beginning with proclaiming the Gospel, receiving all who God puts in our path, with humility and sacrificially
- D. **READ Isaiah 52:13 – 15, 53:1 – 5**; one of several prophecies of Christ the Messiah told by the prophet Isaiah
- E. Notice the “subtitle” of today’s message - “Man of Sorrows”; question becomes what does this prophetic passage show us in regards to relationship between Christmas and the church – the body of Christ

II. In Midst of Ugliness, Beauty can be Found

- A. In appearance the death of Christ was ugly
- B. **v. 52:13** – Isaiah gives us the “end of the story” before actually telling “the story”
- C. ... *my servant* – these are the words of God told to Isaiah and specifically refer to one, single person; **Question**: How do we know who? From looking at other passages in scripture particularly the NT
 - i. In Acts 8:30 – 35; quotes Isaiah 53:7, 8 which was being read by the Eunuch that the Lord sent Philip to to share the Gospel
 - ii. Acts 8:34-35 (NIV)
 - ³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and **told him the good news about Jesus.**
 - iii. In 1 Peter 2:22 – 25 quotes Isaiah 53:9; says 1 Peter 2:23-24 (NIV) ²³
When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

- iv. Isaiah clearly speaking of Christ, which Isaiah referred to many times as the “Suffering Servant”
- D. **v. 52:14** – prophetic, very graphic description of Christ during and after the time of His crucifixion; this is the ugly
 - i. Many artists who have drawn, painted their own depiction of what the crucifixion was visibly like were wrong; Jesus after He was beaten, tortured, whipped was a gruesome sight
 - ii. Nails (spikes) driven through His hands and feet, crown of thorns mashed down upon His head, spear thrust in His side – all that was a gruesome sight
- E. **v. 52:15** – begin to see beauty emerge; *sprinkle* - refers to a cleansing, a cleansing of all that was ugly about Christ’s death, a cleansing of all that is ugly about sin that required His death
 - i. David cried out: Psalm 51:2 (NIV) ² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.
 - ii. Paul pleaded: Acts 22:16 (NIV) ¹⁶ ... Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV) ¹¹ ... you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
- F. Even in the ugly, there is beauty found; **Question:** What does that have to do with the relationship between Christmas and the church?
 - i. **Answer:** There is some ugliness in the church today (example of one church and Pastor leaving); deception; even have some ugliness in our own church – Why? Because the church is people and where people are involved there’s going to be some ugliness; Romans 3:23 (NIV) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
 - ii. In the midst of ugliness there is also beauty – lives being transformed through faith in Christ, people being ministered to in the name of Christ, children/youth/adults all being taught the Word of God (ie. baptisms)
- G. Even in the ugly, where Jesus is found there is beauty; even on the cross which in appearance was gruesome there was beauty in the redemption taking place for all mankind

III. Rejection and Suffering

- A. **v. 53:1 – 3:** Describes the rejection of the Messiah which began even before the Messiah, Jesus Christ was born
- B. The coming of the Messiah had been predicted but even those prophecies were rejected (**REFER v. 1**)

- C. **v. 53:2:** Even after Christ was born, coming as an infant child, totally unexpected therefore it too was rejected;
- i. Jewish people, religious elite, expect a descendant of the great King David who would free the people from their oppressors; God's people even under oppression at the time of Christ's birth – the Romans, very hard time for God's people
 - ii. For 400 years prior, God had been silent among His people not bringing them any new prophecies or revelations – truly was a very *dry ground* existence
 - iii. Notice physical description of Christ in latter part of verse (**REFER v. 2b**); not a description of the tanned, physically buff, GQ model person – physically nothing special or extraordinary about Jesus
 - iv. Jesus not born into wealth, born into poverty; Jesus not born in a palace/castle, born in a barn; Jesus not laid in a handcrafted basinet made from the finest lumber, laid in a cattle feeding trough
 - v. Jesus didn't have a charismatic personality, He was meek and humble
 - vi. Totally not what people's idea of the King of the world should be and therefore the people couldn't accept Him
- D. That's why ... (**REFER v. 3**)
- E. **Question:** What does this have to do with relationship between Christmas and the church?
- i. The people of God can expect to suffer, to still be rejected and despised by the world
 - ii. Some of that ugly mentioned earlier is persecution of God's people that has occurred throughout history, that still occurs today, that will occur until Christ returns
 - iii. But we won't ever go through anything, as individuals or as the church, that Christ Himself wasn't familiar with
 - iv. **Philippians 1:29 (NIV)** ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,
 - v. **Romans 8:17 (NIV)** ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
- F. So far, the relationship we've seen this morning between Christmas (the birth of Christ in this world) and the church (people of God) is: in the midst of ugliness beauty can be found; there will be rejection and suffering – but in the end ...

IV. Hope and Healing

- A. Seen in v. 53:4, 5; notice the references to you and I, the world – use of the words *our* and *we* (**REFER v. 4, 5**)

- B. **Phrase – *There's gold in them thar hills*: from Mark Twain novel; there's hope and healing in these here verses**
- C. **The rejection, sorrows, grief that Jesus endured was all for you and me personally, and you and me the church**
- D. **Jesus was beaten, tortured, abused for mine and your offense – our *transgressions* which is violating and disobeying His Law**
- E. **Jesus was executed for our sin**
- F. **READ v. 53:11**

V. **Close**

- A. **Don't want this message to scare anyone from entering into a relationship with Christ as their Lord and Savior when talking about ugliness, suffering and rejection**
- B. **Understand that ultimately this message is about the hope and healing that can only come through knowing Christ as Savior; not knowing Christ as Savior is what should bring about fear**
- C. **John 3:17-18 (NIV)** ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already** because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.