

## **Lenten Meditations On Isaiah Chapter 53 Abundantly Satisfied.**

Text: Isa 53:10-12

Suggested Hymns:

77, 84, 78, 300, 173

1) What Was It That Gave Jesus Such Abundant Satisfaction?

2) What Is It That Still Gives Jesus The Greatest Satisfaction?

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Isaiah 53:10-12, ***<sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. <sup>11</sup> He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.***

***<sup>12</sup> Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.*** (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Today we continue our series of sermons on Isaiah Chapter 53. The theme for today is that Jesus is abundantly satisfied.

Three hundred years before Christ was born, Alexander the Great swept out of the land of Greece, and in 11 years conquered the entire East. Yet when he died in Babylon at age 33, he was not satisfied. It is said that he wept because there was nothing more to conquer.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, on the first Palm Sunday, Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem, and a few days later, likewise at the age of 33, He died the shameful death of the cross. Was Jesus satisfied?

Charles Ross Weede wrote a poem to reflect the achievement of Alexander the Great and Jesus Christ. It reads as follows:

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three,  
One lived and died for self; **one died for you and me.**  
The Greek died on a throne; **the Jew died on a cross;**  
One's life a triumph seemed; **the other but a loss.**  
One led vast armies forth; **the other walked alone;**  
One shed a whole world's blood; **the other gave His own.**  
One won the world in life and lost it all in death;  
**The other lost His life to win the whole world's faith.**

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three.  
One died in Babylon; **and one on Calvary.**  
One gained all for self; **and one Himself He gave,**  
One conquered every throne; **the other every grave.**  
The one made himself God; **the God made Himself less;**  
The one lived but to blast; **the other but to bless.**  
When died the Greek, forever fell his throne of swords;  
**But Jesus died to live forever Lord of Lords.**

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three,  
The Greek made all men slaves; **the Jew made all men free.**  
One built a throne on blood; **the other built on love,**  
The one was born of earth; **the other from above;**  
One won all this earth, to lose all earth and heaven;  
**The other gave up all, that all to Him be given.**  
The Greek forever died; **the Jew forever lives.**  
He loses all who gets, **and wins all things who gives.**

Judged from that point of view, Calvary is the greatest success story the world has ever heard. And that is exactly what the prophet Isaiah tells us in the last words of his famous chapter 53. Speaking of the outcome of Calvary, He describes the Saviour as being Abundantly Satisfied. May the Lord bless our meditation.

## 1. Abundantly Satisfied

### What Was It That Gave Jesus Such Abundant Satisfaction?

According to all human standards, His life was a total failure. A Chinese statesman,<sup>1</sup> once spoke about this very point to a military person from Europe. He said, *“Men ought always to admire success and the successful person. I cannot understand why clever men like you Europeans should actually worship Jesus Christ. That man’s life was a failure, and at the end of it He was crucified. Crucifixion is not only a painful death, but it is a most degrading form of punishment. How can you call yourselves followers of such a man as that?”*

That is the way the world judges. And, at first glance, how else can you judge? Just look at the picture we have been studying during these past Sundays in Lent on the basis of Isaiah 53!

What has the prophet told us about this suffering Servant of God? There was no form, no comeliness, no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; wounded, bruised, lacerated by the stripes of the scourge; His hands and feet bored through by the nails — it was in this way that Jesus poured out His soul unto death!

Does this suffering, bleeding, dying figure of a man look like one who came down from heaven to save the whole earth? The very opposite seems to be true. Judged by human standards, the life which came to its awful close on Calvary was the most miserable failure of any life that was ever lived!

And yet, our text says, *He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.* Of labour, work, trouble and suffering there certainly had been more than enough. Agony of body, mind, and soul such as no man had ever endured, and yet this very travail of His soul is the cause of His abundant satisfaction!

When *“He was numbered with the transgressors,”* hanging there between those two criminals; when He *“made intercession for the transgressors,”* uttering that wondrous prayer, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,”* all this was not a mere accident, and certainly it was not for any crimes of His own that Jesus suffered such travail.

On the contrary, it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief; or, in other words, this travail of soul was part of God's own great plan of love to redeem the world. God cannot, will not, close His eyes to human sin and His holy Law must be kept. Therefore whenever that Law is broken, somebody must pay. And that is exactly what Jesus did on Calvary!

*“He shall bear their iniquities”* — that was the prophecy. *“He bore the sin of many”* — that was the fulfilment. You and I should have suffered the travail of Calvary, the bitter suffering, the awful death of the cross! But Jesus took it on Himself! He substituted for you and for me! And did Jesus actually accomplish what He set out to do, namely, to save the world?

Listen to our text. It says, *When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand ... By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many.* Yes, thank God, that Jesus did accomplish His purpose.

After Good Friday comes Easter morning, and when His days were prolonged, when He rose again to live forever, He soon began to see His seed, the mighty host of all those who would come to know Him as their dear Saviour and through His shed blood be justified, declared righteous, in the sight of God.

And for that very reason God also said, <sup>12</sup> *Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong.*” Because Jesus humbled Himself, and willingly and lovingly went to Calvary as our Substitute, therefore God also has highly exalted Him, as Scripture says, raised this Man Jesus up to the highest possible heights, so that He now has a name which is above every other human name, Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.

The joy that was set before Him, the joy of saving the whole human race from the curse of sin, the terror of death, the torments of hell, this, my friends, was the tremendous, the abundant satisfaction, which was Jesus' even in the midst of that awful travail of His soul on Calvary.

## **2. Abundantly Satisfied**

### **What Is It That Still Gives Jesus The Greatest Satisfaction?**

Listen to the words of the poet based on Isaiah 53:11,<sup>2</sup>

He shall be satisfied, When all He died to win,  
By loving-kindness gently drawn, *Are safely gathered in.*  
When in the glory bright He views His glorious bride,  
Sees of the travail of His soul, *He shall be satisfied.*

Do you belong to those who are already safely gathered in? Yes, I know that is a personal question, but isn't your relationship to your God and Saviour a very personal matter? And I know, too, that it is a question which only you can answer, because I cannot look into your heart, just as you cannot look into mine. In spite of all that, however, it is still necessary that we ask the question: Do you and I really belong to those who are already safely gathered in?

What better time could there be to do exactly what God wants us to do, as He told us in the words of St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:5, *<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.* The very fact that we are told to do that already implies that there is danger of taking our faith for granted, danger of merely assuming that we are true Christians, danger of deceiving ourselves with outward form and ritual in which there is no true life at all. We say that we are Christians; we have said that time and again; and we would be highly insulted if anybody said that we are not Christians.

We live in a time when that very term "Christian" is used in such a loose sense. If you are not a Jew or a Muslim or a Hindu or an outright atheist, you are almost automatically classed as a Christian. But that, of course, is far cry from what the term really means.

To be a Christian means literally to be Christ's man, Christ's woman, Christ's boy, or Christ's girl. Here is the first mark of the Christian: By the grace of God I have come to realise that by nature I am a lost and condemned sinner, born with a wicked heart, under the wrath of God, and headed for eternal damnation.

Sin is not just a mistake, a weakness, a failing of which I can say, *Oh, well, everybody else has it, too, so why should I get excited about it?* No, sin is the problem of my life, because it is my sin which forms the wall of separation between me and God. With the psalmist I must therefore learn to say, *<sup>4</sup> Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight.*<sup>3</sup> No one is a

Christian, or can be a Christian, unless he first of all has that attitude about sin, the sorrow, the contrite heart, and the broken spirit which comes from realising that we daily offend the holiness of God.

But that is not enough. And so here is the second mark of the true Christian: by the grace of God I have come to know, to understand, and to believe with all my heart and soul, that the love of God has provided a Saviour from sin for me in the person of His own dear Son, Jesus Christ, who in the fullness of time came into the world to serve as every sinner's perfect Substitute.

What I have miserably failed to do, namely, to keep God's Law perfectly, Jesus has done for me. What I should have endured, namely, the wrath of God, death and damnation, Jesus has suffered for me.

To know this, to understand it, and to believe with all my heart and soul that for Jesus' sake God cancels my guilt, forgives my sins, declares me righteous — this is the very heart of my Christian faith.

But there is still more. The mark third mark of a Christian is this: By the grace of God I am now a new creature in Christ. No, I do not mean that I am already a perfect saint as far as my personal life is concerned; on the contrary, I know all too well that I will never completely cast off the old Adam who lives in me; but it does mean that I now hate that which is still evil in me, and I strive by daily repentance to kill the old and to strengthen the new life, which is in me by faith in Christ. I am not what I ought to be; I am not what I wish to be; I am not what I hope to be; but by the grace of God I am not what once I was!

These, then, are the marks of the Christian. Examine yourselves whether you are in this faith, whether you are in this faith today. If we are — and God grant it for all of us — then, but only then, do we belong to those who are already gathered in, and of such it is written: ***He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.***

But will we also be among those who will be safely gathered in on Judgment Day? And here let us remember from the very outset that our personal Judgment Day comes in the moment of our death.

Sometimes, I am afraid, we think of Judgment Day as being far off in the future. It may be, if you are thinking of the end of the world, that day on which all the dead will be raised and all those then living will be judged. As far as you

and I personally are concerned, our private judgment takes place when we die, and that may not be far, far off in the future. That is why the Lord Himself says in Revelation 2:10, ***Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.***

Faithfulness — that is another good thought for today. A certain pastor mourned over a backslider who had once been a regular worshipper in the house of God. He went to the man's home and found him sitting before his open fire. Without saying a word, the pastor took the tongs, lifted a glowing coal from the fire, and laid it aside on the hearth-stone. Silently the two men watched the coal die out. Then the backslider exclaimed, "*You needn't say a single word, I will be there next Sunday.*"

In that little story lie both the cause and the cure of the sin of backsliding. We become unfaithful, we become backsliders just as soon as we withdraw ourselves from those means, those channels, those wells of grace, which the Lord has provided for our spiritual life and health.

Of that first congregation, the mother church in Jerusalem, it is written, ***"And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers."***<sup>4</sup> What they did is still as necessary for us today as it was for them.

As soon as we withdraw ourselves from the body of Christ, His church; as soon as we neglect such things as the regular hearing and reading of God's Word, the regular use of the holy Sacrament, and the regular practice of prayer, then we are separated from the glowing fire and are laid aside by ourselves on the hearth-stone — and there the lone coal soon goes out. Faith simply cannot exist apart from its source of life, which is Christ!

Someday there will be another Day, that eternal one of which it is written in Revelation 7:9, ***'After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands.*** When that Day has come, will you be there? Will all of us be there, safely gathered in?

Remember your Confirmation promise. Do you finally, intend faithfully to conform all your life to the rule of the Divine Word, conduct yourself as befits the Gospel of Christ, and in faith, word, and deed, remain true to the Triune

God, even unto death? You answered, **Yes, I do so intend, by the grace of God.**

May all of us say again today, *“I do so intend, by the grace of God.”*

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,<sup>5</sup>

*Let me be Thine for ever,  
Thou faithful God and Lord;  
Let me forsake Thee never  
Nor wander from Thy Word.  
Lord, do not let me waver,  
But give me steadfastness,  
And for such grace for ever  
Thy holy name I'll bless. Amen.*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Li Hung-Chang

<sup>2</sup> Christian Friend, Vol 16, 1889, p196

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 51:4

<sup>4</sup> Acts 2:42

<sup>5</sup> Hymn 300